

Road Safety Policy 2.0: bargain of the century,

There is a broad consensus on the need to dramatically improve road safety in our country. For 2020, the Flemish objective is 200 fatalities. In 2014, we suffered 393 fatalities, a slight increase compared to 2013.

The target seems unreachable by 2020. However, I am very firmly convinced of the contrary, on two conditions. The first is that we firmly take the active road user as the reference in the determination of the speed regimes. The second condition: we must commit as a nation to new but proven and surprisingly affordable technology.

Currently, we have a strange road safety policy. Inappropriate speed causes many and serious traffic accidents. To lower this speed, we currently do not interfere with our frantic vehicles, but we try to adapt the infrastructure. The expensive traffic furniture that is needed, creates additional emissions, accidents and inconveniences. Flash cameras and average speed checks are much less frequent, because even more expensive. Raising awareness has proven to be very difficult.

Thanks to the digital revolution, we will soon be able to say goodbye to these interim solutions. Indeed, we now have everything to achieve a complete revolution in our traffic mentality within three years: from a culture of speed to a culture of safety. How? Replace by 2019/2020 our metal number plates by a *digital license plate* in the form of an upgradeable GPS / GSM tracker. This unit sends a democratically determined percentage of speed information to a highly secure cloud movement. In terms of privacy, there is nothing new under the sun: there are already flash controls and everyone has a traced cell phone in their pocket. You raise simply the risk of being caught, something *everyone* advocates. A tolerable human scale can be determined in a pilot project with enough drivers.

This is the only way you can quickly put an end to the major design flaw of the car. A driver is currently continually tempted to use the enormous speed capability of the vehicle. In combination with the driving license with points, this will result in a *complete* reversal of the ratio of each driver: driving safely becomes the norm. The positive effects go far beyond speed alone. Drivers who are not able to drive, because they are drunk, have taken drugs, or are too old, are much more exposed. Almost every major accident caused by driving incompetence is preceded by dozens of violation or near misses. This can now be detected, after which the police preventive may make a targeted intervention. Deploy also an identity check in the car via BEID or smartphone and you make that drivers effectively no car can drive longer without a valid license.

Provided integration of a cheap camera and the next big thing, a Head-Up Display, you can driver even assist in driving, and offer advantages such as 'green light speed' assistance. Moreover, you can use gamification techniques, and provide positive feedback as the RoadVikings app. That way, you can make a very attractive 'driver assistance package'.

The implementation of a genuine sustainable mobility policy, with spacious zones 30, bicycle streets, except for local traffic, becomes then many times easier. And finally ethical for the government. How can you ask people to walk and cycle more, if you do not at the same time doing everything reasonable to keep speeders and alcoholics off the road? This solution means the end of the far west context of the traffic, our daily lives.

The list of benefits is endless. With fewer speed differences and accidents, congestion will shorten. Many more people will cycle, resulting in enormous social benefits.

If this system connects to the smart road pricing (which all traffic experts advocate), you may even largely dismiss the cost of such a system. The financial picture is, in any case, a no-brainer: say € 125 per tracker (lifetime 5+ years), equipping each vehicle in Belgium costs only € 700 million. As a reminder, for terrorism were released immediately € 400 million. The societal costs of traffic accidents alone, amounted in the Netherlands to some € 12 billion in 2014. The smart road pricing permits saving additional billions by reducing the need for major infrastructure and makes ambitious climate targets by 2020 achievable.

How to proceed? Through deliberative consultation you break the partisan gridlock and give citizens real participation. Organize a large traffic top with government (political, judicial, police), research institutes (ICT focus, traffic engineering, psychology, marketing), car specialists and companies that already are working with this technology.

Pessimistic? Look at the introduction of the smart toll at 800 000 vehicles by April 2016. Or take the smoking ban in pubs. Ten years ago they declared you almost crazy when you advocated. Now only addicted smokers look back with pain to this anachronism. It always seems impossible, until it's done. The quality of life will improve beyond recognition with the rollout of a road safety policy 2.0.

A comprehensive analysis can be found on my blog <http://transitienu.blogspot.be>