



FEWER ROAD DEATHS IN POLAND

IMPROVING POLAND'S ROAD SAFETY WITH SWISS EXPERTISE



Since 2012, the number of deaths on Polish roads has been reduced by approximately 17%. The Swiss project contributed to this encouraging result.

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With the 'Road Safety' project, Switzerland has contributed to improving road safety in Poland. The number of road deaths in Poland has been reduced as a result of knowledge exchanges and infrastructure improvements. And the Swiss model for victim assistance served as the basis for a revision of the Polish road traffic act.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), road accidents are the tenth most frequent cause of death globally, and the main cause of death among children and young adults. Poland's roads are among the most dangerous in Europe. There has been a big increase in the volume of traffic since the country joined the EU in 2004, but little has been done to adapt the country's infrastructure. According to EU statistics, in 2012 more than 3,600 people died in road accidents, which corresponds to 93 deaths per million inhabitants. By comparison, in Switzerland, according to the Federal Roads Office, in the same year 42 people per million inhabitants lost their lives on Swiss roads, i.e. less than half the number of road fatalities in Poland. Thanks to its experience in the area of road safety, Switzerland helped Poland re-

duce its high number of road deaths and injuries. The 'Road Safety' project, which was funded as part of Switzerland's contribution to the enlarged EU, aimed to improve road safety in Poland. An extensive information exchange between Swiss and Polish authorities was a major aspect of the project. Switzerland was able to contribute its long experience and proven methods to reduce the accident rate in Poland. The project focused on pedestrians, particularly on elderly people and children and on motorcyclists – those most at risk on the roads.

SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER ROAD INJURIES

To achieve the project targets, Switzerland carried out various measures in collaboration with its Polish partners. For example, local traffic police stations were provided with 12 new unmarked police cars with special equipment including speed radar devices. These enable the police to identify and catch speeding cars more effectively. Such speed checks with unmarked vehicles are new in Poland. In addition, traffic calming measures were introduced in seven districts of Lesser Poland, Lublin and Mazovia Provinces to raise traffic safety. Improvements were made to infrastructure and training provided for approximately 650 traffic police officers. The project clearly reduced the number of accidents involving pedestrians in those regions where



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the measures were carried out. In connection with other traffic safety initiatives, the project contributed to reducing the number of road fatalities from 3,571 in 2012 to 2,938 in 2015, i.e. a reduction of 17%.

TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR DRINKING AND DRIVING

In addition to these measures, the project had a lasting impact on legislation in Poland. In 2015, the Polish parliament approved a revised traffic act, which now provides for bigger fines for traffic offences and tougher penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol. In addition, Poland has introduced support services for victims modelled on the Swiss system. Drivers who cause an accident under the influence of alcohol are now legally required to make a payment to the victim, the victim's family or to the victim assistance fund. The Polish public has welcomed the new law.

The revised law was brought about by various factors and events, with the 'Road Safety' project making an important contribution. In December 2013, the Swiss-Polish Parliamentary Friendship Group organised a workshop at the Polish parliament to present Swiss expertise in road safety and to discuss proposals for improvements in this field. The president of Poland's parliamentary Commission of Justice and Human Rights took part in the workshop. A few weeks later, it initiated an amendment to the law in the Polish parliament.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

THEME

Public safety

COUNTRY

Poland

PARTNERS

- Switzerland: Various cantonal traffic police commands, NGOs
- Poland: National police in Warsaw

CURRENT SITUATION / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Poland's roads are among the most dangerous in Europe. Following the collapse of Communism and Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, there was a sharp increase in traffic volume on Poland's roads. Very little was done to adapt the road infrastructure, however, and there is scant public awareness about road accident risks.

OBJECTIVE

Improving road safety in Poland, in particular for children and elderly people – those most at risk on the roads.

ACTIVITIES

- meetings to exchange experiences between Polish officials responsible for road safety and Swiss specialists
- training courses for some 650 police officers and planners
- construction measures to calm the traffic
- media prevention campaigns to create awareness of traffic risks among the population.

TARGET GROUPS

- National and local police authorities, representatives of local authorities, NGOs
- Road users
- The project focuses on Polish regions with high road accident rates.

COSTS

- Total project budget: CHF 4.62 million
- Swiss contribution: CHF 3.93 million

RESPONSIBLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

National police, Warsaw

DURATION

2012–2017