



MEDIA STATEMENT

**EMBARGO**

**Not before 11.00 AM**

**Tuesday, April 23rd**

**More than a quarter of tunnels are still 'poor' or 'very poor' in latest AIT/FIA tunnel safety tests**

More than a quarter of European tunnels were rated 'poor' or 'very poor' in the latest EuroTest survey of road tunnel safety published by motoring organisations across Europe today (23).

This year's safety test - the largest ever and the fourth of its kind to be conducted since testing started in 1999 - included 30 tunnels, on key routes in 11 European countries. The inclusion of an additional 10 tunnels in this year's test was made possible thanks to the support of the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society.

For the first time 3 tunnels achieved a 'very good' safety rating, 6 rated 'good', 13 rated 'acceptable', 3 rated 'poor' and 5 rated 'very poor'. The Mont Blanc Tunnel on the Franco-Italian border and the recently opened Cointe Tunnel in Belgium which both achieved a top score of over 96% came closest to achieving the ideal in tunnel safety. The Mont Blanc was inspected in late 2001 prior to its opening in March this year. The Loibl Tunnel spanning the Austrian-Slovenian border was rated the worst tunnel with 50.4% score.

The Tunnel test has been conducted by German Automobile club ADAC in partnership with engineering experts Deutsche Montan Technologie (DMT) under the umbrella of the AIT & FIA EuroTest programme which brings together a consortium of 14 automobile clubs in 13 Countries who represent almost 40 million motorists.

Independent experts carried out the on-site inspections of the tunnels between 20<sup>th</sup> January and 5<sup>th</sup> March this year in the presence of the relevant tunnel operators and club experts.

The latest tests form part of an ongoing pan-European AIT&FIA campaign to improve road tunnel safety. These tunnel surveys are the only independent and annually conducted assessment of tunnel safety published in Europe. The testing methodology draws on road tunnel safety legislation in Germany and Austria and has been evolved to take on board the recently adopted recommendations of United Nations special working group on tunnel safety. To date operators have committed well over €600 million to improvements, €300 million for Mont Blanc Tunnel alone.

More follows



The criteria in this year's test can be categorised as "*preventative measures*": tunnel system, condition of the tunnel, traffic and traffic surveillance; and "*measures in the event of an emergency*": escape routes, fire ventilation, rescue measures, fire protection, crisis management and communication measures. In total, these criteria provide the "*safety level*" offered by a tunnel's infrastructure and management.

Since 2001, the "*risk potential*" (i.e. the likelihood of an accident happening) of a tunnel has also been included in the test results for each tunnel. The risk potential is evaluated on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative criteria - the actual traffic volumes, the daily volumes of heavy goods vehicles and vehicles carrying hazardous materials, single or two-way traffic in a tube, congestion levels, the longitudinal gradient of a tunnel and the type of ventilation system present. In awarding points, a very low risk potential could add an additional 30 points to the overall score achieved by a tunnel, whereas a tunnel with a very high risk potential would gain no additional points.

### **Why do the AIT&FIA clubs test tunnel safety?**

The risk of an accident occurring in a tunnel remains far lower than on the open road but when disaster strikes the consequences are far worse. Motorists cannot escape so easily, rescue teams take longer to reach the source of the disaster and in the event of serious fires, motorists very often have no more than 15 minutes to react.

Serious fires in the Mont Blanc, Tauern, and Gotthard tunnels in 1999 and 2001 resulted in the loss of 62 lives and extensive disruption to trade. They have highlighted the need for minimum uniform safety standards in trans-European road tunnels and the need to provide motorists with better information on what to do in the event of a tunnel accident or fire.

EuroTest partners have established a positive dialogue with the European Commission's DG TREN on potential improvements to tunnel safety and the latest results have been made available to Commission officials who are currently preparing proposals for uniform minimum safety standards in road tunnels.

European Commissioner Loyola de Palacio said,

"The safety culture of builders, operators and users of the European Union's road tunnels must improve. Initiatives such as the Tunnel Tests are key in this respect. We in the Commission hope the Tunnel Tests will be carried out regularly."

Johann Grill, Director General of the AIT&FIA Eurocouncil, Brussels said,

"The results from our latest safety survey demonstrate that there have been considerable developments since testing of Europe's road tunnels began in 1999. Our calls for improvements have led to a number of operators, prompted by our test results, to make significant and costly commitments to improving the road tunnel infrastructure."

"On a political level also there have been significant efforts made to put in place minimum international standards governing safety in tunnels, where none previously existed."

More follows

"But more can and should be done. Through regular inspection and publication of Europe-wide tunnel safety results together with tips and recommendations for improvements we intend to give motorists the information they need to help themselves when using tunnels. At the same time we shall continue to encourage operators to make improvements in both the management and infrastructure of their tunnels."

Once again some tunnel operators refused to allow safety inspections to be conducted. In 2002, there was a blanket refusal from all Italian tunnel operators approached. However a positive development has been the participation of the Dartford Tunnel in the UK (one of the busiest tunnels in Europe) in this year's test. Two years ago the operators refused to participate. Moreover, from this year's results it has been seen that while the infrastructure could do with additional investment, management of the tunnel proved to be good.

#### **Editors Note:**

Members of the EuroTest consortium participating in the tunnel tests include ADAC (German), the AA (GB) ACI (Italy), ANWB (The Netherlands), AMZS (Slovenia), Autoliitto (Finland), FDM (Denmark), FFAC (France) RACE and RACC (Spain), NAF (Norway), ÖAMTC (Austria), TCB (Belgium) and TCS (Switzerland). EuroTest aims to examine the quality and safety of Europe's mobility infrastructure, products and services on behalf of motoring consumers. For this year's tunnel test which includes the Strahov Tunnel in Prague, the Czech Republic automobile club UAMK was also a collaborator

The tunnel tests have been supported by the newly established FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society. For more information on the FIA Foundation visit [www.fiafoundation.com](http://www.fiafoundation.com)

The overall evaluation was based on the following grade boundaries:

Very good (++):	at least 90 percent of the total points
Good (+):	at least 80 percent of the total points
Acceptable (o):	at least 70 percent of the total points
Poor (-):	at least 60 percent of the total points
Very poor (- -):	less than 60 percent of the total points

More follows

The safety results for the tunnels tested in reverse order are as follows:

N°	Tunnel	Country	Score	Risk Potential	Rating
30	Loibl	Austria / Sloviena	50,4 %	very low risk	Very poor
29	Blackwall Tunnel North	GB	51,6 %	medium risk	Very poor
28	Blackwall Tunnel South	GB	52,6 %	medium risk	Very poor
27	Lovstakken	Norway	52,6 %	medium risk	Very poor
26	San Juan	Spain	58,0 %	medium risk	Very poor
25	San Salvatore	Switzerland	65,5 %	medium risk	poor
24	Tyne	GB	66,0 %	medium risk	poor
23	Kappelberg	Germany	68,1 %	high risk	poor
22	Nordkap	Norway	70,3%	low risk	Acceptable
21	Mersey Queensway	GB	70,4 %	medium risk	Acceptable
20	El Folgoso	Spain	70,9 %	low risk	Acceptable
19	Lainberg	Austria	72,4 %	medium risk	Acceptable
18	Dartford	GB	73,9%	medium risk	Acceptable
17	La Defense	France	75,2 %	high risk	Acceptable
16	Leopold II	Belgium	76,4 %	medium risk	Acceptable
15	Maurice Lemaire	France	77,2 %	very low risk	Acceptable
14	Parpers	Spain	77,6 %	low risk	Acceptable
13	Gotthard	Switzerland	78,1 %	very high risk	Acceptable
12	Rheinufer	Germany	78,4 %	medium risk	Acceptable
11	Katschberg	Austria	78,9 %	medium risk	Acceptable
10	Piet Hein	Netherlands	79,2 %	low risk	Acceptable
9	Strahov	Czech Republic	80,4 %	medium risk	Good
8	Bözberg	Switzerland	81,8 %	medium risk	Good
7	Mersey Kingsway	GB	82,3 %	medium risk	Good
6	Bosruck	Austria	83,8 %	medium risk	Good
5	El Castellot	Spain	84,3 %	low risk	Good
4	Britz	Germany	86,3 %	medium risk	Good
3	Wijker	Netherlands	95,4%	low risk	Very Good
2	Mont Blanc	France/Italy	96,2 %	medium risk	Very Good
1	Cointe	Belgium	96,2 %	medium risk	Very Good

**For more information contact:**

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