

Nordic citizens views on traffic safety

Results from a questionnaire survey carried out by the Nordic Road Safety Council (NTR) in Denmark, Finland, Faroe Islands, Norway and Sweden, 2010

A mail distributed questionnaire survey was carried out by the Nordic Road Safety Council in 2010. Five Nordic countries were covered, Denmark, Finland, Faroe Islands, Norway and Sweden. The questionnaire was answered by 5197 persons. The questions covered Travel habits, knowledge questions about accidents, speed, drugs, seat belts, mobile phone, tiredness, children in traffic, bicycle helmet, reflexes and road safety education.

The results generally showed notable differences between countries. Concerning modes of transport, respondents from Faroe Island were the highest car users, followed by Denmark and Norway. Denmark had the most bicyclists while Sweden and Finland had the highest use of public transport.

The knowledge about road safety matters also varied between countries. Respondents from Denmark and Faroe Islands had the best knowledge about number of fatalities while Fins had the worst. Most respondents in all countries, however, correctly ranked speeding and alcohol as the most important cause of fatal accidents.

Concerning speed adjustment, a large share, 40-60 percent of the respondents regarded it acceptable to drive above the speed limit. On roads with 90 or 80 km/h 50-70 percent were driving fast themselves, highest share in Denmark and Faroe Islands and lowest in Norway and Sweden. A general pattern for all attitudes was that women had a more positive attitude compared to men. This was also the case for speeding.

The results also revealed differences related to drinking and driving. In Denmark, Faroe Islands and Finland, 18 percent reported that they during the last 12 months had been driving when they suspected their BAC was over the allowed limit. Corresponding share in Norway and Sweden was 7 percent. The percentage among women is much lower than men in all countries.

Most of the countries had a high seat belt rate in the front seat, 93-95 percent with exception of Faroe Island where the percentage always using seat belts were 87 percent.

There were also differences in talking in mobile phone while driving. This was most common in Finland and most rare in Denmark. Over 50 percent, highest in Denmark and lowest in Finland, had a positive attitude towards introducing a general rule forbidding all use of mobile phone when driving.

Among respondents who were parents with children in school age, around 90 percent believed traffic education in school should be mandatory. The share who answered that their children had not at all worked with traffic safety in school during the last 12 months were highest in Sweden and Faroe Islands and lowest in Norway, Denmark and Finland.

The authors have a hope that the investigation covering the five Nordic countries has showed that there are both similarities and differences between the countries and that this knowledge can contribute to the best selection of countermeasures in each country, and thus to an improved safety in the whole area.

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The report (in Swedish)

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