

MOBILITY FOR HUMANS AND WILDLIFE: COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

The European Directors of Roads has launched a task force on wildlife and traffic to give advice on wild-life and traffic.

Methods

The study focused on two main strategies for reducing the impact of infrastructure on wildlife: 1) The use of COST 341 Handbook “Wildlife and Traffic- a European handbook for identifying conflicts and designing solutions” and 2) identifying best practice in the EU. The study on the handbook was based on a questionnaire with responses from 22 countries and a workshop at the IENE conference in Hungary 2010. The study on best practice was based on a questionnaire sent to different countries and to individuals. We got 71 responses from 19 European states and from 10 countries outside Europe. In addition in-depth interviews were conducted in the Netherlands, Hungary, Spain (Catalonia) and the UK.

Results

The handbook is used in at least 22 European states in the design of mitigating measures both in the EIA process and during construction. However, there is a need to update the handbook as well as to add new subjects. The study on best practice identified 7 factors for a successful integration of wildlife and roads; public awareness; an ecological network as a base for planning; an overall strategy; the use of guidelines or standards; good collaborations and utilization of synergy effects with for instance traffic safety and long term commitment.

Discussion

The report shows ways to a successful integration of wild-life and traffic. Several actions on a national or regional scale have improved the situation. There is a big difference between the best and the worst strategies. At a national level one success factor is an area-oriented approach where the spatial planning authorities and other stakeholder agree on the land use so that green corridors can be created without interruptions and protected areas (such as Natura 200) can be connected. Mitigating actions and defragmentation programs for roads can, thus, be coordinated with green corridors outside the road area and the ad hoc actions can be minimized. But this approach must be based on good ecological skill in the national road administration and better follow-up on contractor’s performance. European cooperation is of utmost importance for better scientific bases for strategies; standardization of mitigation measures and guidelines.

Conclusions

The working group has recommended the European road directors to promote the updating of the COST 341 handbook, a European research program, support for knowledge exchange, development of performance indicators for wild-life and traffic, sharing knowledge on new contract forms and that they recommend actions on a national level. A European cooperation

would speed up the process to tackle issues such as roads effect on wildlife populations and new ways to mitigate negative effects of roads on wildlife. Cooperation is also needed with other sectors to assure that new areas of nature can be created and nature connected into a functional green infrastructure in parallel with a functional transport infrastructure.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lars Nilsson is environmental director of the Swedish Transport Administration. Previously environmental director of the Swedish Road Administration, political advisor to the transport minister and a scientist from the universities of Stockholm, Leiden and Uppsala. Lars has been working on the subject of transport and environment for 17 years at both a policy level and in the administration. He have been active in many research programs including been chairman of the Swedish emission research program EMFO, Transport-Mistra program.