

## Further funding secured for new road safety survey



Around 500 people are killed every year in the UK through collisions with roadside hazards.

**F**unding to extend the European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP) to include road safety studies in France, Italy and Spain has now been secured from Federation Internationale de L'Automobile (FIA Foundation). The £250,000 grant is the first part of a funding package from the FIA Foundation which is expected to be worth over £632,000.

This extension of the EuroRAP survey comes just two months after the findings of the first stage studies in the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden were announced. The AA led initiative surveyed more than 800 major UK roads over a period of 18 months, to assess the risk they pose to motorists.

EuroRAP maps the safety performance of routes in relation to the amount of traffic they carry, not just the number of accidents that have occurred on a particular stretch of road. Each route is given a star rating – no star the lowest and four star the highest safety rating – based on the information. This gives an accurate picture of the true risk to drivers and other road users.

"Through a better understanding of the risks it is hoped that highway designers will make changes to reduce the danger of the four major killers – head on crashes, accidents at junctions, collisions with pedestrians and cyclists and vehicles hitting objects at the side of

the road," says EuroRAP Chairman and AA Policy Director John Dawson.

"We have to make roads more forgiving – human error should not carry a death sentence. Much of the death toll on major routes is preventable but basic protection from predictable accidents, such as collisions with trees and telegraph poles, is absent."

The first phase of EuroRAP concentrates on primary route A-class roads outside built up areas – many of which are single carriageway road – and motorways. By 2004 the study will be extended to 12 European countries and will include more rural and urban routes.

### Hall of shame: The UK's no-star rated roads

<b>A889</b>	A86 – A9 (near Dalwhinnie)
<b>A537</b>	Macclesfield – Buxton
<b>A12</b>	Romford – M25
<b>A4137</b>	A49 – A40 (west of Ross-on-Wye)
<b>A628</b>	A616 – Penistone
<b>A1001</b>	Hatfield
<b>A534</b>	Welsh border – Nantwich
<b>A533</b>	Runcorn – A56
<b>A682</b>	M65 J13 – A65 Long Preston
<b>A5</b>	Daventry – Rugby (A428)

## New tax is no April fool



**B**ritain's new aggregate tax came into force on 1 April this year despite a last minute attempt by the British Aggregates Association (BAA) to get the new tax overturned. The BAA won a High Court ruling to take the tax to judicial review in late March but after more than two weeks of deliberation the judge ruled the tax to be just and fair.

The new levy was first announced in the Government's April 2000 budget and will charge aggregate producers £1.60 per tonne, raising the Treasury an estimated £385M in the first year. But according to BAA Director Bob Durward the tax will only lead to increased costs elsewhere.

He said: "This 'environmental' levy is purely a stealth tax which will have to be paid for by increases in council tax and business rates. The public sector accounts for almost 40% of all aggregates used in the UK and the tax will have a huge effect on the cost of all construction and maintenance work."

Introduction of the aggregate tax forms part of the Government's plans to reduce environmental damage and encourage the use of secondary and

recycled aggregates. Quarry Products Association Director General Simon van der Byl said: "The aggregates tax provides no incentive for companies to improve their environmental performance. Plus it includes no recognition of the environmental benefits such as the restoration of old quarries to wildlife habitats."

Although the new tax is heralded by the Government as an environmental tax, only 10% of the revenue raised will go into the Sustainability Fund. This fund will pay for environmental projects all over the UK but not necessarily in and around quarrying communities.

"The fund is nothing more than a cynical attempt by the Government to give an appearance of respectability to the new tax," said Durward. "Quarrying companies in the UK already comply with the strictest environmental legislation in Europe."

Mr van der Byl added: "We are disappointed that the quarrying industry has been frozen out of any involvement in use of the fund, despite the sector's strong record in funding and supporting local environmental initiatives."

Use of recycled and secondary aggregates in roads received a boost this spring with the release of new guidance from the Aggregates Information Service. The report – Digest 101: Uses of Secondary and Recycled Aggregates under Existing Specifications – has been comprehensively revised and includes the May 2001 amendments to the Specification for Highway Works.

The updated guidance greatly increases the scope for use of secondary and recycled aggregates and in situ recycling techniques and will help to increase sustainable construction in the UK. It is hoped that the revised digest will be useful to material producers, designers and contractors as a guide to where the various different types of recycled and secondary aggregates can be used.