

SPEECHES

June 25th, 2008



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USER FORUM: FEMA President's speech

Can technology make a rider safer? I am sceptical.

Can technology assist a rider to make decisions that may help him or her to avoid collisions or crashes? Possibly.

The decision by FEMA to participate in the SAFERIDER project is because we need to find answers to these questions and to ensure that the technology being developed can benefit riders - but if doesn't, then we need to be in a position to make our point of view clear.

As Dr Hardy pointed out in the first SAFERIDER meeting, we (FEMA) are your "reality check", because in the end, the products that are being developed in this project need to be accepted, not only commercially but also philosophically by riders.

In the past, we have found that technological development often creates two different types of problems for motorcyclists:

The first is that motorcyclists are generally forgotten in these developments (e.g. Intelligent Infrastructure, V2V communications, etc.);

or

Secondly, that transport engineers simply try to apply what works for cars to motorcycles, without taking motorcycling characteristics and needs into account (the '2-wheeled car' scenario);

Fundamental to our role as the defender of riders' rights in Europe, is that any technology must be developed in such a way that the rider has complete control of his or her machine. This is central to FEMA's philosophy.

By actively participating in projects like SAFERIDER, we, the representatives of European motorcyclists, are ensuring that our wants and needs are taken into account and that tomorrow's transport policies will respect the identity of motorcycling. It puts us in a position to define and determine the future of motorcycling, our future, not only as an organization, but as the representative of motorcyclists in Europe.

It is very easy to be rhetorical and pass judgement on the research of other organisations, but we have found that it hasn't really helped us to change the situation. We can no longer stand on the outside shouting, we must be at the centre of the debates on transport and on the future of mobility, especially now that the cost of petrol is spiralling out of control.

What form of transport stands out as the most efficient, cost effective means on European roads? Motorcycles of course!

What form of transport stands out as the best means of beating congestions? Motorcycles of course!

We know that sales of motorised two wheeled transport are sky-rocketing, because consumers can no longer afford the price of petrol for their cars. We are the only meaningful alternative to cars.

This User Forum is the opportunity for motorcyclists to express their views and opinions, as well as through the Saferider Survey which Dr Baldazzini from the University of Florence will discuss today. We hope that the participation of riders in this survey will be a success in terms of contribution. We count on our partners to take these views - as well as those of the trainers who participated in a focus group - into account and develop these products accordingly.

I wish you all a very constructive debate.