



## PRESS RELEASE

# EUROPE'S FILLING STATIONS NEED CLEANING: NO TOP MARKS IN NEW EUROTEST

**For immediate distribution**

**Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2011**

How do Europe's motorway filling stations compare? Are motorists offered adequate services and charged fair prices for petrol and goods? Are we paying too much for petrol on motorways? Do filling stations meet basic sanitary standards? To answer these questions EuroTest experts inspected 77 motorway filling stations along the most important European travel routes.

"Lack of help for the disabled, unclean sanitary facilities, high prices in shops and petrol price displays not visible on motorways: these are all areas where Europe's motorway filling stations need to do more", said Jacob Bangsgaard, Director General of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) Region I.

EuroTest could not give any station the top rating of 'Very Good', but on the positive side the EuroTest found that signposting on motorways, safe entry and exit points, comprehensive service amenities (such as disposable gloves or tyre pressure gauges) and the range of goods on offer in shops indicate that most filling stations along motorways are operating at a high level.

A checklist of around 80 items were tested and listed in the following categories: points of entry and exit, filling areas, shops, sanitary facilities, hygiene, and prices. EuroTest rated the stations on a scale from Very Poor to Very Good with the 77 stations scoring as follows:

- Very Good: 0
- Good: 23
- Acceptable: 48
- Poor: 6
- Very Poor: 0

The biggest shortcoming concerned hygiene, found to be lacking in most stations visited. Half of the toilets inspected were more or less dirty to look at. But even toilets that appear to be clean are not automatically up to scratch in terms of hygiene: around a quarter of hygiene samples collected were found to be potentially hazardous to health, twelve were definitely found to be hazardous to health, and 40% of the samples indicated insufficient cleaning. When it comes to hygiene there's plenty of room for improvement by operators concerning how frequently and how thoroughly toilets are cleaned.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS:**

#### **Lowest Result**

The lowest result went to the Dutch De Buunderkamp facility on the A 12 (Utrecht - Arnheim). There was no separation of the filling areas for passenger cars and HGVs, the service amenities in the filling area were found to be lacking, the sanitary facilities were dismal and there was no toilet for the

disabled. This was topped off by a hygiene result that was hazardous to health and staff who were not particularly pleasant - not the kind of filling station that attracts motorists.

### **Top Result**

The Kozlov-Černá Studánka station on the A 1 (Prague – Brunn) in the Czech Republic proved to be the exact opposite and came out tops: a sign showing the brand and fuel prices clearly visible on the motorway, a well-stocked shop with very reasonable prices, as well as barrier-free access resulted in the highest score of all going to this facility.

### **Top Five Ratings: All in Eastern Europe**

The top five ratings went to eastern European countries, two in the Czech Republic, two in Slovenia and one in Croatia. In all three countries, the mostly well-equipped sanitary facilities, the diverse range of goods on offer and unbeatable prices in their shops formed the foundation for success.

### **Price of Goods**

Germany proved to be by far the most expensive country despite ranking fourth in purchasing power among countries visited. Belgium, on the other hand, despite being a rather expensive country (ranked 3rd in purchasing power) was found to have moderate prices. Czech Republic had the best prices closely followed by Croatia and Slovenia. At three Dutch filling stations in Den Bout, De Lucht (East) and Het Gevlocht motorists even have to pay for air (to use the tyre pressure gauge).

### **Cheaper off the motorway?**

Inspectors also set out to find out whether it is cheaper to fill up off the motorway and discovered that it is not always true that filling up off the motorway is cheaper. For the stations tested in Austria, France, Switzerland, and to a lesser extent Belgium, motorists would make savings by getting off the motorway and finding an alternative station. But in other countries the difference is not as marked and cheaper prices off the motorway do not justify leaving the motorway and consuming more fuel or having to drive by a tolling station in the process.

### **Information Lacking for Consumers**

Information, however, is often lacking: while brands are relatively well-signposted on the motorway, the picture is completely different when it comes to fuel types and fuel prices. Only 18% of stations displayed this information in advance. In this respect, two Dutch filling stations Bodegraven and Het Gevlocht, and two Slovenian filling stations Jesenice (South) and Grič, really took the biscuit: motorists there are only informed of prices at the petrol pump - after lifting the petrol tap!

### **Notes for the editors:**

Through EuroTest – an international testing programme for consumer protection, 18 automobile clubs in 17 countries, members of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), have been putting the quality and safety of mobility in Europe to the test since 2000 for the benefit of their members and all mobile consumers in Europe. The EuroTest partners have constantly called for a Europe where the mobile consumer can circulate freely using quality infrastructure and in safety. More information can be found at <http://www.eurotestmobility.net>.

The inspection of the 77 motorway filling station was developed, undertaken and results were analysed between the period from September 2010 to March 2011.

For more information contact: Gabriel Simcic, project manager, [g.simcic@fiabrussels.com](mailto:g.simcic@fiabrussels.com) +32 2 282 0817 or Niall Carty, communications manager, [n.carty@fiabrussels.com](mailto:n.carty@fiabrussels.com) +32 2 282 0812