

# Centrico BRIEFING NOTE

Using ITS to manage Europe's busiest roads



## Traffic Management Instruments in Flanders

### SUMMARY

The «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» is responsible for dynamic traffic management in Flanders. To perform this task, the «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» has different systems to its disposal: Automatic Incident Detection cameras, Variable Message Signs, and Lane Allocation Signs.

### Traffic Management in Flanders

The «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» (the Flemish Traffic Control Centre) was founded at the end of 1999. One of its main tasks is the development of Dynamic Traffic Management (DTM) for the Flemish region.

Over the past 7 years different instruments for traffic management have been installed on the Flemish road infrastructure:

- Automatic Incident Detection cameras
- Variable Message Signs
- Lane Allocation Signs

The «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» is located in Antwerp. The Antwerp region is the main focal point of the «Verkeerscentrum», even though also the Brussels region as well as other crucial sectors of the Flemish highway network is monitored.

In the years to come, the current centre will be supplemented by an antenna in the Brussels and Ghent regions. These antennas will focus on their respective regions.

In 2005 a team of the Belgian highway police joined the «Verkeerscentrum» on a 24 / 7 basis. This team enables the «Verkeerscentrum» to directly exchange information with policemen on the road.



### Automatic Incident Detection

To monitor traffic, the «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» uses loops and over 600 cameras. Of these cameras, about 50 % are Automatic Incident Detection cameras (AID). These cameras autonomously detect anomalies in the traffic flow - such as accidents and speed drops - and consequently issue an alarm. Thanks to this intelligence it is not necessary to have all 600 cameras displayed on the video wall.

Currently the «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» is investigating the possibility of using AID-cameras to determine travel times.

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## Variable Message Signs



At 33 locations on the Flemish highways, Variable Message Signs (VMS) have been put up. These dynamic signs are connected to the «Verkeerscentrum Vlaanderen» by an optic fibre network.

Each VMS can display a pictogram and 3 lines of 21 characters. They are used to warn road users of accidents, the location of traffic jams, and road works. When needed, alternative routes are also displayed on the VMS.

## Lane Allocation Signs



Lane Allocation Signs (LAS) are the latest addition to the traffic management instruments in Flanders. In 2004 LAS were operational on 4 highways leading to the Antwerp ring road. The outer carriageway of the Antwerp ring road between junctions Antwerpen

West and Antwerpen Noord was equipped with LAS in 2005. By the summer of 2006 LAS was also operational on the inner carriageway.

In total 53,5 km of connecting highways has been equipped with 430 individual lane allocation signs on 107 locations.

In Flanders LAS serve three purposes:

- Alerting road users when they are nearing a traffic jam by lowering the speed limit per lane in steps of 20 km/h.
- Lowering the speed of traffic on a blocked (by an accident or road works) lane and on the adjacent lane to eliminate big differences in driving speed. At the last possible location, traffic on the blocked lane is directed to the adjacent lane. Thanks to the lowering of the speed limits traffic from the blocked lane can more easily filter into the adjacent lane.
- Lowering the speed limit on all lanes on a particular segment of the highway to increase the capacity of the road and reduce the risk of traffic jams. A lower speed limit eliminates the need to overtake other vehicles (less manoeuvres), and reduces the space each vehicle occupies on the road (vehicles drive closer to each other).

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