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Assessment of the Brazilian Traffic Code

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The Brazilian Traffic Code, 1998, recently completed 12 yrs of implementation.

It came as a promise:

- to be more rigorous,
- to promote education,

and brought the hope to reduce the high number of accidents and fatalities.

- Accordingly to the Traffic Code, “a safe traffic is a right to all citizens and a duty to the government.”
- Nevertheless, the number of accidents is very high, with:
 - 40,000 fatalities/year
 - 8.75 fatalities/10.000 vehicles
 - 19.5 fatalities/100.000 inhabitants.

- Every year the Brazilian traffic produces:
 - 40,000 fatalities,
 - 100,000 people with temporary or permanent deficiencies, and
 - 400,000 injureds
- The annual costs of accidents in Brazil ranges to about R\$ 35 billions (U\$ 20 bi).

- The initial effect of the Traffic Code, was extremely beneficial,
 - attracting the respect
 - bringing obediencewith strict regulations, heavy fines and the possibility to lose the right to drive
- In the early years the rigidity of the Code helped to reduce the number of accidents and victims.

- After this initial period, however, the code fell into disrespect due to impunity and deficiencies of enforcement of the rules, which lead to an increased number of accidents, returning to the previous figures.

- The failure of the Traffic Code is in great part due to the lack of enforcement
- Such low level of enforcement generates the feeling of impunity, the feeling that is possible to commit a violation with very low probability of being caught, and reinforces incorrect behavior.

- Despite education being widely discussed in various levels of society, it is not being implemented as should be, and has no real support from government actions, planning and funds
- Driver's training is still deficient and allows people to drive without knowing important and basic rules of safe behavior, and key traffic rules.

- There is a project to change the Brazilian Traffic Code, and legislators intend to decrease safety problems proposing changes in approximately 20 existing rules, including:

- reduction of speed limits,
- reduction in the maximum blood alcohol concentration,
- changing the rules for the movement of motorcycles, banning traffic between lanes,
- increasing penalties and fines, among others.

- Maybe the country does not need more laws, or stricter laws.
- Maybe the country needs to apply the code in its entirety, fulfilling what already exists and was never enforced.

- Can we create immediate order, morals and education through normative acts, proposing new rules and tougher laws?
- instead of working and implementing what already exists, growing traffic safety along with the constant work in education, supported by legal effort.

- Unfortunately it is possible to perceive that Brazil is far from having **safe traffic** as a Government priority.



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Thank you.

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