

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goal: The goal of the Belgian Ministry of the Interior (IBZ) Federal Public Service Home Affairs Crisis Center was to ensure the safety of cyclists, race teams, fans, local citizens and bystanders during the 2017 Tour de France by monitoring the progress of the cyclists as they passed through Belgian territory.

Challenges: This event was characterized by several features that made guaranteeing a safe race environment particularly challenging. The two stages of the Tour that passed through Belgium lasted for two days and covered 258 total miles. Additionally, the cyclists were constantly on the move, traversing multiple municipalities and law enforcement jurisdictions.

Results/Solution: IBZ achieved its goal via a COBRA-enabled Common Operating Picture (COP) that employed blue-force tracker technology, allowing Belgian security forces to monitor the changing position of the cyclists as they passed through the country. Specialized, GPS and cellular network-enabled trackers were affixed to lead and tail police motorcycles that transited the race route immediately in front of and behind the cyclists. GPS data was sent to a Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) pre-positioned at the end of each race stage and to the IBZ headquarters.

Background

In March of 2016, Belgian authorities chose to adopt a COBRA-based platform for their nationwide Incident and Crisis Management System (ICMS). The ICMS went into effect on January 1st, 2017 and now connects all Belgium cities, municipalities, provinces and federal authorities, as well as all ports, roads, high-risk companies, hospitals and other organizations of national significance to one comprehensive Common Operating Picture (COP).

The system is used by 1,200 jurisdictions, 2,500 organization and 4,000 active users. It maintains 60,000 emergency management-related contacts and supports four languages including French, Dutch, German and English. This national-level COBRA based COP, adapted to the specific needs of Belgian users, allows Belgian authorities to share GPS, sensor and weather data, and incident logs through a single map and dashboard, securely accessible anywhere by local, provincial and federal authorities. In addition, Belgium grants system access to each jurisdiction for managing their emergency management plans,

exercise plans, After Action Reports (AARs), planning scenarios, national GIS layers, national vulnerable/critical facility layers, hospital bed status information, first responder location/status information and more.

In July of 2017, the ICMS was employed for the Tour de France. This event—the most well-known of cycling’s grand tours—included two race routes, consisting of a combined 258 miles, that passed through Belgium over the course of two days. In all, 198 of the world’s elite cyclists from 22 teams competed in the 21-stage race.



Case-Specific Security Challenges

The experience of the Boston Marathon demonstrated the paramount importance of ensuring effective security for long-lasting, geographically dispersed sporting events. Such events face a variety of threats, from coordinated terrorist attacks to injuries or even deaths resulting from traffic collisions. The circumstances of the Tour De France posed multiple and diverse security challenges including:

- Mobility of the race participants
- Number of racers (198)
- Extreme length of the race routes (258 total miles)
- Length of the event (2 days)



Response partners plan for race



ICMS @ICMS_BE Following

PRIMEUR: Suivi en temps réel sur ICMS des motards de la WPR @FEDPOL sur base de trackers GPS pendant étape du #TDF2017 ... @PlanuBe

Translated from French by bing Wrong translation?

SCOOP: Real-time monitoring on the bikers of the WPR @FEDPOL ICMS based on GPS trackers during the @TDF2017 step... #PlanuBe

Tour de France - Etape 3 - Verviers - Longwy

Case Type: EVENT

5:50 AM - 3 Jul 2017

COBRA trackers showed location of race participants in real time

Results/Solutions

The ICMS COP provided by COBRA enabled IBZ personnel to address these security challenges by exercising the following capabilities:

- Harness military-grade technology by affixing specialized, solar battery-powered, cellular network-enabled blue-force GPS trackers to police motorcycles leading and tailing the riders, thereby enabling IBZ personnel to monitor the progress of the race in the COP.
- Send GPS data to a Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC), pre-staged at the end of each race route, and to the IBZ headquarters via the cellular network.
- Track any significant events in the ICMS within one “incident,” allowing field personnel to upload any issues or observations to their individual position logs, visible instantaneously to all in the COP.

Lessons Learned

Belgian security forces and the Dynamis Europe COBRA team each had occasion to learn numerous lessons from the 2017 Tour de France. Most of these concerned the use of the specialized blue-force trackers. For example, the Belgian police in possession of the trackers learned the importance of ensuring that the batteries were effectively charged when, on one occasion, a tracker ran out of battery power. On another occasion, some police forgot to switch the trackers on. Senior police thus learned to include this essential step when training their field agents to use the trackers. Finally, because the trackers were manufactured and tested in the US using the US cellular network, some technical adjustments were required before they could effectively employ the Belgian cellular network. As a result, the Dynamis Europe team learned the importance of calibrating sensitive electronic devices in accordance with the conditions of the customer's environment.



COBRA Tracker Monitoring Security

“Thanks to ICMS using the COBRA software, the Belgian authorities can collaborate for their missions in the field of safety and security, and have a common situational awareness which is critical during emergencies.”

- Peter Mertens, Belgian Crisis Centre, Ministry of the Interior