

Dominic Lawson on **Labour's feuding**: These MPs only really care about their jobs

Italian drivers face 19mph speed limit at home of Fiat

By Peter Popham

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Turin, home of Fiat Motors and location of the film *The Italian Job*, has seen its normally wrangling politicians unite on a proposal to calm the city's manic traffic, imposing a draconian 30kph (19mph) speed limit on the densely populated Santa Rita section near the city centre.

Beginning at the end of August, the city will introduce a traffic-calming regime to the area, removing all traffic lights, resurfacing the roads with noise-absorbent asphalt and creating chicanes and narrow lanes to make Michael Caine-type driving stunts - still a daily hazard in many Italian cities - out of the question.

"This is just a first step," announced the city's executive officer for transport, Maria Grazia Sestero. "After an experimental phase we are thinking of extending this regime right across the city. We started at Santa Rita because people in the area strongly desired to be first. But there is nothing to stop us soon transforming the historical centre of the city in the same way."

Carlo Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food Movement whose headquarters is in the nearby Piedmontese town of Bra, threw his support behind the go-slow plan. "The philosophy of slowness is not novel," he said. "The ideology originated centuries ago: Seneca [the classical playwright] taught that it is not life that is short but we who make it appear so by burning up time... Lowering the speed limit does not mean giving up the car but... establishing that it is the car that has the duty to adapt, not the pedestrian." The president of the Santa Rita ward, Andrea Stara, said the reason his part of town got the green light to go slow was thanks to a rare consensus. "It's an incredible event," he said of the unusual display of unity. "The reason we won was thanks to the fact that the project was strongly desired by everybody, both the ruling majority on the ward council and the opposition."

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