

# **19th Technical Community Meeting on Road Safety and the 9th Meeting of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO)**

## **Belgrade, TCT Secretariat premises**

Thursday, 03 October 2024

### **CONCLUSIONS**

1. The 19th Technical Community Meeting on Road Safety was held on 3-4 October 2024 in the TCT Secretariat premises. It was a back-to-back meeting with the 9th Meeting of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO). Next day on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024, a 'Site visit' to the National Driving Academy - NAVAK (str. Subotiste bb, Belgrade) was held.
2. Mr. Matej Zakonjšek, Director of the TCT Secretariat, welcomed participants and emphasized the meeting's importance in reviewing past progress and setting future goals. He highlighted the need for accurate data for compliance and strategic planning, noting key achievements such as a reduction in road fatalities in 2023 and the completion of the progress reports and action plans for the next three years, focusing on seatbelt usage and level crossings. Mr. Matej Zakonjšek underscored the value of community engagement, including contributions from educators, hospitals, and enforcement agencies, to enhance road safety. He assured ongoing support from the European Commission and member states, expressing optimism about the action plans aiming for a 50% reduction in road injuries by 2030 and zero fatalities by 2050.
3. Ms. Zana Joca, the Chair of this meeting of the Road Safety Technical Committee greeted the representatives and thanked the TCT Secretariat for organising the meeting and looking forward for its results.
4. The proposed agenda of the meeting was adopted without comments.

5. The first presentation was from Ms. Marija Markovic from the Belgrade Institute for Public Health in Serbia. Her presentation was related to the Component 4 of the "EU for Serbia Project—Improving Road Safety." This component of the project aimed to enhance healthcare data collection on MAIS3+ injuries and data exchange between health care and road traffic police sector, as well as to enhance the health sector's capacity from June 2020 to March 2022. It involved a team of medical experts and focused on establishing a national expert team, collaborating with the National Institute of Public Health and the Traffic Safety Agency. Key points included analysing road traffic injuries in Serbia, legislative, institutional, administrative and technical aspects of introducing MAIS 3+ injury scale, and data exchange between the health sector and traffic police, classifying injury severity using the ICD-10 system (International Classification of Diseases), and advocating for legislative amendments to improve data reporting, proposing the method of collecting data on MAIS3+ injury scale, intersectoral exchange of MAIS 3+ data, and training of medical staff in recording MAIS3+ injuries.

Challenges with data quality and consistency were identified, along with workshops for educating healthcare professionals on road traffic injury data management and the Injury Severity Score (ISS). Despite two years of effort, progress was limited by legal and financial constraints. Round of questions from the members were raised and adequately replied.

6. Following this, Mr. Dragoslav Kukic presented the 'Smart Traffic Signs as a new solution for recommended speeds. He highlighted the importance of accurate data reporting and the introduction of smart speed limit signs to improve road safety, with preliminary results showing a reduction in accidents and plans for system expansion in 2023. It was noted that these signs are for sections with recommended but not mandatory speed limits. Before the implementation of this signs a detailed analysis is required. The round cost of a single sign is 10.000 euros, and it can be connected with the surrounding Meteo stations for exchange of data between the systems. A fruitful discussion was then developed with many interventions.
7. Tomislav Bojic provided a brief update on WBRSO data collection for 2023, reporting a 9% reduction in fatalities, from 553 to 503. He noted over 1.5 million traffic offenses, including 500,000 speeding violations and 200,000 seatbelt violations. The discussion emphasized the role of media coverage in traffic safety, highlighting its impact on public awareness, and

stressed the need for accurate data collection and sharing among regional partners to inform future strategies.

8. In the 4th progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan and EU Acquis, Tomislav Bojic noted a 100% achievement in cooperation and experience exchange, with 56% and 59% in other areas. Serbia led in several indicators, while Albania showed significant progress.
9. Goran Temovski presented the Next Generation Action Plan for Road Safety 2025-2027, which aims to improve performance metrics with a focus on safer infrastructure, vehicle safety, and protection for vulnerable users. Challenges such as high implementation costs were discussed, alongside the need for continuous data collection and policy updates. At the beginning he presented the background of the rationale behind the next generation AP, the drafting and adoption timeframe, and the reference documents for this action plan. The action plan emphasizes five pillars: strengthening road safety management, promoting safer infrastructure, encouraging safer vehicles, fostering cooperation, and enhancing experience exchange. He put a special emphasis on the expected outcomes for each area of the five pillars and the goals of the AP as concluding remarks such are:
  - Reducing serious injuries and fatalities by 25% by 2027 and beyond 50% by 2030
  - Dedicated road safety agency
  - Improving road infrastructure
  - Specific programmes for the protection of vulnerable road users
  - Capacity building initiatives
10. Darko Miceski shortly explained that the final version of the Next Generation Action Plan for Road Safety (2025-2027) for the Observing Participants (Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). Its status is that it is prepared, sent to the European Commission on comments, EC replied, and final version will be sent to the RSC member in due time. He also emphasized that the next generation AP on Road Safety for the observing participants aims to improve the overall safety in the OPs and this time it was prepared as a country specific document separately for each of the observing partners. He also expressed a gratitude to the present representatives from Moldova and Georgia in their valuable contribution and cooperation in previous period during the preparation of the Action Plan.

11. Goran Temovski initiated a roundtable discussion, requesting final remarks on the action plan and highlighting the importance of sharing experiences. He stressed the necessity of maintaining the road safety observatory with all of the relevant data. It is essential for every stakeholder to have accurate data on road safety in the WBRSO platform for it to be able to define adequate future policies. Discussions included the progress and future plans for technical cooperation and legislation in the transport community. He noted the Albania and Montenegro's achievements in technical assistance as a model for others. He emphasized the significance of regional workshops for knowledge exchange and legislative adoption. In the end, a call was made to draft proposals and conclusions focusing on road safety and the next generation action plan for the upcoming week.
12. Goran Temovski opened discussion on the possibilities of using the TAIEX instrument for requesting technical assistance for the Road safety working group. The TCT Secretariat initiated for this working group a proposed topic of an event titled "TAIEX Capacity building on increasing the level of vehicle safety – in support of Regulation (EU) 2018/858 on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, amending Regulations (EC) No 715/2007 and (EC) No 59/2009 and repealing Directive 2007/46/EC
13. On the round table interventions, the representatives had no objections on the data from the WBRSO report that Tomislav presented. They also took the floor to present their interventions to the meeting topics:
- Once the data from the EU member states on road safety statistic comes out, an e-mail will be sent to the national coordinators of the WBRSO to insert their inputs.
  - Albania – reported a progress of 13%. It was briefly informed that there is a new project for Technical assistance in transport using IPA III assistance.
  - Bosnia and Hercegovina had no remarks on the presented data from the WBRSO
  - Kosovo\* - was not represented on the meeting but shared the reporting data via e-mail.
  - Montenegro had no additional remarks on the presented data from the WBRSO
  - North Macedonia informed that a working group is established for drafting of the new National Road Traffic Safety Strategy and no other remarks.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

- Serbia noted that the amendments of Law on road traffic safety are ongoing. Some relate to regulation of the electric scooters, and also an intervention on the Road safety traffic strategy. The representative from the Road traffic safety agency noted that some of the reasons for increased number of road accidents might be related to the high temperatures that this year has been statistically recorded for which a coordination for the test of the network is needed.

14. On the next day, the members of the Technical committee for road safety and the WBR SO members, were transferred to the site visit venue, the NAVAK center. The site visit provided insights into the development and features of a driver training facility in Serbia. Key points included the need for additional training for Serbian drivers, the creation of a customized training program based on local needs, and the establishment of a 33.5-hectare facility designed for realistic, high-speed exercises. The Director, Mr. Alvirovic, emphasized the importance of using their own vehicles to ensure consistent training conditions and highlighted the facility's adaptability for various scenarios, including night and winter conditions. The goal is to enhance driver safety and awareness through high-quality, realistic training.

15. Discussions centred on a training program designed to improve driver safety and reduce accidents. Key aspects included addressing overconfidence in drivers, ensuring voluntary participation, and the effectiveness of the training methods in decreasing accidents and fatalities. Metrics revealed a 30% reduction in collisions, a 39% reduction in injuries, and zero fatalities among trained drivers. The program, operational for 10 years, includes practical exercises and theoretical instruction, supported by sponsors. The training process is rigorous, involving multiple stages and assessments to ensure effective learning.

16. From the representative from the observing participants was informed about establishment of a New Road safety observatory for the eastern partnership. A conclusion was proposed for a possible coordination for exchange of data between the WBR SO and this newly established Observatory by the members representing the Observing participants.