

## Assessment of road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in South-East European regions

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### Abstract

Road safety has not consistently been considered in the design, maintenance and operation of road networks in South-East Europe. The objective of this paper is to provide a comparative assessment of road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in South-East European regions. On that purpose, an overview of the current road safety situation and the respective road safety management practices found in these countries have been identified followed by the results of the comparative assessment based on a common methodology (questionnaire filled in by road safety experts) carried out within the “ROSEE- ROad safety in South-East European regions” project. The results serve as a baseline for monitoring and evaluating progress of the road safety policies and road safety performance in each country. Results show important diversity in the structures and processes at the higher level of road safety management. Major problems in almost all countries include lack of a dedicated budget, difficulties in coordination of stakeholders and consequently difficulties in the implementation of programmes and measures.

*Keywords:* road safety; legislation; policy; institutional capacity; South-East Europe.

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### Résumé

La sécurité routière n'a pas toujours été prise en compte dans la conception, la maintenance et l'exploitation des réseaux routiers en Europe du Sud-Est. L'objectif de cet article est de fournir une évaluation comparative de la législation, la politique et la capacité institutionnelle de la sécurité routière dans les régions d'Europe du Sud-Est. À cette fin, un aperçu de la situation de la sécurité routière actuelle et les pratiques de gestion de la sécurité routière respectifs dans ces pays ont été identifiés suivi par les résultats de l'évaluation comparative basée sur une méthodologie commune (questionnaire rempli par des experts de la sécurité routière), effectués au sein du projet “ROSEE- ROad safety in South-East European regions”. Les résultats servent de référence pour le suivi et l'évaluation des progrès des politiques et de la performance de sécurité routière dans chaque pays. Les résultats montrent la diversité importante dans les structures et les processus au niveau supérieur de la gestion de la sécurité routière. Les principaux problèmes dans presque tous les pays comprennent le manque d'un budget spécifique, des difficultés de coordination des acteurs et, par conséquent, des difficultés dans la mise en œuvre des programmes et mesures.

*Mots-clé:* sécurité routière; législation; politiques; capacité institutionnelle; l'Europe du Sud-Est.

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## 1. Introduction

The improvement of road safety is attracting more and more interest worldwide as road accidents have become one of the major causes of death in many countries and road safety is regarded as an issue of public health. The road safety level differs a lot among the members of the European Union with South-East European regions being among the worst road safety performers in Europe, suffering higher road crash injury and fatality rates than the EU average. Specifically, in 2011, 97 persons per million population were killed in Greece, 94 in Romania, 88 in Bulgaria, 69 in Slovenia, 65 in Italy and 64 in Hungary while the respective EU average was 61 fatalities per million (CARE, 2012). These numbers show that road accidents is a common serious problem of the countries of South-East Europe (SEE) and common action should be taken in order to improve road safety in this wider part of Europe and not only in particular countries. Although the analysis of road accidents per country may reveal differences and special characteristics that formulate the final road safety performance of each country, there are also common key road safety factors, such as road infrastructure management that should also be explored in order to improve road safety in this part of Europe. Moreover, knowledge and experience of central and north European countries that perform better in road safety must be exploited and further developed.

ROSEE-ROad safety in South-East European regions is a project approved under the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program. Project partners come from Italy, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Slovenia and Bulgaria and involve representatives of national authorities, universities, NGOs and research centres. The main objective of ROSEE is to improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation of national and regional road networks in SEE with an emphasis on improving accessibility and road safety.

The objective of this paper is to provide a comparative assessment of road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in South-East European regions. On that purpose, an overview of the current road safety situation and the respective road safety management practices found in these countries have been identified, followed by the results of the comparative assessment based on a common methodology (questionnaire filled in by road safety experts).

Data on road safety performance of the SEE countries were collected from international and national sources with the contribution of the project partners. In the framework of the ROSEE project, national reports presenting road safety situation in the participating countries were produced. These reports were exploited for better understanding current road safety management practices in the SEE. Furthermore, an assessment was undertaken to serve as a baseline for monitoring and evaluating progress of the road safety policies and road safety performance in each country based on the methodology developed within the DaCoTA (Data Collection, Transfer and Analysis) EU co-funded project. Specifically, an extensive questionnaire for the assessment of road safety management, legislation and policies in the European countries which was developed within the DaCoTA project, was further exploited in the ROSEE partner countries. The questionnaire was divided in the following subject areas:

- Institutional organization, coordination and stakeholders' involvement
- Policy formulation and adoption
- Policy implementation and funding
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Scientific support and information, capacity building

Within the ROSEE project, the existing European legislation, policy and institutional capacity assessment framework was updated, regarding the data from Italy and Greece, and complemented with data from southern and eastern European countries using the above described questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled in by one governmental representative and one independent expert per partner country.

## 2. Overview of road safety in South-East Europe

SEE is an area comprising of sixteen countries which have been members of the European Union (EU) for decades or for few years, of candidate countries and others. This diversity is reflected to road safety situation in the area and to the availability of relevant data. Road fatalities' data in EU members are available in EUROSTAT. IRTAD provides data from several EU members and from few other SEE countries (e.g. Serbia). For non EU and/or IRTAD members, data on road fatalities are found in the World Health Organisation (WHO).



Road fatalities per million population in SEE countries in 2011 (or 2010 depending on available data) are shown in Figure 1. SEE countries that are not yet members of the EU show the highest rates of fatalities. Fatalities per population in such countries range from 156 in Bosnia-Herzegovina to 102 in Serbia and 79 in FYROM. It is noted that the most recent available data from these countries refer to 2010 and the actual numbers for 2011 might be slightly different. On the other hand, EU members show lower rates and specifically, lower than 100 road fatalities per population. Greece is the poorest performing country among SEE EU and ROSEE countries with 101 road fatalities per million population in 2011. The best performing EU country is Slovakia with 60 fatalities per million population in 2011. Among the ROSEE partners, the best performing are Italy and Hungary with 64 road fatalities per million population in 2011. Most importantly, fatalities per population rate is higher than the average EU rate in almost all SEE countries. Based on provisional data from CARE, the EU average rate in 2011 was 61. This is lower than the actual rate in almost all EU members in the SEE, with only Slovakia achieving a rate of 60 fatalities per million population. Among the rest of the EU members, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria show the highest rates with 101, 94 and 89 fatalities respectively while the rest are much closer to the EU average with rates ranging from 71 fatalities per million population in Slovenia to 62 in Austria.

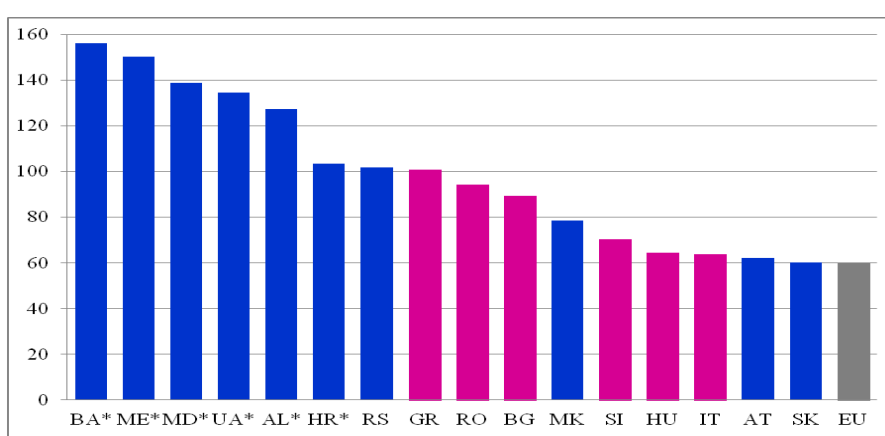


Fig. 1. Road fatalities per million population in SEE countries 2000-2011 (\*2010)  
Sources: EUROSTAT, IRTAD, WHO

Identifying trends of road fatalities per million population in the SEE countries during the last decade is also interesting. However, such data were not available for all SEE countries. Therefore, in Table 1 and Figure 2, data only from the ROSEE countries are shown. Between 2000 and 2011, all countries achieved an important decrease in the number of road fatalities per million population. Slovenia and Greece are the countries with the highest rates in 2000 and also those achieving the greatest decrease in 2011 by 89 and 86 fatalities per million population respectively (Table 1). This is quite logical and usual phenomenon as the higher a rate is, the easier it is to achieve its reduction. The rest of the countries show individual results with Italy and Hungary managing almost to halve the rate during the examined period, while Bulgaria and Romania achieved smaller reductions.

Table 1. Road fatalities per million population in ROSEE partner countries, 2000 – 2011 Sources: CARE, National Sources

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Italy	125	125	123	115	106	100	97	87	80	71	68	65
Romania	110	109	110	102	113	121	120	130	142	130	111	94
Hungary	118	122	141	131	129	127	130	124	101	83	74	64
Greece	187	172	149	146	151	150	149	144	139	129	113	101
Slovenia	158	140	135	121	137	129	131	146	107	84	67	69
Bulgaria	124	128	122	123	122	124	136	132	140	119	103	89

Figure 2 provides a depiction of the evolution of road fatalities per million population in the ROSEE countries from 2000 to 2011 and different trends can be identified. The newest EU members, Romania and Bulgaria, show very similar trends with an increase until 2008 and a decrease starting in 2008 and continuing until 2011. This might somehow be related with the fact that the two countries became members of the EU in 2007 or with other



similarities of the two Balkan countries. Older EU members (Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Greece) show different trends. In particular, Italy shows a continuous decrease. In Hungary, an increase is recorded in early 2000s and a decrease after 2007. In Slovenia, the trend was rather unstable with ups and downs until 2007 after when an important decrease was recorded until 2010. Greece had the highest number of road fatalities per million population in 2000 and achieved an important decrease until 2003. Then, the rate was almost stable for the following three years and started to decrease again in 2007.

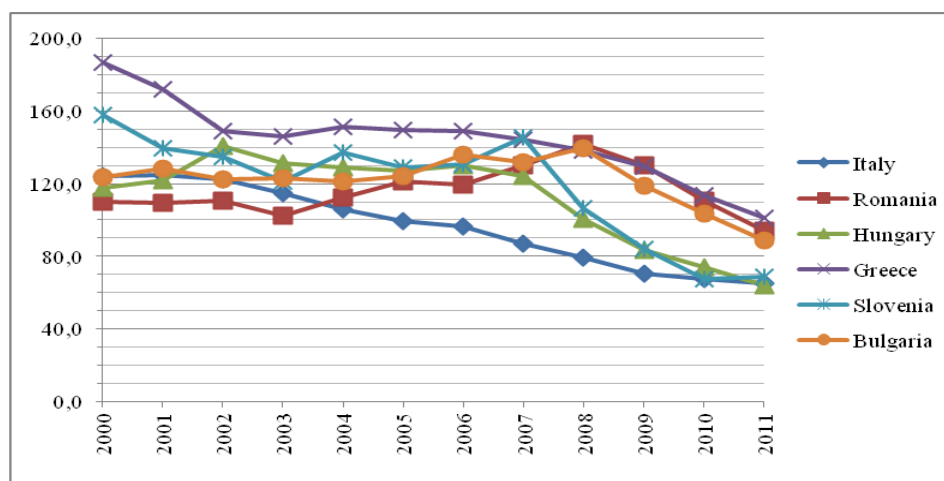


Fig. 2. Road fatalities per million population in the ROSEE countries 2000-2011

The examination of road fatalities per road user type reveals that fatality rates of pedestrians are quite high in all the examined countries and in some cases (Romania, Hungary, Slovenia) they are even higher than those of passengers (Table 2). This is an indication that pedestrians' safety is a serious problem in SEE countries and specific actions are needed.

Table 2. Road fatalities per road user type in the ROSEE countries (2010)

User type	IT	RO	HU	GR	SI	BG
Drivers	69%	39%	52%	65%	65%	47%
Passengers	16%	24%	22%	19%	16%	31%
Pedestrians	15%	37%	26%	14%	19%	22%

The distribution of road fatalities per vehicle type (Table 3) shows that fatalities of motorcyclists are very high in Italy (27%) and Greece (34%) while fatalities of cyclists are high in Romania (12%), Hungary (17%) and Slovenia (14%). Such high rates of fatalities may be partially attributed to the large numbers of motorcycles and bicycles in the respective countries. In addition, in most of the countries, fatality rates for lorries/trucks occupants are relatively increased. In every case, such high fatality rates indicate the urgent need for targeted actions in the framework of an integrated road safety management system.

Table 3. Road fatalities per vehicle type in the ROSEE countries (2010)

User type	IT	RO	HU	GR	SI	BG
Passenger car occupants	53%	65%	60%	51%	39%	92%
Motorcyclists	27%	4%	9%	34%	15%	8%
Moped riders	6%	8%	3%	3%	4%	1%
Cyclists	8%	12%	17%	2%	14%	5%
Buses/coaches occupants	0.3%	0.7%	2.2%	0.2%	0%	0.6%
Lorries/trucks occupants	1%	5%	6%	7%	2%	6%



### **3. Road safety management in South-East Europe**

In Italy, the responsibilities for road safety management are divided at national, regional and local level. Legally the Government is the main authority responsible for road safety. Regions are appointed to implement programs within the National Plan for Road Safety (PNSS). Local administrative bodies (responsible for traffic police and for the management of road infrastructures) act in the field of road safety as far as the Traffic Code is concerned.

Key functions in road safety policy making (formulation of national road safety strategy, setting targets, development of the road safety program, monitoring) belong to the Government, with its Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports, in agreement with Ministers of the Interior, Education, Health. The Government is also entitled to deal with enforcement of road traffic laws. Regions, Provinces and Municipalities are involved in the improvements in road infrastructure, improvement in road user education and publicity campaigns.

As regards enforcement organisation in Italy, the Traffic Police is a specialized unit of the State Police that works along the motorway network and the major Italian roads, in order to facilitate traffic. The main areas of traffic enforcement are speed limits, use of seat belts, helmet use, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, limitation of circulation of heavy goods vehicles and the penalty points system.

In spite of all the efforts put by the authorities and some positive results obtained in the last few years, the level of road risk in Romania remains way above the European average. The Interministerial Council for Road Safety (CISR) was set up in 1995, with the purpose of assuring the general concept and coordination at national level of the road safety improvement measures and the evaluation of the relevant public policies. The Ministers mainly related to road safety issues, representatives of the Bucharest city central public administration and local public administration, as well as of the legally acknowledged associated structures of the local public administration authorities participate in the CISR. The activity of the CISR is coordinated by the Prime Minister, and its daily activity is being steered by the Minister of Transport, as the President. Representatives from the Parliament, universities, research institutes, NGOs or public and private firms from the road safety sector also take part in the CISR. CISR is planned to get together twice a year however; in fact the interministerial structure exists only in papers. The secretariat of the CISR is assured through the Romanian Road Authority.

Within the CISR, there functions a technical interministerial permanent delegation for road safety, the DPISR, formed by experts of the institutions represented in the CISR and assigned by the leaders of the public authorities represented in the CISR. The activity of the DPISR takes place on working groups on different road safety issues. It is permanent and takes place under the coordination of the state secretary for road transportation. The main activity of the DPISR is the elaboration of the National Strategy on Road Safety and of the priority actions programs for its implementation, and assuring the implementation of all decisions issued by the CISR.

The lead agency appointed at national level to take responsibility for road safety is the Romanian Automobile Register, the technical specialized body designated by the Ministry of Transport as the competent authority in the field of road vehicles, road safety, environment protection and quality assurance.

The CISR is responsible for coordinating the elaboration of the National Strategy on Road Safety and the national priority actions programs for its implementation, together with their financing options, based on the proposals received from the DPISR, harmonizing the interests of all institutions with activity on road safety and those of road users. The CISR decisions are made public by the secretariat of CISR - the Romanian Road Authority- on the website of the Ministry of Transport.

In order to ensure the implementation of the CISR decisions and of the national road safety strategy, and to assure the DPISR's activity, the institutions represented in the CISR foresee in their budgets the necessary financial resources. Even if this creates some stability, it permits only short-term decision-making which is not enough to create the premises of a sustainable improvement of road safety. Moreover, even governmental representatives highlight the lack of enough financial resources available for road safety programs and policy components, management of tasks and interventions as well as of sufficient human resources in place to implement them. To make things worse, on the background of the economic crisis, road safety funds from the state budget have been missing altogether in 2011.



Although a national road safety observatory to collect and analyse related data doesn't exist, some data are collected by the Romanian Traffic Police, the Romanian Road Authority and the Romanian Automobile Register. The reporting procedure to monitor the road safety interventions carried out at national level is set up only for a few institutions, it's done periodically and it's limited only to accidents and their consequences. An evaluation procedure for the safety performance of the global program or policy is not available. Moreover, at least for the past programming period (2007-2013), no "process evaluation" of safety interventions was in place, nor was any evaluation process to assess the effects of policy components planned.

In Hungary, the road accident prevention is a state responsibility defined by the Road Traffic Act Nr.I./1988. The Minister of Transport is in charge of the coordination of public duties related to road safety defined in the Act. In 2007, Government Decision No.2261/2007 (XII.29.) was entailed on public duties relating to road safety improvement and the National Road Safety Program, accepted in 1993 and being in force as a framework of the road safety activity, lost its mandate. Accordingly, the relevant road safety strategic trends were laid down in the Road Safety Action Program for 2008-2010 and later in the Road Safety Action Program for 2011-2013. The Program has been developed in line with the EU's Road Safety Policy Orientations. On the basis of the Action Program, an Action Plan is to be prepared annually. This is basically a task for the Ministry of National Development (NFM) and for the National Accident Prevention Committee (ORFK-OBB). Apart from the involvement of NFM, the National Transport Authority (NKH) and the ORFK-OBB assign resources to this task, and become, thus, responsible for the resources and the implementation. The implementation of measures is to be monitored continuously as the application of the Action Plan is assessed and the processes are controlled annually. Government Decision No.409/2007 (XII.29) provides the financial resources required for the implementation of certain road safety tasks of the state as well as for the methods of utilization. The Minister of National Development and Minister of Interior are authorized to exploit these resources.

The National Accident Prevention Committee (ORFK-OBB) is supported by the police and provides advice, makes proposals and offers its opinions on road safety issues. It also coordinates, organizes and manages road safety and educational campaigns. The Ministry of Interior is responsible to lead such activities. ORFK-OBB consists of 19 County Accident Prevention Committees (MBB) and the Metropolitan Accident Prevention Committee (FBB). These organizations are responsible for the road safety in the counties and in Budapest respectively. City Accident Prevention Committees (VBB) act at local level and the respective MBB is responsible to lead the activity of these organizations.

Road safety, fatality and injury data are being collected and processed in a sustainable way. Such data are primarily handled by the police, but they are not analysed in detail. Data on user behavior such as speeds, seatbelt use and drink-driving are not regularly collected and analysed. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office processes available data (e.g. road accidents, fatalities, injuries, behavioral patterns, traffic volumes, driving licenses and vehicle registration) with some specialized indicators being handled by the KTI Institute for Transport Sciences. The data from more in-depth accident analyses are not centrally processed. Data concerning traffic offences and penalties are filed by the police.

Data collected by means of obligatory data submission enable the assessment of implemented road safety measures. Data submissions are regular and directly matched to the intermediate steps of road safety programs. All activities concerning control, road safety education/training, campaigns, driver training and vehicles are recorded. Nevertheless, data regarding engineering works on rural and urban roads are not collected in a transparent way. Collected data, in some cases, have been used, among others for altering road safety programs and for organizing trainings.

In Greece, road safety has not been given the necessary attention and is not dealt with on a systematic basis although there are several governmental bodies (mainly Ministries) as well as universities/research institutes and NGOs that support the need for action. The only management structure ever legally created is the inter-ministerial Road Safety Committee which has no authority over the other sectors' administrations as it has been placed under the Minister of Infrastructure rather than under the authority of the Prime Minister. In practice, the Committee has no decision making power and no budget of its own. Furthermore, though a Secretariat for the support of the Committee exists, outputs so far show limited efficiency. Similarly, an existing structure for





consultations of stakeholders including NGOs and some experts appears to be more an opportunity for discussion and information rather than for decision making. Although all three administrative levels (national, regional, local) have specific responsibilities for road safety, and the regional authorities are represented in the interministerial committee, there is no process to integrate national and regional activities neither any reporting from the regional/local levels to the national one.

The main road safety output is a strategic plan, based on a Safe Systems approach and including a vision and targets for 2015 and 2020. However, this strategic plan has not yet been formally adopted as a national policy. This demonstrates an obvious gap between policy formulation and policy adoption at a very early level in the decision-making chain. The lack of a formally adopted national road safety program, normally leads to the lack of an identified road safety budget. Nevertheless, fragmentary interventions are implemented and financed by the authorities and some NGOs coordinate their activities with them. The monitoring process included in the Strategic plan has not been implemented. The main problem for not implementing the necessary road safety measures seems to be related mainly with organizational problems and to a less extent with lack of the appropriate human resources.

The base of knowledge used in policy formulation is limited, which is to be expected as policy has not been adopted. Only police accident data is available on a systematic basis, benchmarking is not really used (except at the research level) and there is no systematic evaluation of the measures implemented. Although the country has some university-based multi-disciplinary scientific teams available, knowledge production is not in a strong position as research has to rely on funding from European programs which are, by nature, non-sustainable. In the present situation, there can be no substantial offer of road safety training for professionals.

In Slovenia, while the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning has the legal responsibility for national road safety, the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency is the national authority assigned with the overall responsibility for road safety. The 210 municipalities of Slovenia can make local road safety decisions, within certain limits. According to the National Road Safety Program, a National Program Monitoring Board of Directors shall be set up in which the Minister of Transport will be president and several other Ministers will participate. The Board shall provide socio-political support to the National Program and coordinate the implementation of activities. In addition, a Working Group responsible for monitoring the Road Safety Program implementation will also be established. The Group shall consist of experts from different fields, whose competencies and tasks cover road safety, professional organisations as well as single experts, civil society organisations, the Slovenian Insurance Association and local communities. The Group shall be chaired by a representative of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning. The duties and tasks of the Group shall be to elaborate and, where necessary, to deal with interim reports on problems which require additional sources for the implementation of the planned measures; to monitor the implementation of the National Program tasks; to analyse reports on the implemented measures from the periodical programs; to support local committees in their work and participate in the coordination of programs intended to solve problems exceeding the local level. Local communities are also participating in the provision of road safety. In accordance with the National Program they will elaborate their own programs, which shall include the competencies and tasks related to road safety in their areas.

The National Assembly of Slovenia addresses the development and issues of road safety once a year. On this purpose, the Government prepares a report on the implementation of the national program and especially the implementation of strategies, programs and action plans. The National Assembly ensures social and political support, considers and adopts the annual report on the results and implementation of the program and provides the necessary guidelines and tasks for the effective implementation of the measures.

The Government establishes the Board of Directors of several state agencies as a body responsible for policy coordination and strategic direction for the implementation of the national program. An interdepartmental working group is also established for professional knowledge exchange. Participants in the interdepartmental working group are public authorities and NGO's, individual experts, businesses, Pan-Slovenian Insurance Association and local communities.

In Bulgaria, at national level, the road safety responsibility is divided mainly among the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Transport and Information



Technologies. However, a State-Public Consultative Commission on the Problems of Road Safety, which includes members from all Ministries and also key non-governmental players in the automotive and road safety field, has been established. At local level, in almost all regions local, consultative councils have also been established to further promote the issue of road safety and to help implement the national strategy for road safety 2011-2020, adopted by the council of Ministers.

The policy and priorities with regards to road safety in Bulgaria are defined by the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications. The “Automobile administration” executive agency is directly responsible for the vehicle safety and technical condition control. It also oversees that public and freight transportation is in line with the legislation in force.

Traffic law enforcement and control of all vehicles is implemented by departments and officials appointed by the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Transport. Administratively, the duties, functions and responsibilities in ensuring road safety are distributed among different agencies and ministries and there is no single unit to synchronize road safety policy. Furthermore the duties are divided at national, regional and local levels.

The activity of the State-Public Consultative Commission on the Problems of Road Safety is extremely important to the society in Bulgaria. However the high-level decisions, taken in the commission, are meant to be implemented by different agencies and departments and structures. Thus, it is just an advisory body without executive power, own budget or permanent staff, to follow on the implementation and to control the road safety initiatives. As a direct result, the national strategy is not uniformly and effectively implemented.

#### **4. Comparing road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in South-East Europe**

The existing road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in the SEE countries participating in the ROSEE project were assessed using the methodology developed in the DaCoTA project. The assessment revealed important similarities and differences among the partner countries. Similarities are identified mainly on issues related to institutional organization, coordination and stakeholders' involvement as well as policy formulation and adoption while policy implementation and funding, monitoring and evaluation, scientific support and information and capacity building are issues addressed in various ways.

In the SEE countries, the need of taking road safety action has been advocated by government agencies, primarily ministries, public authorities and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Local authorities have a more or less active role in the various countries. An Inter-ministerial Committee or Council for Road Safety has been legally created in all the examined countries to serve as the high level inter-section decision-making institution which prepares policy orientations or directions for road safety. Most of governmental sectors potentially involved in road safety are represented in these institutions which are presided by the Minister of Transport in most countries. In Romania, the Committee operates under the Prime Minister. In Romania, Hungary, Slovenia and Bulgaria non-governmental stakeholders are also represented in the high-level decision-making institution and meetings take place regularly. Still, in most countries, it seems that these institutions have a general consulting character while their authority on road safety stakeholders is limited. In Romania, Hungary and Slovenia, a lead agency has also been formally appointed to take responsibility for road safety while in Romania and Slovenia a technical inter-sectoral road safety institution, endowed with a statutory budget is in charge of coordination.

In all countries the examined countries, except from Hungary, a national "vision" for improved road safety performance in the long term has been also adopted. However, such a vision is compelling for the government only in Slovenia and in Bulgaria where it is approved in the Parliament and by the Council of Ministers respectively. National plans developed for the improvement of road safety have taken into consideration the Safe System approach in all countries except from Bulgaria. These national plans cover shorter or longer periods up to 2020 but in most cases, they are not triggered yet as they have not been officially adopted or they do not have a legislative imperative character. National medium-term (four to ten years) quantitative targets have been set in all countries apart from Italy. Specifically, the quantitative EU target for halving road fatalities by 2020 comparing to 2010 has been adopted. Regional road safety programs or policy components are integrated into the national road safety policy only in Italy.





Funding for road safety seems to be a critical issue in South East Europe. In half of the examined countries (Romania, Greece and Bulgaria), although national road safety programs have been elaborated, the budget needed for program implementation has not been estimated. Furthermore, the budget necessary to move towards the long term vision for improving road safety has been estimated only in Slovenia, while a decision to ensure availability of a budget for a medium term road safety program has been made in Hungary too. The product of fines are allocated to road safety interventions or related activities only in Italy and Romania. However, it must be noted that in Italy, Romania, Hungary and Slovenia an amount of the national budget is allocated specifically to road safety activities, interventions and capacity building. In Greece, the annual or multi-year budget of the Ministries and of Regional and Local Authorities sometimes includes a budget for road safety activities. Formal resource allocation procedures to support road safety management tasks and interventions have been established in all countries apart from Greece and Bulgaria. Still, evaluation of road safety activities is funded only in Hungary and Slovenia. A key finding concerning road safety funding that funds allocated to implement the program or policy components adopted in various areas of road safety such as rural infrastructure, urban infrastructures, transport and traffic planning, vehicles, traffic education, driver training and licensing, road safety campaigns, enforcement or health are considered sufficient only in Hungary and only for very few areas (driver training and licensing, road safety campaigns and enforcement).

As far as monitoring and evaluation of road safety in the examined countries of South East Europe are concerned, sustainable systems to collect and manage data on road accidents, fatalities and injuries are in place in all the examined countries. On the other hand, in-depth accident investigations for road safety purposes are conducted in any country. Concerning data on behavioral indicators, a sustainable system for their collection and management is in place only in Romania, Slovenia and Bulgaria. A national Observatory centralizing the data systems for road safety is available in Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria however; data included in it vary per country. A reporting procedure to monitor the road safety interventions carried out in the country has been set up in Hungary and Slovenia. In both countries, the procedure is linked to intermediate phases of the national road safety program. In Slovenia, it applies to all areas of intervention while in Hungary; planning and engineering interventions in urban areas are not covered. Identified needs for program modification or changes in implementation conditions are addressed by the procedures in both countries. Compliance with the timetable of implementation is addressed only in Hungary and delivery by the relevant authorities only in Slovenia. Collected information has been exploited for limited changes in the action program of both countries as well as for allocation of funds or human resources in Slovenia and for training in Hungary. A procedure to evaluate safety performances of the global program or policy has been set up in Italy, Hungary and Slovenia. Performance is assessed on the basis of performance indicators and against national quantitative targets. A "process evaluation" of safety interventions takes place during the implementation period of the program only in Hungary and Slovenia again. This means it is checked whether measures have the expected results and or they generate undesired side-effects. In both countries, process evaluation is performed by scientific teams however; the evaluation results are available to all stakeholders only in Slovenia. Action on the basis of the outcome of this information has been taken in both Hungary and Slovenia and concerned partial changes in the action program and improvement of implementation conditions.

In each one of the examined countries there is at least one institute or university performing multi-disciplinary road safety research and/or studies as well as steady research teams. In all countries but Italy, results of safety analyses and research are used in formulating the national road safety policy and the research teams are systematically requested by policy-makers to contribute knowledge for policy formulation. In Italy and Greece, citizens lack factual and valid information on road accidents, injuries and risk as well as on the national road safety policy and interventions and their effects. This comes also in combination with a lack of articles or programs in the media on road accidents and/or on road safety activities which review, criticize or challenge current policies. Finally, multi-disciplinary courses on road traffic safety for students are provided in all countries at either under or post-graduate level. In Italy, Slovenia and Bulgaria further-training sessions addressing key professionals currently involved in road safety are also offered.

## **5. Conclusions**

South-East Europe regions are among the worst road safety performers in Europe, suffering higher road accident injury and mortality rates and slower reduction trends than the EU average. Countries such as Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and to a less extent Slovenia, Hungary and Italy have a road deaths rate per population by far above the EU average. Furthermore, the poor performance in the SEE countries is slowing down overall progress at EU



level. In the SEE countries that are currently not members of the European Union, crash and fatality rates are even higher, showing how critical the situation is in the region and the need of urgent improvements. The above show clearly that EU needs to step up efforts particularly in the member states in SEE to reach the 2020 EU road safety target.

Road safety management practices are critical for changing the development of road safety and for changing the current trends. The examination of the existing situation regarding road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in countries of the SEE provides some important insight on deficiencies of current practices which might partially explain poor road safety performance in these countries. Furthermore, in combination with the special characteristics of these countries, common deeper problems in structures and policies may be identified.

The current research, completed in the framework of the ROSEE project, revealed that although a number of steps towards the implementation of identified good practices have been taken in all countries, important diversity in the structures and processes at the higher level of road safety management still exists. Major problems faced in almost all countries include lack of a road safety dedicated budget, difficulties in coordination of road safety stakeholders and consequently difficulties in the implementation of programmes and measures.

Such data are collected for the first time in most of the specific SEE countries and can be very useful to road safety decision-makers to take into consideration for future action. In addition, identification of the specific problems may enhance participation of the SEE countries in road safety initiatives and undertaking a more active role which will promote their efforts towards the improvement of road safety in the area.

Future research that would analyse the current situation in road safety legislation, policy and institutional capacity in more countries of the SEE and also compare it to that in other, developed in road safety, countries is necessary to better comprehend the existing problems and suggest the most appropriate interventions.

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