### ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ROAD SAFETY



**Stergios Mavromatis** 

stemavro@central.ntua.gr

Assistant Professor National Technical University of Athens

### **Structure of Presentation**

- Background
- Safe System Adaptation to Road Design



### BACKGROUND



### European Union 2010 - 2020 Road fatalities per million population



#### 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2010-2020 CONTRACTOR DE LA CONTRACTÓRIA DE LA CONTRACTÓRIA DE LA CONTRACTORIA DE LA CONTRACTORIA DE LA CONTRACTORIA DE LA -42.4% Sweden ranked first in 2020 -42.9% with 18 fatalities/mil. inhabitants followed by -36.2% Malta (21) and Denmark (27), whereas -26.0% -37.7% Greece ranked 20th (54) -26.7% and Romania ranked last (85) -43.8% Greece -23.7% was the only country -52.3% EL 113 to achieve the decade -44.2% 2010-2020 target of -20.0% -37.1% countries 50% road fatalities -41.4% reduction, with -37.8% had a better a performance of -34.8% -39.4% -52% performance -33.7% than the EU average -34.4% -28.2% in 2020 -41.7% -20.5% -36.9% -35.0% Fatalities per million population, 2020 -27.4% -35.7% -43.3% -34.8% -37.5% April 20th, 2021. Figures in italics are provisional data Issued: About the data: www.nrso.ntua.gr/wp-content/uploads/nrso-data-eu5.pdf European Commission Sources:

NTUA - Road Safety Observatory Processing:

AT

BE

BG

CY.

CZ

DE

DK

EE

ES

FI

FR

HR

HU

**L**T

LU

LV

MT

NL

PL

PT

RO

SK

EU

SE MT DK ES IE NL DE SI AT FR IT FI LU EU BE EE SK HU CZ PT EL CY HR LT PL BG LV RO

www.nrso.ntua.gr

### **Where Do Accidents Occur?**



### **Improvement Rates in EU**

-30%



#### Road Fatalities' reduction by road type, 2010-2019



EU CARE Database (2021)

## **Accident Contributing Factors**



### **Accident Risk in Horizontal Curves**

- **1.5 to 4 times higher than in tangents**
- Severity is high, 25-30 % of all fatal accidents occur in curves
- Secondary rural roads (more and sharper horizontal curves) have higher proportion of accident in curves
- 60% of all accidents to occur on horizontal curves are single-vehicle off-road accidents
- The proportion of accidents on wet surface is high in horizontal curves
- Accidents occur primarily at both ends of curves



### **Accident Risk in Horizontal Curves**



PIARC, Road Safety Manual (2003)

### List of Accident Contributing Factors - Human

	before the accident	during the accident	after the accident
	Physical condition	Physical condition	Physical condition
human	• Fatigue, illness, medication, alcohol	• reflex	resistance to impact
	• handicaps: sight, hearing, etc.	Error	Physiological condition
	Physiological condition	• poor mental image of the road	emotional shock
	• stress, inattention, distraction,	• poor evaluation of distances and	Experience and skill
	attitude	speeds	safety first
	Socio-demographic profile	inappropriate manoeuvres	protection of accident-scene
	• age, sex, professional occupation,	Action	raising the alarm
	level of education	• speed	Action
	Experience and skill	braking	manoeuvres after collision
	• driving experience, knowledge of	positioning	
	vehicle and itinerary, knowledge of	• warning	
	regulations		
	Action		
	manoeuvres before collision self-		
	protection		
	<ul> <li>seatbelt, helmet</li> </ul>		

### List of Accident Contributing Factors - Vehicle

	before the accident	during the accident	after the accident
vehicle	<ul> <li>Physical factors</li> <li>type and make, colour, horsepower</li> <li>Mechanical condition</li> <li>brakes, tires, suspension, lights, etc.</li> <li>Damage</li> <li>external, internal</li> <li>Running state</li> <li>objects, position of passengers</li> <li>obstructive luggage</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Activation of passive safety</li> <li>resistance to deformation</li> <li>airbag</li> <li>mayday</li> </ul>	Handling of damaged vehicles

### List of Accident Contributing Factors - Road Environment

	before the accident	during the accident	after the accident
	Geometry	Recovery area	Accident warning
	<ul> <li>vertical alignment, cross-section</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>shoulders, emergency lane</li> </ul>	Cleaning up the road
	horizontal alignment	<ul> <li>central refuge</li> </ul>	
	Surface characteristics	Roadside conditions	
	<ul> <li>skid resistance, roughness</li> </ul>	Critical zone	
road	<ul> <li>debris, contamination</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>transition zone</li> </ul>	
rodu	Surroundings	<ul> <li>work zones, unusual surroundings</li> </ul>	
environment	• urban, rural	defect	
	<ul> <li>advertising, shops</li> </ul>	maintenance	
	<ul> <li>traffic volumes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>obstacle on roadway</li> </ul>	
	• main users		
	Equipment		
	<ul> <li>signs, markings, etc.</li> </ul>		

### **Engineering Approach to Road Safety**

### Assess potential risk

reactive approach

✓ analysis of crash data – traditional approach

proactive approach

 data is poor or need to supplement crash data

### Approaches to risk assessment

- reactive approach
  - ✓ crash- based identification
- proactive approach
  - based on impact assessment, road safety
     audit and road safety inspection



## **Reactive Approach**

### **Crash-based identification**

- Accident investigation or treatment of 'black spots' or sites with potential for safety improvement
- Approach: select location with highest potential for reductions in crashes through targeted safety improvements
- Relies on crash analyses to identify safety problems
- Requires a good and reliable crash database

PIARC 2013 – 'Road Accident Investigation Guidelines for Engineers'



## **Proactive Approach**

- Suitable to LMIC where accurate crash data may not be available
- Cover a range of techniques for assessing risk
- Aims to avoid crashes by
  - safe road design construction
  - proposed road infrastructure designed and built to minimise road safety problems
  - treating safety issues on existing
     roads before crashes occur

PIARC 2013 – 'Road Accident Investigation Guidelines for Engineers'



### **Proactive Approach - Road Safety Checks**



## **Why Perform Road Safety Checks?**

- Future minimisation of crash risk, severity and occurrence at the site and on adjacent roads
- Recognising the importance of considering safety in road design
- Reducing long-term operating/maintenance costs and the need for remedial work (via efficient and safe design selection)
- Bringing an increased awareness to road
   safety issues and solutions amongst
   policy-makers and scheme designers

![](_page_16_Picture_5.jpeg)

### Road safety impact assessments (RSIA)

- allows a comparison of the impact
   of different road or traffic schemes
   on safety performance
   (new road or modification to existing road)
- used to ensure the scheme is selected
   (out of a number of alternative schemes)
   that has the best outcome for road safety

![](_page_17_Picture_4.jpeg)

### Road safety audits (RSA)

- formal and independent technical check of a road scheme design and construction
- identify any unsafe features or potential hazards and to provide recommendations for rectifying them
- applied during all stages, from planning to early operation
- > checks that the selected scheme is designed and constructed in such a way as to yield the greatest road safety benefits, and to detect any potential hazards throughout the design and construction

Large amount of RSA literature techniques and examples

![](_page_18_Picture_7.jpeg)

### Road safety inspections (RSI)

a systematic, on-site review
 of an existing road with the aim
 of identifying hazardous conditions,
 faults and deficiencies that may lead to
 serious crash outcomes

The PIARC Road Safety Inspection Guideline for Safety Checks of Existing Roads (2012a)

![](_page_19_Picture_4.jpeg)

IRAP

### Road assessment programmes (RAP)

- undertaken on existing roads to quantify the expected outcomes for a network, route or location
- numerous RAP programmes
   EuroRAP, AusRAP, USRAP
   (iRAP International RAP the global face)

# **Combination Approach**

- Provides a full picture of the risk
   locations and where fatal
   and serious injuries
   will occur in the future
- Some countries trying to merge the 2 approaches to identify risk
  - USA (Preston et al 2013) –
     'systematic' safety project approach
- Used with or without crash data
  - Harwood et al (2014) reviewed the approach

![](_page_21_Picture_6.jpeg)

## Safe System Approach

The Safe System approach works on the principle that it is not acceptable for a road user to be killed or seriously injured if they make a mistake.

The Safe System approach aims to create a forgiving road system based on 4 principles:

#### People make mistakes

> as a result some crashes are inevitable

#### People are vulnerable

> our bodies have a limited ability to withstand crash forces without being seriously injured or killed

#### We need to share responsibility

system designers and people who use the roads must all share responsibility for creating a road system where crash forces do not result in death or serious injury

#### We need to strengthen all parts of the system

we need to improve the safety of all parts of the system – roads and roadside environment, speeds, vehicles,
 and road use so that if one part fails, other parts will still protect the people involved

### Under a Safe System, designers create and operate a transport system where people are protected from death and serious injury

## Safe Systems Approach

The concept of the safe system approach evolves from the Vision Zero and Sustainable Safety concepts that were introduced in the mid-1990s

![](_page_23_Picture_2.jpeg)

### **Safe System Principles and Road Design**

### Creating a forgiving road system

- hierarchizing road network
- setting safe system speeds
- > managing the key crash types
- ranking system
  - consider crash severity, crash exposure and crash likelihood
  - $\checkmark\,$  rate the risks identified in RSAs

![](_page_24_Picture_8.jpeg)

### SAFE SYSTEM ADAPTATION TO ROAD DESIGN

### □ 3D vs 2D road design stages

- actual road alignment consists of a 3D line designed in 3 different, independent and uncorrelated 2D stages:
  - ✓ horizontal alignment
    - tangents, circular arcs and transition curves
  - ✓ vertical alignment
    - constant grades and vertical curves
  - ✓ superelevation
    - cross slopes

Although specific rules apply between design elements, existing guidelines fail to offer concrete 3D guidance design

![](_page_26_Figure_10.jpeg)

### Speed impact

- > dominant parameter in road safety
- important factor to be considered by travelers in selecting alternative routes
- reduces the visual field
- restricts peripheral vision
- limits time for drivers to receive and process information
- imposes restrictions
   in critical design parameters

![](_page_27_Picture_8.jpeg)

### Speed impact

> fatality risk for 3 major crash types

at different impact speeds

![](_page_28_Figure_4.jpeg)

Wramborg, P. "A New Approach to a Safe and Sustainable Road Structure", (2005)

### Speed impact

![](_page_29_Figure_2.jpeg)

PIARC, Road Safety Manual (2003)

### Types of speed

- operating speed
  - ✓ vehicles speed under free flow conditions
  - extracted from 85th% of the distribution of observed speeds and associated to road geometry

#### running speed

- ✓ road section length divided by running time of travel
- ✓ most appropriate for evaluating level of service

### design speed

- ✓ determines various geometric design parameters
- selected based on anticipated operating speed, topography, adjacent land use and functional classification of the road
- safety, mobility and efficiency combined with constraints of environmental quality, economics,
   aesthetics and social – political impacts
- ranging from 20km/h 130km/h

![](_page_30_Picture_13.jpeg)

Countries with speed laws meeting Best Practice (2017)

![](_page_31_Figure_2.jpeg)

![](_page_31_Picture_3.jpeg)

Speed limits on urban roads ≤ 50 km/h and can be modified Speed limits on urban roads ≤ 50 km/h but cannot be modified No speed law or speed limit on urban roads > 50 km/h

![](_page_31_Picture_5.jpeg)

Data not available Not applicable

### Infrastructure adaption to human capacity

> workload in curves with good and inappropriate design

![](_page_32_Figure_3.jpeg)

### Infrastructure adaption to human capacity

- > self explaining roads
  - traffic environment which elicits safe behavior simply by it's design
  - advocates the use of set road categories to ensure drivers are not confused by different types with varying speed limit

![](_page_33_Picture_5.jpeg)

- Infrastructure adaption to human capacity
  - self explaining roads

### Speed limit = 70km/h

**NOT a Self Explaining Road** 

![](_page_34_Picture_5.jpeg)

- Infrastructure adaption to human capacity
  - self explaining roads

### Self Explaining Roads through landscaping

![](_page_35_Picture_4.jpeg)

PIARC, Road Safety Manual (2003)
#### Road categorization

functional classification



#### Road categorization

- network
  - ✓ flow function: vehicle movement rapid and uninterrupted
    - through roads (national, international roads)
  - ✓ distributor function: distribution and collection of traffic to and from different districts and residential areas
    - distributor roads (regional roads)
  - access function: provide entrance vehicle reach and depart from an individual dwelling, shop, etc.
    - access roads (local roads)



#### Road types

> motorway



- Road types
  - regional road



- Road types
  - local road



#### Road types

> map example



through road (international)
 through road (national)
 through road (regional)
 distributor road

### Sustainable safety

- functionality
- homogeneity
- predictability



#### Functionality

- speed values compatible with the operation of the road
- clear hierarchy of road network functions



### Homogeneity

- uniformity in the mass and speed
   of vehicles using a road element
   otherwise adequately separated
- incompatible road users should not share the same road parts
- physical separation not always
   acceptable in mixed use environments
   where more interaction
   between different road users
   is desirable





#### Homogeneity

areas with steep grades

and increased trucks presence

Crash involvement rate of trucks for which running speeds are reduced below average running speed of all traffic



Speed Reduction (km/h)

AASHTO (2018)

#### Homogeneity

> areas with steep grades

#### and increased trucks presence

- ✓ climbing lanes benefits
  - separation between fast and slow moving vehicles
  - traffic quality improvement
  - accident reduction

Design Vehicle: W/hp = 85kg/KW



AASHTO (2018)

#### Homogeneity

- areas with steep grades and increased trucks presence
  - ✓ climbing lanes





### Predictability

- > design of roads should direct drivers to select the appropriate speeds
- road environment that satisfies drivers' needs and expectations in terms of safety with a fairly constant, low mental workload
- road environment without violating the drivers' expectancy is the basis of the "self-explaining" road approach



### Predictability

#### achieved by

- ✓ design consistency
  - avoidance of abrupt changes of successive alignment elements
- assessed by correlating successive elements between operational speeds or between design and operational speeds
- ✓ continuity
- ability of road geometry to conform to driver's expectations
- closely related to psychological sight distance (depth of driving space, of which the driver supposes to have it completely registered)



#### Predictability

achieved by

✓ design consistency

#### What about tangents between curves?





#### Predictability

#### achieved by

#### ✓ continuity

not visible crossing in 150 m





#### Predictability

- achieved by
  - ✓ continuity

<image>



PIARC, Road Safety Manual (2003)

# **Setting Speed Limits**

- Speed zone design as to eliminate excessive driving conditions based on:
  - road functional classification
  - > alignment consistency and continuity
  - > skidding on curves provision
  - stopping sight distance provision
  - intersection and interchange areas
  - accident data



# Traffic Calming and Speed Reduction Engineering Measures

- Roundabouts
- Design of transitional zones between rural and urban environment
  - visual impression of portal areas
- Speedometers combined with variable message signs
- Rumble strips
- Speed bumps

and raised crossing platforms

urban areas





#### Main elements

undivided road



#### Main elements

divided road



#### Main elements

design vehicle



#### Main elements

traffic space





#### Lane width typical dimensions

#### > motorways

- ✓ 130 km/h: 3.75 m [passing (inner) lane 3.50m]
- expressways
  - ✓ 100-110 km/h: 3.50m 3.75m
- two lane roads
  - ✓ 90-100 km/h : 3.00m 3.25m
  - ✓ 50-80 km/h: 2.75m 3.00m



#### Unsafe cross sections

on 4 (and more) lane roads
 of opposing traffic without a medium,
 the number of head on accidents
 and side accidents
 from left turning is extremely high



#### Unsafe cross sections

- 2-lane roads with wide lanes

   or wide hard shoulders,
   are regularly used as
   very narrow 4-lane roads
   and the number
   of heavy accidents is even higher
- however,
   they can be transformed
   to 2+1 cross section
   with regulated overtaking possibilities
   on the middle lane



#### 2+1 cross sections

Cross-section dimension:	15.5m	
Carriageway with:	12.0-12.5m	
Lane width:	3.25-3.5	
Width of emergency lanes:	20	
Width of median:	0.5-1.0m*	
Cross-section dimension:	11.5-12.0m	
Carriageway with:	8.5-9.0m	
Lane width:	3.5m	
Width of emergency lanes:	n an anna an Aonaichte 1940 1940 - Anna an Aonaichtean	
Width of median:	0.5-1.0m*	

\*Median marking either double solid line or with additional transverse rumble strips

#### 2+1 cross sections







#### 2-1 cross sections

Cross-section dimension:	7.5-9.0m	
Carriageway with:	4.5-6.0m	
Lane width:	3.0-4.5m*	
Width of emergency lanes:		
Width of median:		
widen of median.	5	

RAL (2012)

#### Road edge design



- Potential measures, in order of priority
  - remove or relocate objects by placing them outside danger zone (avoidance of abrupt slopes on fills)
    - ✓ create obstacle free zone
  - replace the support of an obstacle
     with a collision-friendly support
    - ✓ breakable or slide construction
  - protect danger zones with
     vehicle restraint systems

Potential measures, in order of priority

- remove or relocate objects by placing them outside danger zone
   [avoidance of abrupt slopes on fills (>2/3)]
  - ✓ create obstacle free zone
  - certain criteria apply in accordance with speed





- Potential measures, in order of priority
  - replace the support of an obstacle with a collision-friendly support
    - ✓ EN12767, MASH
    - ✓ breakable or slide construction
      - detach [neutral energy (NE)]
      - yield [high energy (HE), low energy (LE)]



Willems, C. "Creating Forgiving Roadsides by Using Passive Safe System Road Equipment", (2015)

#### Potential measures, in order of priority

- protect danger zones with vehicle restraint systems (VRS)
  - EN1317, MASH, GOST R52289, JTG



safety barriers



removable barrier sections



crash cushions





terminals

transitions
## Visibility



### Visibility

- Stopping sight distance
- Passing sight distance
- Decision sight distance
- Intersection sight distance
- Interchange sight distance



Highway geometric design element
 of fundamental importance

must be provided at every point along the road surface

### Stopping sight distance

- > crest vertical curve radii
- > sag vertical curve radii
- > lateral clearance on right curves
- inner shoulder width on left curves
  of divided highways









PIARC, Road Safety Manual (2003)

# Highway geometric design element of fundamental importance

must be provided at every point along the road surface

### Stopping sight distance

- > crest vertical curve radii
- > sag vertical curve radii
- > lateral clearance on right curves
- inner shoulder width on left curves of divided highways

not to be considered as an additional lane\_ (in general <1.20m)



### SSD, under similar lighting conditions:

- SSD<sub>DEMANDED</sub> related with the ability of the vehicle to reach stop condition depending on
  - ✓ the road (geometry)
  - ✓ the driver (perception reaction)
  - ✓ the vehicle (dynamic characteristics)
- SSD<sub>AVAILABLE</sub> associated with the frontal sight field visible to the driver during daytime conditions and depends on
  - ✓ the road (geometry)
  - the roadside environment (roadside obstacles)



### SSD<sub>DEMANDED</sub> calculation

- distance traveled during driver's perception – reaction time, to the instant the brakes are applied
- the distance while braking
  to stop the vehicle
  (pure braking distance)

$$SSD = V \times t + \frac{V^2}{2(\frac{a}{g} + s)}$$

 $V_o$  (m/sec) : vehicle initial speed

t (sec) : driver's perception – reaction time [2.5sec (AASHTO, 2018), 2.0sec (RAA 2008)] g (m/sec<sup>2</sup>) : gravitational constant

a (m/sec<sup>2</sup>) : vehicle deceleration rate [3.4m/sec<sup>2</sup> (AASHTO, 2018), 3.7m/sec<sup>2</sup> (RAA 2008)]

s (%/100) : road grade [(+) upgrades, (-) downgrades]



### □ Collision speed calculation V<sub>D</sub>,

for cases where

 $D' < SSD - \frac{V_0 t}{3.6}$ 

$$V_{\rm D}$$
 = 3.6  $\sqrt{\frac{V_0^2}{3.6^2}}$  - 2(a + g $\frac{s}{100}$ )D



- $V_o$  (km/h) : vehicle initial speed
- t (sec) : driver's perception reaction time [2.5sec (AASHTO, 2018), 2.0sec (RAA 2008)]
- g (m/sec<sup>2</sup>) : gravitational constant
- a (m/sec<sup>2</sup>) : vehicle deceleration rate [3.4m/sec<sup>2</sup> (AASHTO, 2018), 3.7m/sec<sup>2</sup> (RAA 2008)]
- s (%/100) : road grade [(+) upgrades, (-) downgrades]



### 

uninterrupted line of sight between the

#### driver's eye and the obstacle

- ✓ typical height of the driver's eye
  - 1.00m for passenger cars
- 2.00m regarding trucks
- ✓ typical obstacle height
- 0.50m 1.00m



### SSD adequacy breakpoint (3D perspective)

- SSD<sub>DEMANDED</sub> ≤ SSD<sub>AVAILABLE</sub>
- options
  - ✓ determine the examined curve's inferred safe speed
  - ✓ define the inner shoulder width for a desired speed



### **Passing Sight Distance**

- Length allocated to process safe passing of vehicle ahead
- Provided on bidirectional two lane roads
- Depends on vehicles' operating speed
- □ Minimum PSD to be provided for 20% 25% of the road's length

 $D_1+D_2+D_3+D_4 = Passing Sight Distance$ tmaneuver (D1+D2) = tmaneuver (D4)



### **Passing Sight Distance**

### Impact Parameters

- road geometry
  (in general permissible in broad horizontal and vertical curves)
- ▷ PSD<sub>AVAILABLE</sub> ≥ PSD<sub>DEMANDED</sub>
- allocated PSD areas
  - ✓ high traffic →
    high overtaking demand →
    reduced passing areas →
    possible provision 2 +1 roads



## **Decision Sight Distance**

#### Length of roadway where the driver

- detects optically an unexpected information
- adjusts effectively his speed
- completes efficiently and safely the required maneuvers

#### Examples

- complex intersections or interchanges
- locations requiring unusual or unexpected maneuvers
- major cross section changes
- work zone areas



### **Intersection Sight Distance**

- $\Box SSD_{AVAILABLE} \geq SSD_{DEMANDED}$
- Yield Crossing (15m from edge line)
  - > L=110m (V≤70km/h)
- Controlled Crossing (3m from edgeline)
  - L=110m (V=70km/h)
  - L=200m (V>70km/h)







RAL (2012)

### **Interchange Sight Distance**

#### Entrance ramp



### ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ROAD SAFETY



**Stergios Mavromatis** 

stemavro@central.ntua.gr

Assistant Professor National Technical University of Athens