

**ESF EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP:
TOWARD SAFER ROAD TRAFFIC IN SOUTHERN EUROPE**

FINAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

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General objectives

The objective of this ESF Exploratory Workshop was to establish links between traffic researchers - especially social scientists - from Southern and Western Europe. The general objective of the work trip to the Netherlands and UK, METU Conference on Driver Behaviour and Traffic Safety, Mediterranean Traffic Researcher Workshop, and student training trip to Traffic Research Unit at the University of Helsinki was to both develop an exchange program for young researchers and to launch long-term projects involving Southern and Western European research institutes. In order to understand the reasons for high numbers of road fatalities in Mediterranean countries and to develop effective interventions, research collaboration between "safe" and "risky" European countries is essential.

Phase 1: A Work Trip to the traffic research institutes in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

Aims

The first objective of the working trip to the traffic research laboratories in the Netherlands and United Kingdom was to familiarise the participants with up-to-date research techniques and technological developments in traffic research. The second aim was to establish links between Western European and Turkish traffic researchers and to launch joint research programs.

Table 1. Participants of the working trip

Name	Institute	Country	Degree	Age group	Gender
Timo Lajunen	Middle East Technical University (METU)	Turkey	PhD, Assoc. Prof.	30-35	M
Mikko Räsänen	Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT)	Finland	PhD, researcher	30-35	M
Nebi Sümer	METU	Turkey	PhD, Assoc. Prof.	40-45	M
Türker Özkan	METU	Turkey	BSc, PhD student	20-25	M

Table 2. Programme of the working trip

8.2.2001	Flight: Ankara-Amsterdam
9.2.2001	<p>SWOV Institute for Traffic Safety (host: Dr. Peter Levelt)</p> <p>Mr. Fred Wegman, the director of the institute, told us about the role SWOV in the field of traffic safety. SWOV is an independent research institute which aims at improving traffic safety by conducting research and distributing information. SWOV's research activities can be classified under eight titles: road users (the relationship between behaviour, surroundings, and accidents), preconditions for safe behaviour, the strategy for a safe road infrastructure, road design and road safety, vehicle safety, telematics and road safety, road safety analysis and decision making and administration. The research results are actively disseminated to all interest groups.</p> <p>Mr. Chris Schoon described projects about cycling safety in the Netherlands.</p> <p>Dr. Marjan Hangenziager is the head of the behaviour, decision making and analysis department at SWOV. She told us about the on-going research projects which cover themes like the influence of alcohol and drugs, aggression and emotion, fatigue, and sustainable safety (traffic environment supports the safe behaviour).</p> <p>Ms. Martha Brouwer presented us a new computerised application for organising traffic safety related information. The aim of this information database is to collect all relevant traffic safety information to one system. The user interface of the system was very impressive: with few keywords a user can select information from several databases.</p> <p>Ms Divera Twisk told about her projects about the safety knowledge and behaviour, police supervision and driver education. In addition, we discussed with Ms. Twisk about a future research project of Turkish drivers in the Netherlands.</p>
10.2.2001	Flight: Amsterdam-London
11.2.2001	London
12.2.2001	<p>University of Reading, Department of Psychology (host: Prof. Frank McKenna)</p> <p>Prof. Frank McKenna has been developing tests for measuring a driver's hazard perception skills. He told us about his recent research projects and demonstrated the hazard perception test. Since the Turkish law of driver testing requires us to test certain driver groups with psychomotor tests, information about McKenna's hazard perception test was very important. In future, a Turkish adaptation of the test is likely to be added to psycho-technical assessment.</p>

<p>13.2.2001</p>	<p>Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), Crowthorne, UK (host: Mr. Chris Baugham)</p> <p>Mr. Chris Baugham told us about the research activities in TRL. TRL is a private traffic research institute with over 500 employees. TRL has four divisions: infrastructure, safety and environment, transportation and internal division. Traffic safety work is mostly done in the safety and environment division.</p> <p>Mr. Ryszard Gorell showed us how the TRL driving simulator can be used in planning the environmental interventions.</p> <p>Dr. Andrew Parkes demonstrated the driving simulator itself and told about the research projects related to it.</p> <p>Mr. Mark Wedlock demonstrated the TRL instrumented car and the analysing methods. In the instrumented car, a driver's driving behaviour can be recorded in great detailed, because the car has three video cameras, sensors in steering wheel and pedals ,etc. In addition to the instrumented car, we were able to have a test drive in TRL's impressive test track.</p>
<p>14.2.2001</p>	<p>University of Manchester, Department of Psychology (host: Dr. Dianne Parker)</p> <p>Dr. Dianne Parker is one of the leading social psychologists applying social psychological theories to driving. She has been studying the relationships between traffic behaviour and social psychological factors (attitudes, norms, etc). She is especially interested in rule-related behaviour and driver errors. Dr. Parker presented us a review of recent research. In addition, she demonstrated how successful media campaigns should be planned and targeted to evoke a permanent change in driver attitudes.</p>
<p>15.2.2001</p>	<p>University of Leeds, Institute for Transport Studies (ITS) (host: Dr. Oliver Carsten)</p> <p>Dr. Oliver Carsten told about research activities in ITS. ITS conducts research in six fields: transport policy and appraisal, traffic statistics (traffic flow analysis), network modelling (SATURN), safety, economics and behavioural modelling, and teaching. Safety research in ITS is concentrated mainly on new technologies in vehicles. For example, intelligent speed management systems would result in considerable reduction in traffic accidents. The system can be adapted dynamically to road and weather conditions. The cost-benefit studies indicate that intelligent speed management systems would pay its costs back in few years.</p>

	<p>Dr. Samantha Comte presented a study about user acceptance of intelligent speed management systems. It seems that well-designed attitude and information campaign are needed before the system can be applied.</p> <p>Dr. Liliana Read presented her research results concerning a driver assessment test for elderly drivers. She has been developing a computer based testing system for assessing elderly drivers with cognitive impairment. Validation results were impressive: the test can differentiate between accident-involved and accident-free older drivers.</p> <p>Dr. Oliver Carsten demonstrated the Leeds traffic simulator. Although the simulator does not simulate accelerations as the TRL simulator does, the visual simulation was very advanced. In ITS, the simulator has been used in testing in-car IT applications.</p>
16.2.2001	Flight: Manchester-Ankara

Assessment of the results

In general, the work trip was a great success and the targets were met. The learning objectives were achieved: we heard about cutting-edge research from the leading researchers in the field. Since traffic psychology is a new field in Turkey, being able to get familiar with new research techniques and instruments (simulators, instrumented vehicles, etc) is crucial. Especially new developments in driver testing (hazard perception test and the test for older drivers) were important for Turkey.

In addition to learning objectives, the trip was successful in establishing links and promoting collaboration. Together with SWOV researchers Dr. Peter Levelt and Ms. Divera Twisk, we decided to launch a project about driving behaviour of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. In addition, Dr. Paul Timms from the University of Leeds invited us to collaborate in INCO-MED programme, which aims at improving the contacts between European Union and Middle Eastern countries. The proposal was submitted in August. We also talked with Dr. Dianne Parker (Manchester University) of possible Leonardo-programme partnership. In addition to many valuable personal contacts, the work trip led to several initiatives for future collaboration.

Phase 2: ESF/METU Conference on Driver Behaviour and Traffic Safety

Aims

The objective of the ESF Exploratory Workshop was to invite cutting-edge traffic safety scientists from Western Europe (Finland, Netherlands, UK, Sweden) and Greece to Turkey as keynote speakers. The speakers gave general state-of-art talks about different aspects of driver behaviour and more specialised workshops about their speciality. The aim was to discuss about reasons for high accident rate in the region and safety measures, raise the level of public knowledge about traffic safety and establish and strengthen the links between European traffic professionals.

Target audience

The target audience for the conference were traffic officials, political decision makers, general audience via media (TV, radio, newspapers) and traffic professionals.

Organizing committee

Organizing committee included following members: Assoc. prof. Nebi Sümer (chairperson), Assoc. prof. Timo Lajunen (coordinator), Prof. Nuray Karanci, and Assoc. prof. Belgin Ayvasik.

Speakers and participants

The list of invited speakers and participants can be found in the Table 3. This table includes only those participants who contributed the conference by giving a talk, helping with arrangements or whose costs were met by ESF. ESF funded participants are indicated by an asterisk.

Table 3. Participants in the conference and the workshop

Name	Role	Institute	Country	Degree	Age group	Gender
Åberg, Lars**	KN	Univ. of Uppsala	Sweden	Prof., Dr.	50-54	M
Akbulut, Ural	KN	METU	Turkey	Prof., Dr.	55-60	M
Ayvasik, Belgin	P	METU	Turkey	Assist. Prof, Dr.	35-40	F
Bozo, Özlem	P	METU	Turkey	Assistant, MA	20-24	F
Chliaoutakis, Joannes*	WS	TEI	Greece	Prof., Dr.	50-54	M
Demakakos, Panayotes*	KN	TEI	Greece	Lecturer, MA	30-34	M
Kaistinen, Jyrki*	WS	Univ. of Helsinki	Finland	Lecturer, MA	30-34	M
Kurtic, Nihat	KN	Turkish Traffic Police	Turkey	Head of Traffic Police in Turkey	55-60	M

Lajunen, Timo	KN	METU	Turkey	Assoc. Prof., Dr.	30-34	M
Lamble, David*	WS	Univ. of Helsinki	Finland	Researcher, MA	30-34	M
McKenna, Frank*	KN	Univ. of Reading	UK	Prof., Dr.	45-50	M
Makriyanni, Vasilias*	P	TEI	Greece	Graduate student	20-24	F
Mesken, Jolieke**	WS	SWOV	Netherlands	Researcher, Drs.	25-30	F
Papadaki, Kalliopi*	P	TEI	Greece	Graduate student	20-24	F
Pagoulidou, Maria*	P	TEI	Greece	Graduate student	25-30	F
Papadakaki, Maria*	P	TEI	Greece	Graduate student	25-30	F
Parker, Dianne*	KN	Univ. of Manchester	UK	Senior lecturer, Dr.	40-44	F
Rimmö, Per-Arne**	WS	Univ. of Uppsala	Sweden	Lecturer, Dr.	40-44	M
Räsänen, Mikko*	WS	VTT	Finland	Researcher, Dr.	30-34	M
Sahin, Nesrin	KN	Turkish Psychological Association	Turkey	Prof., Dr.	50-54	F
Sümer, Nebi	KN	METU	Turkey	Assoc. Prof., Dr.	40-44	M
Tan, Ahmet	KN	Turkish Parliament	Turkey	Member of parliament	40-44	M
Yasak, Yesim	WS	Plaka Psikoteknik	Turkey	Psychologist, MA	30-34	F
Yigit, Dincer	KN	Turkish Road Administration	Turkey	Head of Road Administration	50-54	M
Öz, Bahar	P	METU	Turkey	Assistant, BA	20-24	F
Özdemir, Metin	P	METU	Turkey	Assistant, BA	20-24	M
Özkan, Türker	P	METU	Turkey	Assistant, BA	20-24	M

*Participation funded fully by ESF; ** Participation funded partly by ESF
KN=keynote/invited speaker, WS=workshop speaker, P=participant
M=male, F=female

Table 4. Programme (31 May 2001, METU Kultur ve Kongre Merkezi, Salon A)

09:00 – 09:05	Welcome Assoc. prof. Nebi Sümer, representatives of the scientific committee, Assoc. prof. Timo Lajunen, convenor
09:05 – 09:20	Opening of the conference Prof. Ural Akbulut, President of the Middle East Technical University
09:20 – 09:35	The role of Turkish Psychological Association in traffic safety work Prof. Nesrin Sahin, President of the Turkish Psychological Association
09:35 – 9:50	Turkish traffic police and traffic safety in Turkey Dr. Nihat Kurtiç, Head of the Turkish Traffic Police
09.50-10:05	Traffic and transportation safety in Turkey Mr. Dincer Yigit, Head of the Turkish Road Administration
10:00 -10:15	Recent developments in traffic safety policy in Turkey Mr. Ahmet Tan, representative of the traffic committee of the Turkish parliament

Coffee break

10:45 – 11:30	Keynote "Driver behaviour and accident involvement" Prof. Frank McKenna, University of Reading, UK
11:30 – 12:15	Keynote "Making roads safer by changing the behaviour of drivers" Dr. Dianne Parker, University of Manchester, UK
12:15 – 13:00	Keynote " The law and the driver" Prof. Lars Åberg, University of Uppsala, Sweden

Lunch break

14:30 – 15:15	Keynote "Human behavior, traffic accidents and traffic-safety policy" Prof. Heikki Summala, University of Helsinki, Finland
15:15 – 16:00	Keynote "The road traffic accidents in Greece. Trends and perspectives" Panayotes Th. Demakakos, TEI of Athens, Greece

Tea break

16:30 – 17:30	Panel discussion and conclusions
17:30 – 17:40	Closing

Assessment of the results

The results can be assessed by using three criteria: 1) coverage in media, 2) number of participants, and 3) feed-back from the participants. The conference gained broad coverage in Turkish media before, during and after the conference. For example, nation-wide newspaper Milliyet wrote an article about the conference and Turkish CNN interviewed our foreign participants in the conference. The estimated number of participants was about 200, i.e. the auditorium was fully booked. Also the main state organisations were represented: Turkish Parliament, the Police, Air Force, Army, Gendarmerie, Turkish Psychological Association, and several private companies and universities. When evaluated with criteria 1 and 2, the conference was a success.

Also the feed-back from the participants was positive. The only problem was the language. Although the talks were translated to Turkish beforehand and we clearly indicated that the conference language is English, some Turkish participants were disappointed, because they were not able to follow well the English speaking presenters.

From the scientific point of view, the conference was successful. As expected, the Western European speakers were able to tell about new findings and approaches in traffic safety sciences. The Greek keynote talk by Mr. Panayotes Demakakos about the traffic safety situation in Greece was extremely informative for the Turkish participants. In sum, the conference reached its objectives.

Phase 3: ESF Mediterranean Traffic Researcher Workshop

Aims

In addition to the large-scale one-day conference, a two-day workshop for a limited number of traffic safety researchers, students and professionals was organised. In these workshops, leading European experts gave “hands-on” training for Turkish and Greek traffic psychologists. The aim of the workshop was to improve skills and knowledge of Mediterranean traffic researchers and familiarise them with the recent developments in the field.

Participants

Please see the table 3. In addition, about 40 other (non-EU funded) participants followed the sessions. This number included most of the traffic psychologists in Turkey. In addition, there were participants from Turkish Air Force, Army, Gendarmerie, Traffic Police, and Road Administration.

Table 5. Programme

Friday 1 June 2001

09:00 – 09:15	Opening of the workshop
09:15 – 11:00	Session I. “Driver attitude change: social psychology of driving” Prof. Lars Åberg, University of Uppsala, Sweden Dr. Dianne Parker, University of Manchester, UK Dr. Per-Arne Rimmö, University of Uppsala, Sweden

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:45	Session II: “Hazard perception in driving situation” Prof. Frank McKenna, University of Reading, UK
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Lunch break

14:00 – 16:00	Session III: “New methods of studying driver behaviour” Prof. Heikki Summala, University of Helsinki, Finland Mr. Jyrki Kaistinen, University of Helsinki, Finland Mr. David Lamble, University of Helsinki, Finland
16:00 – 17:00	Conclusion of the Sessions

Saturday 2 June 2001

10:00 – 12:00	Session IV: “Driver behaviour and Traffic safety in Eastern Mediterranean countries” Prof. Joannes Chliaoutakis, TEI of Crete, Greece Dr. Timo Lajunen, METU, Turkey Assoc. Prof. Nebi Sümer, METU, Turkey Ms. Yesim Yasak, Turkey
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Coffee break

12:30 – 14:00	Session V: “Emotions and driver behaviour” Drs. Jolieke Mesken., SVOW, the Netherlands
14:00 – 14:45	Session VI: "Driver and the environment" Dr. Mikko Räsänen, Technical Research Centre of Finland
14:45 – 15:00	Closing
15:00 – 15:45	Mediterranean workgroup meeting between Greek and Turkish participants Assoc. prof. Belgin Ayvasik, Prof. Joannes Chliaoutakis, MA Panayotes Demakakos, Assoc. prof. Timo Lajunen, Ms. Makriyanni, Ms. Maria Pagoulidou, Ms. Maria Papadakaki, Ms. Kalliopi Papadaki, Assoc. prof. Nebi Sümer, and Ass. Türker Özkan

Assessment of the results

The aims of the two-day workshop were quite different than those of the one-day conference. The objective was to create a friendly and informal learning environment, in which younger Mediterranean traffic researchers and professionals (MSc/MA level) could learn by doing from the leading experts in the field. Workshops included exercises in which the participants worked in groups in order to solve certain traffic safety problems. As far as I can see, we managed to encourage participants to participate all activities and ask questions from the experts. In this way, I see that the workshop was successful.

Workshop presentations improved participants' knowledge of safety sciences in two ways. First, some of the presentations (e.g by Mr. Lambie, Mr. Kaistinen, Prof. McKenna, Prof. Summala) familiarized the participants with up-to-date research techniques and instruments for studying road user behaviour. These involved driving simulators, instrumented vehicles, and testing instruments. This workshop gave the Mediterranean traffic professionals chance to learn about techniques, which they otherwise would not have chance to hear about. Second, some of the presentations provided information about the last theoretical developments in the field. Presentations by Prof. Lars Åberg, Dr. Dianne Parker, Drs. Jolieke Mesken, and Dr. Per-Arne Rimmö dealt with theories and empirical findings related to social and personality psychology of driving, for example, attitude change, emotions, and supervision techniques.

Especially interesting and relevant for Mediterranean region were the Session IV (“Driver behaviour and Traffic safety in Eastern Mediterranean countries”) and the Mediterranean group meeting. Discussion about cultural factors influencing traffic safety was very interesting, because cultural factors are not usually taken into account in traffic safety interventions. This is mainly due to the fact that traffic psychology conferences are usually dominated by Western European and American researchers. Discussion in this workshop indicated that there is a clear need for studies about regional and cultural differences in traffic behaviour and safety.

All participants of the group meeting agreed the conclusion that further collaboration between Greece and Turkey is needed for developing traffic safety interventions for the region. Traffic safety problems were found to be almost identical in Greece and Turkey, so unified efforts are needed. Prof. Joannes Chliaoutakis presented his idea about next traffic safety workshop, which could be held in Crete. As a continuum to this ESF exploratory workshop, the coming workshop held in Crete would be focused on practical safety interventions.

Phase 4: Establishment of an exchange training programme in traffic psychology

Aim

One of the main findings in the exploratory workshop was the need of training programmes for young traffic researchers in Greece and Turkey. Because of lack of senior experts and research equipment, these countries cannot offer up-to-date training in traffic sciences. Therefore, the only option for improving the level of expertise of young Eastern Mediterranean traffic behaviour experts is to establish exchange programmes between Eastern Mediterranean countries and Western Europe. These programmes should include both expert visits and workshops in Greece and Turkey and short training periods of Greek and Turkish students in Western European research laboratories.

During his stay in Ankara, prof. Heikki Summala expressed his willingness to host Mediterranean traffic psychology students in his lab for a three-months period of training. Since this idea was exactly what we were aiming at, we suggested the training period to MA Türker Özkan, who finally participated the training course from the beginning of August to the end of October, 2001.

Content of training

Türker Özkan's training period included following tasks: participation of experimental research (data collection and analysis) on driver behaviour (driving ability of Alzheimer's disease patients) by using instrumented car and semi-automatic data analysis, training in survey methodology, and participation in research seminars at the department.

Costs

Türker Özkan's training in Finland was covered by a scholarship from the Finnish Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). The scholarship (EUR 800 per month), however, covered only accommodation and daily allowance, so we decided to cover the travel costs from ESF grant, since enhancement of this kind of exchange possibilities was one of the main aims of the workshop.

Assessment of the results

The successfulness of the training period was assessed by following criteria: 1) new techniques and skills learned during the period, 2) feed-back from the supervisor, 3) research conducted (data collected, manuscripts prepared). The training period met all these criteria. Türker learned techniques, which cannot be studied in Turkey (use of instrumented car, semi-automatic data analysis, analysis of on-road measurements, design and use of computerised questionnaires). Second, the feed-back from prof. Heikki Summala was very positive. In his evaluation, Türker's good technical skills, enthusiasm and ability to co-operate were mentioned. In addition, Türker was able to 1) collect a large dataset of 900 Finnish drivers, and 2) finalised one manuscript.

General assessment of the results

As the evaluation of individual phases of the workshop showed, general impression of the scientific value and impact on general awareness of road safety issues is very positive. Also, each phase of the workshop (work trip to NL and UK, conference, two-day workshop, training period) had distinctive impact on knowledge on traffic safety science in Eastern Mediterranean region. Work trip to the leading laboratories in Western Europe, two-day workshop, and training period in Finland all introduced Turkish and Greek traffic safety experts and graduate students with last findings and techniques in safety research, and, therefore, strengthened the level of knowledge of these issues in Turkey and Greece. In addition to these training occasions for experts, one-day conference targeted to high-level traffic authorities and political decision makers was a success: one of the main TV channels and press reported about the conference.

In addition to training of local experts, I personally found it important to bring Greek and Turkish traffic safety experts together. General impression among Greeks and Turks was that the traffic safety problems are very similar in these two countries. Therefore, collaboration between Greece and Turkey is vital both in research and training of traffic experts. Since establishing traffic research laboratories is expensive and out of reach of these countries, close collaboration would help us to establish effective training programs and conduct competitive research with reasonable costs. As a result of this workshop, a collaborative research project has been started between Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara and Technological Educational Institute of Crete (TEI). In addition, Professor Chliaoutakis emphasised the need of a follow-up workshop and invited Turkish traffic experts to Crete.

Traffic safety research is mainly conducted in Western Europe, Australia and USA. Therefore, traffic safety experts – even in EU level – are usually not interested or even aware of vast regional differences in traffic behaviour and safety. This workshop was able to introduce the Mediterranean traffic safety problems to leading experts from Western Europe. In future, this might help traffic researcher community to pay more attention to Eastern Europe and Eastern Mediterranean countries. In fact, this ESF exploratory workshop has already led to collaboration in European level. Both METU and TEI are core partners in a INCO-MED project proposal (lead by Leeds University), which was started after our visit in Leeds. These kinds of measurable outcomes show that the workshop reached its aims well.

Dissemination of results

Since the main aims of the exploratory workshop was to train Eastern Mediterranean traffic safety professionals and raise the public awareness of road safety, adequate dissemination of results is essential. The papers presented in conference and two-day workshop will be translated to Turkish and published in proceedings publications. One of the proceedings will be in Turkish (editors: Nebi Sümer, Timo Lajunen), and one in English (editors: Timo Lajunen, David Lambie and Nebi Sümer). It is necessary to print both English and Turkish versions of the proceedings book, since most of the traffic policy makers and road safety planners in Turkey do not speak English. English copy of the proceedings book is needed to communicate the results to international community of traffic professionals. In addition, selected parts papers can be translated to Greek. Both English and Turkish versions of the proceedings book can be used as texts in traffic psychology courses in Turkey.

List of participants

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