



Towards safer road traffic in Eastern Mediterranean region

Reporting

Project Information

SAFEAST

Grant agreement ID: 509813

[Project website](#) 

Start date

1 October 2004


End date

30 September 2008

Funded under
FP6-MOBILITY

Overall budget
€ 685 366

EU contribution
€ 685 366

Coordinated by
ORTA DOGU TEKNIK
UNIVERSITESI
 Turkey

Final Activity Report Summary - SAFEAST (Towards safer road traffic in Eastern Mediterranean region)

The aim of the SAFEAST project was to improve the knowledge and research skills of Eastern Mediterranean traffic researchers by training researchers in Greece and especially in Turkey. This aim was achieved by:

- 1) establishing a traffic research laboratory and driving ability clinic to Middle East Technical University (METU);
- 2) developing a MSc program for traffic safety studies; and
- 3) by joint research projects conducted by incoming fellows and Turkish researchers both in Turkey and in the secondment countries.

Incoming fellowships were used for giving training in METU for traffic safety experts and students as well as conducting research in four priority areas.

The main method for the transfer of knowledge was 'learning-by-doing' i.e. teaching Turkish students and traffic researchers by integrating them to research projects. The traffic research laboratory and clinic

(named as 'Safety research unit' - SRU) for assessing driving abilities was established in the first and second year of the project by purchasing the most up-to-date equipment and providing training for staff and graduate students. The SRU equipment included also field research equipment, which made roadside observations and measurements in traffic possible.

The second aim, i.e. master program in traffic safety sciences, was achieved finally in the last year of the project, when proposal for a joint MSc program between METU and University of Groningen of the Netherlands was prepared and submitted. The key features of the program are that the graduates from the program would fulfil both University of Groningen and METU qualifications and that teaching has strong emphasis on practice and research. In addition to establishment of the laboratory and MSc program, research was conducted in four priority areas which were human factors, societal factors in traffic safety, driving abilities of elderly professional drivers, and social psychological models of traffic behaviour.

The priority area of human factors included studies about pedestrian bridge use and design, safe crossings around schools and acceptability of in-car information technology, especially intelligent speed

adaptation systems. These studies resulted in recommendations for successful application of engineering solutions to traffic safety problems in Turkey. The second priority area 'societal factors in traffic safety' included studies about regional and cultural differences in traffic safety and behaviour in Europe and in the Middle East. Surveys included data sets about driving (e.g. driving violations, errors, driving skills, aggression) from six countries and also studies using aggregated data sets were conducted. These studies provided new results about cultural and regional differences in risky driving and accident involvement as well as factors leading to aberrant driving.

The third priority area (driving abilities of elderly professional drivers) included a large study in which Turkish and Finnish elderly professional drivers were examined by using extensive vision tests, cognitive and neuropsychological tests, psychological inventories and survey about driving problems and general health. The results emphasised the role of psychological well-being and physical fitness in professional drivers' driving ability.

The fourth priority area included studies applying social psychological models to risky driving and driver attitudes. In addition, cultural correlates of risky driving were studied. Psychological models were applied especially to seat belt use and acceptance of intelligent speed adaptation systems in Turkey. In 'cultural correlates' studies, studies about impact of cultural conservatism and religion (Islam) on risky road user behaviour were studied by using surveys and field observations. In general, SAFEAST project achievements exceeded the original objectives and lasting impact on the quality and quantity of traffic safety research in Turkey can be expected.

Last update: 25 May 2012

Record number: 52278