

European Conference
on Road Safety Data and Knowledge-based Policy-making
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Opening Speech by **Prof. John Golias**, NTUA
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On behalf of the School of Civil Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Athens and to this important European Conference on evidence based road safety policy making. As Head of the NTUA Laboratory of Traffic Engineering, I have had the pleasure to follow and participate in the European accidentology research since the first steps of the development of the CARE database, and its upgrade and enhancement through CAREPLUS I & II. I also followed and contributed with great interest to the SafetyNet and Dakota projects, and I witnessed the development and enhancement of the European Road Safety Observatory (ERSO), which has become a most useful tool for providing substantiated knowledge and high quality data for both researchers and policy makers throughout Europe.

In Europe, there has been significant road safety improvement over the last decades in almost all countries, as a result of systematic efforts at national and European level. Nevertheless, the recently adopted new European target for reducing fatalities by 2020, brings the need for further strengthening efforts and cooperation, for more reliable, useful and accessible data and knowledge, for better understanding of road accidents causes and road user behaviour, for improved infrastructure and vehicle technologies, and for more standardised methodologies for data collection and analysis, in order to fully support evidence-based policy making.

Especially in Greece, despite the considerable progress during the last decade, our country is still ranked among the poor performing countries in Europe. There is a lot of potential for improvement, especially as regards road safety management, road safety culture and road user behaviour, education and training, implementation and evaluation of road safety strategies, programmes and measures. The cooperation and exchange of knowledge, data and good practices within the ERSO can be thus most useful for making road safety evidence-based policy making a priority, towards the improvement of road safety in Greece.

The Dakota project has contributed significantly in the enhancement of the ERSO, not only by gathering and making available more, and more reliable, data and knowledge, but also by providing additional tools, such as benchmarking tools, future forecasts, road safety management good practices, in-depth accident investigations, new insights on vehicle technologies and naturalistic driving pilot experiments. This Conference gives us the opportunity to be informed about these very interesting results. Moreover, it is an excellent opportunity to discuss the current and future potential and the further development of the ERSO and the challenges for the improvement of road safety in Europe.

I would like to welcome you all in Athens, to get inspired from this ideal place and contribute in a fruitful discussion for the future of road safety in Europe.