

9th annual ASECAP Road Safety Conference

Road safety on a larger European motorway network

Warsaw, Tuesday 8th March 2016, 9 h – 16 h

Hotel Intercontinental, ul. Emilii Plater, 49, 00-125 Warsaw

Slide 1

Contemporary man drowns in an information flood. We're surrounded by the information – don't drink alcohol, don't eat fatty food, go jogging, cycling, don't do this – because something, do that – because something else. Scratch yourself there, take a pill, use a shampoo, don't jump from the fortieth floor. In this information flood we need to create tools to be able to reach people living today to make them (additionally) slow down even more and know how to behave in case of an accident. And what's more, to answer for them why they're supposed to do it.

Slide 2

Can you see the picture of a virus? Do you know this virus? It's Ebola virus. Are you scared of this virus? If I told you I was in Sierra Leone yesterday, would you shake my hand? I suppose not. WHO quotes that Ebola virus has killed 11,000 people since the epidemic outbreak.

Slide 3:

Do you know how many people have died in Iraq since the beginning of the conflict? 242,000! Each death has been publicised as a sensation. A soldier's death was accompanied by a military setting, there was an orchestra, a commander, a Ministry of Defence representative. He handed in a medal for valour.

Slide 4:

In the meantime, we pass by traffic accidents almost indifferently. There are so many of them that we aren't shocked at all. We've assumed that there were, are and will be accidents. While leaving home we aren't afraid of being knocked down by a car or getting run over by a lorry. WHO quotes that every year 1,300,000 people die in traffic accidents in the whole world.

Slide 5:

The subject of the conference is motorway safety, the context of accidents, rescuing people. Yet, if we pass by the million victims killed yearly, we can organise 12 such conferences every month with no effect, as road safety depends on the state authorities' determination. The authorities have to show us what they expect from us, what kind of actions and reactions. Good road, education and law enforcement, as well as cooperation of all institutions, services and NGOs have to go together. Creating laws can't be like patching ripped trousers. Sometimes instead of adding a patch it's better to take a new pair and forget the sentiment for the old ones.

Polish motorways are a young network. What a pity UEFA European Championship isn't organised every four years in Poland. Just before the first whistle blow on 8th June 2012 the whole Poland smelled fresh motorway asphalt. Warsaw was connected with Lisbon. Europe, the civilisation came round to Poland.

We got from our authorities a present which, as it turned out later, we can't use. I've vacuumed a film I made 2 years ago with my Foundation and the Municipal Roads Management Board. It hasn't become much outdated. Let's watch it.

Slide 6:

As we can see drivers use a motorway as a municipal road. In the picture on the left, we've got a motorway – 2 carriageways, 2 lanes and a central reservation. On the right – also 2 carriageways, but 3 lanes and a central reservation. Also grade-separated junctions, also overpasses. On the first one we'll go 140 km/h, on the other 80 km/h. This is a way of upper speed limit.

Slide 7:

Drivers don't see any difference between these two roads. Thus the behaviour we've seen in the film. Driving the middle lane, overtaking on the right, blocking the middle lane. Why? Because I know that in 7km it's not going to be the middle but the right lane, so I'm already prepared.

One more: Traffic lights at the exits of motorways is misunderstanding. Drivers think that they will save time, but lose it.

Slide 8

The responsibility within road safety in Poland is vague. There is no leader. There are two ministries in charge of the road safety. There are also several uniformed services.

The main institution associated with road traffic is the Police. The Police has all rights to control road traffic – from measuring the speed, to managing road accidents, to imposing fines.

Next institution is the Road Transport Inspection, established to control the observation of laws within the performance of road transport and non-profit transport of people and goods.

Currently, there's a discussion to decide if the inspection is to function simultaneously or to be incorporated to the Police structures.

Slide 9

The following organs can control us: the Military Police – often used during holiday traffic, long weekend traffic, and the Border Guard – which often replace the Police in a border area.

Slide 10

The City Guard – I'll stop for a while. The Guard is directly subordinate to the president of the city where the guard has been established. It has been created to keep general order – pay attention to illegal trade, drinking alcohol in public places, case of a violation of public order. One day, someone came up with an idea to give to the City Guard the right to measure speed limit and control parking.

The formation got onto it eagerly. Why? Local authorities quickly noticed that money from fines constituted a significant amount in their local budgets.

The formation was hated by the media, citizens, politicians, judges, as it didn't afraid to send a photo to anyone who was caught in it. The media started to call speed cameras - money-makers. I'm going to say something unpopular in Poland. The City Guard became a formation that reduced the number of accidents in places where it made a control. There are two truths: first one, yes, some cities have done money-makers with speed cameras. On the other hand, nobody had punished drivers for driving according to the law.

On 7 Warsaw junctions, where automatic speed measurement system was installed, the number of accidents was reduced to 0, the number of victims and the injured to 0, a few collisions were noted. The location of Warsaw speed cameras was determined basing on police statistics.

What happened then? 2015 parliamentary elections came. One of the parties wanting to remind the voters about themselves suggested to take away from the city guard the rights to control speed. No one was brave enough to stop this madness, as they would have lost in the voters eyes. Speed control was moved to the Road Transport Inspection. Except that there are 12,000 City Guards, and only 500 inspectors. The processing of the photos from Warsaw speed cameras was done by 100 city guards. There is no workforce to take over this control.

Politicians shouted from the tribune: “we have eliminated the pathology”. Yet, it’s not the speed control that is a pathology, but 3,200 people who died on Polish roads.

As you can see, we’ve already moved to the 10th slide and I’m not talking about motorways but a faulty system.

Slide 11

Next institution is The National Road Safety Council.

It has been established as an advisory and auxiliary intra-resort organ to the Council of Ministers in the matters of road traffic safety. That institution should be the leader with real power, but it is an advisory body.

Slide 12 / 13

In Poland Medical Rescue is provided by The State Emergency Medical Services.

SEMS: Paramedic Services, Air Paramedic Services, National Fire Service, Emergency Communication Centre, Emergency Management Centre, Emergency Department in a hospital.

Volunteers: Volunteer Fire Brigade, Polish Red Cross, Malta Medical Services, Mazurian Volunteer Rescue Service, Mountain Volunteer Rescue Service.

Slide 14

An answer of the our Federation is the popularisation of the road rules and the first aid. We've got 1,835 instructors and paramedics who offer their knowledge and experience in every accident. Unfortunately, our rescuers have not been included in a medical rescue system. If they see an accident they are obliged to stop and give first aid until rescue services come (ambulance, fire brigade, police). However, they won't be informed, nor called by the radio.

Slide 15

In the Warsaw emergency management system there have been included paramedics from ELE TAXI. The boss of ELE TAXI corporation, as 90% of Polish taxi drivers are associated in corporations, has told his taxi drivers – you have an additional task. You're going to rescue people. The ones who don't agree may change a corporation. Today, every ELE TAXI driver is a road paramedic. All ELE TAXI paramedics were educated by the our Federation.

Slide 16

The Our Federation postulates to incorporate our paramedics to The State Emergency Medical Services.

There should be established one institution with real power, which will define the course of action, which will create a road map, a common education programme for all Polish regions.

There should also be established one uniformed service which will no longer be involved in education, but in tedious and thankless law enforcement.

We postulate as well a coherent education system for children and youth in the form of a road education lesson.

We want to become a leader of extracurricular education of children and youth. To create events within road safety, to initiate educative campaigns, actions and exterior events.

Slide 17

As every year, we're going to organise a Polish nationwide road traffic knowledge competition for children and youth as well as trainings for diplomatic corps.

And something new: a competition on a radio. The competition is divided in two stages: the first - knowledge verification. Tree top participants will get to the final. Each will get a car. We'll be monitoring their drive around the city - petrol, oil, smooth driving, speed. The best will get two tickets for Austrian Grand Prix (we're still looking for a sponsor :) We're waiting at the exit).

Another new thing: 2nd Warsaw Road Traffic Safety Week in June 2016. We're going to organise a two-day conference "Children on the way to school" and an action "Warsaw is going on holiday" on petrol stations where we're going to make a technical check-up of cars going on holidays.

Slide 18

What for? Look at the photos. A head-on crash on a motorway.