

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
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Road Safety Performance Review

Albania



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Notes

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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the five United Nations regional commissions administered by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1947 with the mandate to help rebuild post-war Europe, develop economic activity and strengthen economic relations among European countries, and between Europe and the rest of the world.

During the Cold War, UNECE served as a unique forum for economic dialogue and cooperation between East and West. Despite the complexity of this period, significant achievements were made, with consensus reached on numerous harmonization and standardization agreements.

In the post-Cold War era, the Commission acquired not only many new Member States, but also new functions. Since the early 1990s, it has focused on analyses of the transition process, using its harmonization experience to facilitate the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into global markets.

Today UNECE is the forum where countries of Europe, Central Asia and North America – 56 in all – come together to forge the tools of their economic cooperation. That cooperation encompasses economics, statistics, environment, transport, trade, sustainable energy, timber and habitat. The Commission offers a regional framework for the elaboration and harmonization of conventions, norms and standards. In particular, UNECE's experts provide technical assistance to the countries of South-East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. This assistance takes the form of advisory services, training seminars and workshops where countries can share their experiences and best practices.

Transport in UNECE

The UNECE Sustainable Transport Division acts as the secretariat of the Inland Transport Committee and the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

The Inland Transport Committee and its 20 working parties, as well as the ECOSOC Committee and its sub-committees, are intergovernmental decision-making bodies that work to improve the daily lives of people and businesses around the world in measurable ways and with concrete action to enhance traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency and the competitiveness of the transport sector.

The Inland Transport Committee is a unique intergovernmental forum that was set up in 1947 to support the reconstruction of transport connections in post-war Europe. Over the years, it has specialized in facilitating the harmonized and sustainable development of inland modes of transport. The main and most well-known results of its ongoing work are reflected in the following outcomes:

- Fifty-eight United Nations conventions and many more technical regulations, which are updated on a regular basis and provide an international legal framework for the sustainable development of national and international road, rail, inland water and intermodal transport, including the transport of dangerous goods, as well as the construction and inspection of road motor vehicles.
- The Trans-European North-South Motorway, Trans-European Railway and the Euro-Asia Transport Links projects, which facilitate multi-country coordination of transport infrastructure investment programmes.
- The TIR system, which is a global customs transit facilitation solution.
- The tool called For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS), which can assist national and local governments in monitoring carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions coming from inland transport modes and in selecting and designing climate change mitigation policies, based on their impact and adapted to local conditions.
- Transport statistics – methods and data – that are internationally agreed on.
- Studies and reports that help transport policy development by addressing timely issues, based on cutting-edge research and analysis.
- Special attention to Intelligent Transport Services, sustainable urban mobility and city logistics, as well as to increasing the resilience of transport networks and services in response to climate change adaptation and security challenges.

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List of abbreviations

ADR	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road
AETR	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport
ARA	Albanian Road Authority
CPC	Certificate of Professional Competence
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDRTS	General Directorate of Road Transport Services
IMRSC	Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Committee
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
MoEY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MF	Ministry of Finance
MoHSC	Ministry of Health and Social Care
MoIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Mol	Ministry of the Interior
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RAMS	Road Asset Management Systems
RID	Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail
SEETO	South East Europe Transport Observatory
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

In the period of transition, Albania has experienced a high number of traffic accidents and fatalities. The significant demographic movements toward the main urban centres, erratic urbanization, territory mismanagement and lack of urban plans, increased motorization and a low level of road safety culture have all contributed to the high number of accidents. The road safety indicators show an improving trend from 2009 with a decrease in the number of fatalities. However, it is still far from the objectives set in the Albanian Road Safety Strategy.

The Albanian vehicle fleet has increased dramatically during the last 10 years and although the number of fatal accidents in the last two years has decreased, Albania still has the highest fatalities per hundred thousand vehicles in the South-East Europe region.

A road safety management system is vital to bring about improvements in road safety. The Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Committee is the highest organ for road safety policy and strategic work in Albania. Members of this committee are at the ministerial level. Representatives of the insurance companies operating in Albania and private sector are also invited to some of the meetings. The Review shows that this management structure has to be strengthened and empowered for better road safety results. Coordination and secretariat functions should be provided by staff with the relevant experience in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and Infrastructure.

Funding for road safety is one of the important issues. Funds from the central budget go towards the improvement of the main national road network and the Ministry's regular activities. The percentage of both the state budget and local government financing for road safety is very low. Establishment of earmarked funds is crucial for improving the road safety situation in Albania.

An important part of the review process was an analysis of the legal and administrative framework for road safety. Although it was commonly agreed that Albania has made considerable progress towards harmonizing its road safety legislation with the EU *acquis communautaire* and internationally recognized good practice, it emphasized the importance of the efficient implementation of key United Nations road-safety related legal instruments as an effective means for improving road safety management at the national level.

Following the approach of matching the existing system and the institutional setup for road safety with the state of the art of international practices, the Review includes a detailed identification of the needs and gaps for aligning Albanian legislation with EU directives, as well as of the current management practices in the area of road safety.

Despite the fact that in Albania the road infrastructure was constructed recently, right of way is not respected or protected by the communities living alongside the main road corridors resulting in high-risk road sections with many road accidents. The legislative framework should be updated to resolve the contradictions between road administrators and local government and protect right of way.

Albania is not a vehicle producer. Vehicles are imported from other regions, mainly Europe, with fewer from Asia and the United States of America. It is estimated that new vehicles constitute only 5% of the vehicle fleet. Technical inspections of vehicles are conducted every year, and roadside inspections consist primarily of a visual check of the vehicle and documents. The recommendations for safer vehicles are concentrated on improvement of roadside inspections and the transportation of dangerous goods.

A large proportion of traffic accidents can be attributed to risky road user behaviour, demonstrated by both drivers and vulnerable road users. Speeding is among the riskiest behaviours contributing to traffic accidents in recent years, despite efforts to strengthen enforcement and the legal consequences. An emerging issue is driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs (DUI) and some efforts are being made to better understand the prevalence and to reduce DUI.

Road safety education is considered essential in improving road safety in Albania. The Review emphasizes the efforts which should be made to improve the driving school system in accordance with EU Directives, extending education on traffic to the pre-university school curricula, implementing road safety projects and organizing public awareness campaigns. Much remains to be done to better understand the Albanian road safety culture and use the data on accidents to regularly monitor the Road Safety Strategy and conduct research in support of evidence-based policies.

Based on the safe system approach, Albania can improve road safety management by strengthening coordination between road safety stakeholders and experts at the national and local level. The recommendations in this Review should be used for the preparation of a Road Safety Strategy and actions and interventions in the future.

1. Albania, a country profile

Albania is a parliamentary constitutional republic located in South East Europe. Albania has a coastline of 450 km along the Adriatic and the Ionian Seas in the west and is separated from Italy by the Strait of Otranto (72 km). Most of Albania's territory is mountainous. The average height above sea level is 708 m. The highest peak, Mount Korab, rises to 2,753 m.

Figure 1.1
Map of Albania



Albania is one of the former transition economies of Central and South-East Europe and has now been upgraded to emerging country status. The most recent data reported by the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) show that the Albanian population reached 2.88 million as of January 2017. The reported unemployment rate was 15.2% in 2016, with a decreasing trend from 2014.

At the beginning of the transition period, there were substantial demographic movements from rural and peripheral industrial towns towards the main urban centres. This led to a high concentration in the Tirana-Durres region and erratic urbanization defined by all forms of informal construction and territory mismanagement. The urban and road infrastructure were very poorly prepared to mitigate the considerable increase in urbanization and transportation. Chaotic development and lack of territorial planning have significantly impacted on infrastructure development. Urban plans have been designed and redesigned to account for this erratic development.

The Albanian economy has managed to sustain positive economic growth reaching an estimated level of 2.2 per cent in 2015.¹ However, this is below the 5-6 per cent growth that prevailed during the transition period. Demographic and labour redistribution towards the most productive sectors are the main reason behind the rapid growth in the early stages of transition until the early 2000s. Services, construction and light industry and agriculture have become the drivers of economic growth. Starting from the mid-2000s, economic growth benefited mostly from the expansion of financial intermediation and fast credit growth, leading to the so-called absorption lead growth model. The high growth trend shrank following the global financial crisis and the sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone affected key economic partners. Growth in the post-crisis period has been driven first by large public investment and later by strong commodity exports. The EU is the main trading partner for the Albanian economy in terms of goods, services and emigrant remittances. Remittances have had a significant positive impact on Albania's economy.

However, unfavourable external conditions, asset quality problems in the financial system and structural problems in the domestic economy have limited the gradual recovery of growth rates to 2-3 per cent per annum in the medium term. GDP per capita in 2014 was \$4,579.² This relatively slow growth has contributed to the increase of public debt which reached 72 per cent of GDP in 2014. Large and persistent current account deficits are financed by foreign direct investments and other capital inflows.³

At the beginning of transition Albania had a very young population and despite considerable emigration to neighbouring countries and a drop in the birth rate, it is still young relative to the EU and the South East European region. A United Nations report⁴ (2016) estimates that 40 per cent of the Albanian population works and lives abroad, mainly in Italy (16.1%) and Greece (15.7%).

Table 1.1

Key economic indicators

Indicator	Units	2006	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP real	%	5.90	3.75	3.17	1.03	1.13	2.13	2.62	3.4
GDP per capita	USD	2,975	4,094.36	4,210.08	4,276.92	4,332.32	4,419.44	4,547.13	4,711.99
Average inflation	%	2.37	3.61	3.43	2.04	1.95	1.64	1.90	1.29
End of year inflation	%	2.5	3.6	1.7	2.4	1.9	0.7	2.0	2.2
Unemployment rate	%	13.8	14.0	14.0	13.4	16.0	17.6	17.3	14.2
Population	Millions	2.99	2.91	2.91	2.90	2.897	2.892	2.885	2.875
National debt	% of GDP	56.69	57.72	59.41	62.14	65.53	70.07	72.59	70.95

Source: Bank of Albania, INSTAT, Albanian Ministry of Finance and Economy, World Bank, 2017.

¹ INSTAT, 2017.

² INSTAT, Albania in figures, 2016. Available from: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2017/albania-in-figures-2016>.

³ Bank of Albania, Annual Reports, Monetary Policy Reports and Financial Stability Reports, 2009-2016.

⁴ <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/07/15/albania-presents-its-human-development-report-2016-functionality.html>.

Albania has a high number of climatic regions relative to its landmass. The coastal lowlands have typically Mediterranean weather while the highlands have a Mediterranean continental climate. The weather varies considerably from north to south.

Average precipitation is heavy, caused by the movement of Mediterranean air flows inland which is dominated by a continental air mass, causing frequent thunderstorms accompanied by high local winds and torrential downpours. Farther inland, the intermediate mountainous region receives some 3,100 mm of rain annually, making it one of the wettest areas in Europe. The highest mountain areas in the north and south-east region of the country are distinguished by heavy snow during the winter; they remain covered in snow for most of the winter season.

Albania submitted a formal application for EU membership in 2009 but only in 2012 did the European Commission recommend EU candidate status subject to completion of key measures in the areas of judicial and public administration reform and revision of the parliamentary rules of procedure. Formally, Albania was awarded EU candidate status in June 2014. In this integration process, Albania has embarked on a long process of adopting legislation, including legislation related to road safety, aimed at alignment with EC directives.

To strengthen ties with its EU partners, the Government of Albania signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Core Network on 11 June 2004 creating the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO).⁵ The main aim of SEETO is “to promote cooperation on the development of the main and ancillary infrastructure on the multimodal South East Europe Core Regional Transport Network and to promote and enhance local capacity for the implementation of investment programmes, management and data collection and analysis on the Core Regional Transport Network”.

⁵ <http://www.seetoint.org/seeto-comprehensive-network>.

2. Review of the legal and administrative framework for road safety

2.1 National legal framework for road safety

The main laws governing road safety issues in Albania include Law No. 8378, dated 22 July 1998, “The Road Code of Albania” (as amended), complemented by secondary legislation including Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 153, dated 7 April 2000, “On the approval of the regulation on the implementation of the Road Code of Albania” (as amended). It should be noted that this legislation and the specific articles regulating driver permits and road user behaviour have been progressively amended to align them with EU Directive 2006/126/EC, dated 20 December 2006.

The strategies and regulatory framework are compatible with “The Albanian National Road Safety Strategy 2010-2020, Road safety as a right and responsibility for all, January 2010”⁶, which was elaborated by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure⁷ in its role as lead agency for road safety. It reflects a long-term approach and commitment towards upgrading the national legal and regulatory framework as an important priority.

The main legal basis for road safety in Albania is comprised of the laws, decisions of the Council of Ministers and instructions of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure (by-laws) which are summarized in the tables below.

Table 2.1

Legal framework

Title	Area	Description	Date
Law No. 8378, “Road Code of the Republic of Albania”, as amended	Fundamental legislation on road safety	Article 1: “... norms and acts on the application of this Code are led by the principle of security of movement on the road, following the objectives of rational movement, protection of the environment and saving of energy”	21/7/1999
Law No. 118 “On the transport of dangerous goods”	Safer transport	Aims to improve safety in road and rail transport of dangerous goods, by setting out the procedures under which the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail is carried out	13/12/2012
Law No. 158/213 “On safety in road tunnels”	Safer roads	Aims to improve safety in road tunnels	10/10/2013
Law No. 10211 “On the adoption of the normative act, No. 9, the Council of Ministers “On the operation and financial resources for the digital tachograph in Albania”	Road safety	Setting out rules and regulations for production of digital tachograph cards	23/12/2009
Law No. 8308 “On road transport”, as amended	Road transport	Regulates the conditions for admission to the activity of national and international road transport operator for goods and passengers	18/3/1998

⁶ Approved and published in February 2011.

⁷ As of December 2017, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy.

Table 2.2

Decisions of the Council of Ministers and Instructions of the Minister in charge (by-laws)

Title	Area	Description	Date
Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 153 "On approval of regulations for implementing the Road Code of the Republic of Albania", as amended	Road safety legislation implementation and update		7/4/2000
Decision No. 739 "On some additional measures and amendments to the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 153, dated 7/4/2000"	Road safety legislation implementation and update		9/9/2015
Decision No. 1243 "For the approval of regulations for the working time of individuals involved in road transport, for the working times of drivers and recording equipment"	Road transport, safer roads		10/9/2008
Decision No. 207 "On the deployment and implementation of the digital tachograph"	Road transport		25/02/2009
Decision No. 1054 "On approval of the regulation for recording equipment in road transport"	Road transport, safety		22/12/2010
Decision No. 298 amending Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 153 of 7/4/2000 "On the approval of regulations for implementing the Road Code of Albania"	Road safety legislation implementation and update	Lays down the provisions for the demerit point system for driving licenses	8/04/2015
Decision No. 739 "On the system of road accident data"	Road safety information		9/09/2015
Decision No. 940 "On amendments to the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 153 of 7/4/2000 "On approval of regulations implementing the Road Code of Albania""	Road safety legislation implementation and update	Introduced a new driving license based on the EU model	18/11/2015
Instruction of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure No. 3606/2 "On issuance of drivers of road vehicles of categories C, CE, D and DE with the certificate of professional proficiency"	Road safety legislation implementation and update		28/10/2011
Instruction No. 2 "On technical inspections of road vehicles"	Safer vehicles		11/2/2010
Instruction No. 9 "On road safety auditing and inspections"	Road safety monitoring		3/7/2012
Instruction No. 1 "On the registration of road vehicles and their trailers", as amended	Road transport		10/1/2012
Instruction No. 3985/4 "On control procedures during transport of dangerous goods by road"	Safer roads		24/6/2013

Title	Area	Description	Date
Instruction No. 4 "On the standards for the operation of authorized machine shops (technical centres) for the digital tachograph", as amended	Road safety		27/5/2014
Guideline of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure No. 9 "On amendments to Guideline 3606/2(18) of 28/10/2011 "On the certificate of professional competence for drivers of category C and D driving permits"	Road transport standards	Regulates the issuance of the CPC for bus and truck drivers	9/10/2015
Guideline of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure No. 682/4 "On the activity of driving schools, driving permit issuance, training of driving instructors and specialists of the General Directorate of Road Transport Services"	Road safety legislation and standards		1/04/2016
Instruction of the Minister of Transport No. 1546 "Repair of road vehicles and their trailers"	Safer vehicles		29/03/2016
Instruction No. 10, dated 30/5/2011 "On type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units"	Regulatory legislation, vehicle standards	Sets up rules on approval (individual/type) of vehicles	30/05/2011
Instruction No. 11, dated 6/6/2011 "On the approval of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles"	Regulatory legislation, vehicle standards	Sets up rules on approval (individual/type) of vehicles	6/06/2011
Instruction No. 12, dated 6/6/2011 "On type-approval of two or three-wheel motor vehicles"	Regulatory legislation, vehicle standards	Sets up rules on approval (individual/type) of vehicles	6/06/2011

A number of relevant amendments to the Road Code were made in 2011, with Law No. 10488, dated 5 December 2011 "On amendments to Law No. 8378, dated 22 July 1998 "The Road Code of the Republic of Albania", as amended.

Such changes included:

- Introduction of the point system, granting everyone with a valid driving permit a maximum of 20 points.⁸ This article entered into force in mid-2015;
- The driving school system, their licensing and monitoring (article 121);
- Speed limits, strengthening the fine system by increasing the lower limit of the fine by up to a factor of three, and the upper limit by up to a factor of two, accompanying them with additional sanctions, such as suspending the driving permit (article 140);

⁸ A driver who violates laws, for which an additional administrative sanction is foreseen, loses a certain number of points. The driving permit is suspended if the driver loses all 20 points. The driver is required to pass a qualification test to gain the 20 points and regain the driving permit. Also, drivers who lose up to 15 points in a 12-month period are also required to pass the qualification test (article 120/1).

- Increasing the lower and the upper limit of fines when drivers contravene several rules related to driver behaviour on the road;⁹
- Increasing the lower and the upper limit of fines for not using a helmet (article 169) or seatbelts and car seats/ restraints for children (article 170);
- A comprehensive revision of article 184, driving under the influence of alcohol, prohibiting driving after consuming alcohol or under the influence of alcohol;¹⁰
- Increasing the fine when the driver is under the influence of drugs.

Other amendments to the Road Code were made in 2014 by Law No. 175, dated 18 December 2014 “On some changes and amendments to Law No. 8378, dated 22 July 1998 “The Road Code of the Republic of Albania”, as amended. With these changes, the approximation of the law with European Commission Directive 2006/126/EC is complete.¹¹

Changes include:

- Classification/categorization of driving permits, and permit format; training and testing procedures, according to EC Directives (article 150);
- Additional requirements on issuing driving permits to those with limited health capabilities to drive and medical history for first-time applicants;¹²
- Additional requirements on issuing professional certificates (for transportation of both goods and passengers (article 115/1).

In order to respond to the serious road safety situation and following its ambitious reform policy, the Government of Albania adopted additional rigorous changes to the Road Code in 2015, most of them focused on severe penalties for road users who do not respect the basic rules for driving safely and do not use appropriate safety devices. Since the beginning of 2016 new rules related to the issuance of driving permits have been in force and a demerit “points system” for driving permits has been applied.

⁹ These include driving behaviour at roundabouts, in limited visibility, while turning, on giving priority at unregulated junctions (articles 141–143); not obeying traffic lights or the traffic police (article 144); overtaking (article 146); safety distance between vehicles (article 147); signaling (article 151); change of lane (article 152); stopping and parking of vehicles (article 156).

¹⁰ Considering as over the limit when the alcohol test is positive at a level above 0.5 gram/litre, increasing the level of fines for driving while under the influence of alcohol; police are allowed to ask for a further medical examination when the test result is above 1.5 gram/litre, or to suspend the driving permit until the medical test is provided.

¹¹ Directive 2006/126/EC, dated 20 December 2006, on Driving Permits, as amended. CELEX number: 32006L0126, EU Official Gazette, series L, No. 403, dated 30.12.2006, pp. 18-60.

¹² A first-time applicant has to submit a medical report showing that he/she is not an alcohol abuser or user of drugs or psychotropic substances, as proved by clinical-toxicological tests carried out by a licensed medical centre (article 117).

2.2 Strategic approach and national strategies on road safety

Albania has embraced the philosophy of “Vision Zero” as is pointed out in the Albanian Road Safety Strategy. The strategic goal is to reduce fatalities in the long term by 50%, an objective fully compatible with EU objectives and the standards accepted by all SEETO members.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II) 2015 – 2020¹³ was approved by the Council of Ministers on 11 May 2016 defining the main objectives for the development of Albania, including the development of the transport sector. It sets forth the long-term vision for Albanian transport, as an efficient transport system, integrated into the region and into the EU transport network, promoting economic development and improving the quality of life of citizens.

The National Transport Strategy 2016 – 2020 approved in 2016,¹⁴ includes a draft National Action Plan with priority actions for each mode of transport (road, rail, maritime, air and intermodal).

“The National Road Safety Strategy for the period 2011 – 2020”¹⁵ and the Revised Action Plan¹⁶ are essential for pursuing both development goals and achievement of road safety standards. The Strategy is in line with the Regional Road Safety Strategy developed by the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO), aimed at improving road safety in the country to the levels of the best-performing EU countries, and at establishing a continuous reduction in the number of fatalities and injuries.

¹³ “Strategjia Kombëtare për Zhvillim dhe Integrim 2015-2020” approved by Decree 348 of the Council of Ministers, dated 11 May 2016 and published in Official Gazette No. 86.

¹⁴ Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 811, dated 16 November 2016 “On approval of the Strategy for the Transport Sector and the Action Plan”.

¹⁵ Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 125, dated 23 February 2011.

¹⁶ Approved by Prime Minister Order No. 1, dated 18 March 2014.

2.3 Transposition of international regulations and agreements

Seriously committed to improving its road safety performance, the Government of Albania has expressed interest in upgrading its national road safety management system through the efficient implementation of United Nations legal instruments on road transport and road safety.

Table 2.3

International agreements Albania has acceded to

No.	Title	Area	Date of accession
1.	European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR), of 15 November 1975	Road infrastructure	2 August 2006
2.	Convention on Road Traffic, of 19 September 1949 (including Final Act and related documents), Geneva	Road traffic and road signs and signals	1 October 1969
3.	Convention on Road Traffic, of 8 November 1968 (2006 consolidated version)	Road traffic and road signs and signals	29 June 2000
4.	Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 8 November 1968 (2006 consolidated version)	Road traffic and road signs and signals	6 February 2004
5.	European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic, of 1 May 1971 (2006 consolidated version)	Road traffic and road signs and signals	27 October 2005
6.	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968), of 1 May 1971	Road traffic and road signs and signals	6 June 2005
7.	European Agreement on the Application of Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties, of 16 September 1950	Road traffic and road signs and signals	14 October 2008
8.	European Agreement on Road Markings, of 13 December 1957	Road traffic and road signs and signals	4 June 2004
9.	Protocol on Road Markings, additional to the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 1 March 1973	Road traffic and road signs and signals	6 June 2005
10.	Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and /or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these Prescriptions, of 20 March 1958	Road vehicles	6 September 2011
11.	Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections, of 13 November 1997	Road vehicles	22 December 2004
12.	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), of 1 July 1970 (Consolidated text dated 20 September 2010)	Working hours, rest periods and digital tachographs	20 July 2006
13.	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), of 30 September 1957	Transport of dangerous goods	26 January 2005
14.	Protocol amending article 1 (a), article 14 (1) and article 14 (3) (b) of the European Agreement of 30 September 1957 concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), of 28 October 1993	Transport of dangerous goods	9 March 2006
15.	Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP), of 1 September 1970	Transport of perishable foodstuffs	26 January 2005

Overall, Albania is a contracting party to 30 international agreements (conventions) regarding road transport. For detailed information on the status of accession to international agreements please refer to the link: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/conventn/agree_e.pdf.

2.4 Harmonization with EU legislation

Since June 2014 Albania has had the status of a candidate country for EU membership. This achievement came as the result of Albania's reform efforts in recent years and acknowledgment by the EU of the efforts made and the progress achieved on Albania's road to accession.

The Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed with Albania in June 2006 and entered into force in April 2009. Based on Article 18 of protocol 5 of the Agreement (Road Safety):

1. Albania will harmonize its legislation on road safety, particularly with regard to the transport of dangerous goods, with that of respective EU legislation by the end of the fifth year after the date of entry into force of the Agreement.
2. Albania is already a Contracting Party to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). The EU and Albania will coordinate to the maximum extent possible their policies concerning the carriage of dangerous goods.
3. The Parties will cooperate with regard to implementation and enforcement of road safety legislation, particularly on driving licenses and measures to reduce road accidents.

It should be noted that Albania has progressed considerably with the task of harmonizing its road safety legislation with the EU *acquis communautaire*.¹⁷

It is clearly mentioned in the Albania 2016 Report¹⁸ that "on road transport, Albania has made steady progress in approximating its national legislation with the *acquis*".

2.5 Institutional setup for road safety

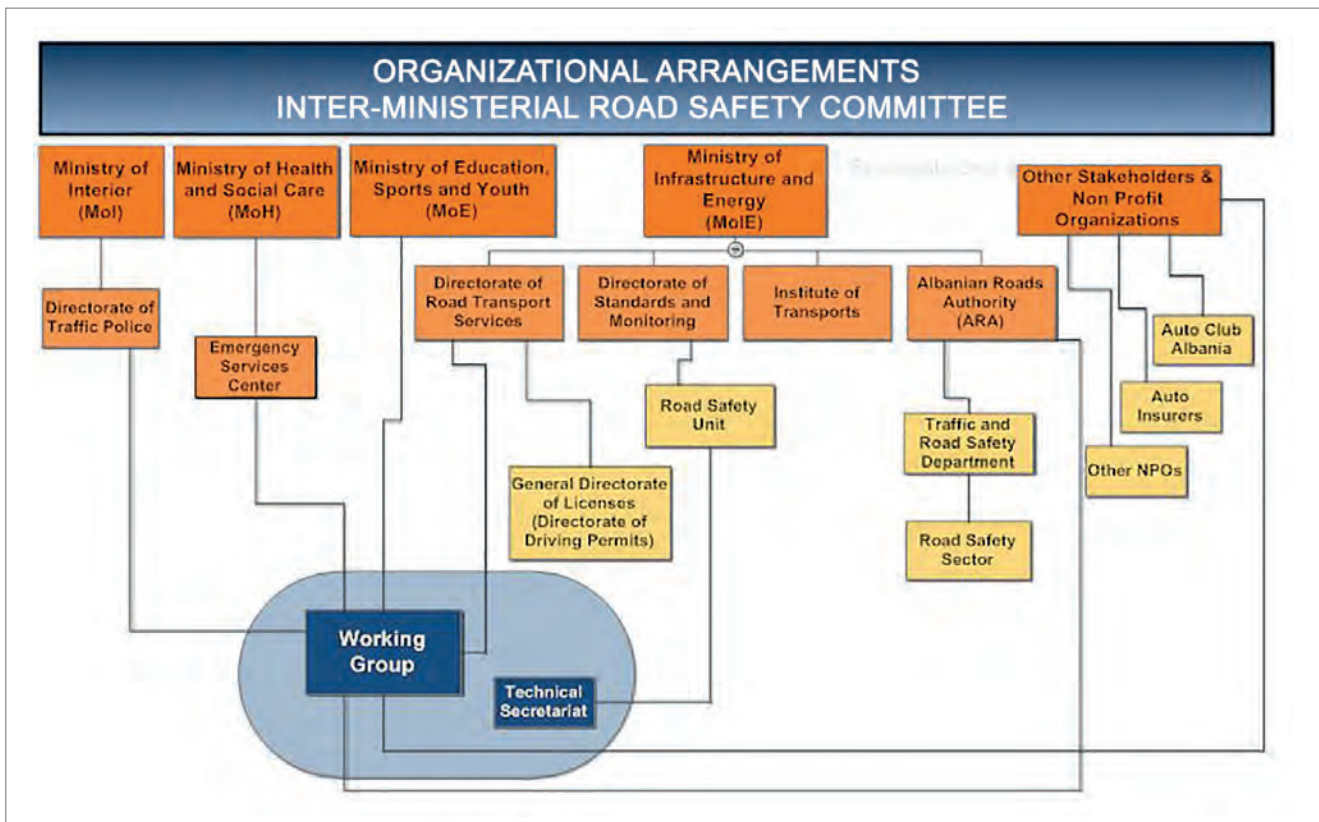
Increased attention to road safety issues in Albania has been followed by increasing accountability from stakeholder institutions and the general public. The coordination and leading role has been vested in the former Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, now the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, as the primarily responsible institution, along with the Ministry of Interior.

National level – Since 2002 the Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Committee (IMRSC) is the lead coordination body on road safety issues at the central government level. The Inter-Ministerial Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of eight members (ministers and high national authorities with a stake in road safety issues, e.g. Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MoIE), Ministry of Interior (Mol), Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoEY), Ministry of Finance (MF), Ministry of Health and Social Care (MoHSC)). A representative of the insurance companies in Albania is also invited to attend some of the IMRSC's meetings.

¹⁷ "Albania, Annual Report of EC" for years 2014, 2015 and 2016, published by the former Ministry of Integration of Albania.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_albania.pdf.

Figure 2.1
Institutional setup for road safety in Albania¹⁹



Source: National Transport Strategy, 2016.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy proposes road safety legislation to the Government for approval and issues by-laws and regulations and organizes national road safety programmes. In technical terms, there are two units inside the MoIE that play a central role in the management of the road safety system, namely the Directorate of Deregulation, Licenses, Permits and Monitoring (Section for Road Transport Monitoring Traffic and Section for Monitoring of Road Operators) and the Institute of Transport. With the latest restructuring of the Government in December 2017, the MoIE Section for Road Transport Monitoring Traffic and Section for Monitoring of Road Operators have taken on the role of a central technical body for implementation and monitoring of road safety issues, both policies and projects. The section is in charge of the preparation of the necessary documents for IMRSC meetings to promote and organize follow-up actions and to evaluate the results of measures taken. Furthermore, the MoIE monitors and implements programmes and regulations through the Albanian Road Authority (ARA) and the General Directorate of Road Transport Services (GDRTS).

The Directorate of Traffic Police plays a key role both in the enforcement and promotion of road safety. Strongly supported by the Ministry of Interior and central government, the traffic police is strengthening its role for the enforcement of traffic rules.

The Albanian Road Authority (ARA) and its subordinate agencies have a key role in dealing with road engineering. ARA is the main asset manager of the national road network and is responsible for the construction, upgrading, rehabilitation and maintenance of the national road network, including associated planning, budgeting and programming. ARA is accountable to the MoIE and is overseen by a management board. There is a specialized unit within ARA's structure, the Section for Road Safety, included in the Department for Standards and Maintenance, which deals exclusively with road safety issues (but only with three specialists).

¹⁹ National Transport Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 (updated according to the latest government re-organization which took place at the end of 2017).

The General Directorate of Road Transport Services (GDRTS) deals with vehicle registration and approval, technical inspections and the issuing of driving permits. GDRTS is financed by fees from services carried out.

In addition, the Transport Institute is becoming more interested and involved, and is in charge of developing research activities and managing training courses for road safety auditors.

Sub-national level – There are 12 prefectures (known as *qarks*) in Albania which are subdivided into 61 municipalities. Following the recent territorial reform, the municipalities and their councils are in charge of management and development of local infrastructure, public transport and some other transport services. As such, they have quite a large degree of autonomy to fund road safety initiatives and relevant road safety programmes.

There is a hierarchical organization in the form of local expert groups which contribute within the territory of each *qark*, under the guidance of the Prefect. Prefectures, as a liaison body between the central and local government, play their role in their territory of jurisdiction, while municipalities have established transport development offices (sections) to deal with road signing, elimination of high-risk road sections, road accident monitoring, urban and inter-urban transport and other road safety measures in their capacity as road owners within their territorial jurisdiction.

Non-governmental organizations – One of the most active organizations on road safety is the Automobile Club Albania (ACA). ACA is a member of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) and participates in the campaign of the FIA Foundation in Albania “Decade of Road Safety”. As a partner of the EuroRap Program for the star rating and safety of the road infrastructure of the South-East Region of the Balkans, ACA is also engaged in local initiatives within the country for promoting road safety.

An increasing number of professional NGOs have become much more involved recently, among which the Albanian Road Safety Council, the Albanian Association for Prevention of Road Accidents, the Civil Association for Road Safety and the Environment, the National Association of Driving Schools, and the Albanian Association of Consultant Engineers should be mentioned.

In addition, Tirana Polytechnic University contributes to research projects related to road safety and has organized a number of Masters and other educational courses on road safety matters.

3. Road safety trends

3.1 Road safety data collection and statistics

The following definitions and classifications for traffic accidents and casualties are used in Albania:

- A fatal crash is one in which one or more persons are killed as a result of the accident, provided death occurs within 30 days;
- A serious injury crash is one in which there are no deaths, but one or more persons are seriously injured;
- A slight injury crash is one in which there are no deaths or serious injuries, but a person is slightly injured. This will be an injury of a minor character such as a cut, sprain or bruise;
- A damage only crash is one in which no one is injured, but damage to vehicles and or property is sustained;
- A fatal casualty in a road accident is one in which the victim dies within 30 days of the crash;
- Based on the Albanian Civil Code a serious injury is defined as either one for which a person suffers a deterioration of health and the inability to work for a period of more than nine days or if any of the human organs is heavily damaged. It includes fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushing, severe cuts and lacerations, or severe general shock which requires medical treatment;
- A slight injured casualty is when someone receives some medical attention (small cuts and bruises) but is not detained in hospital overnight.

The accident database system is based mainly on information gathered by the state traffic police when at the scene of an accident. The traffic police is the source of accident data and their performance is thus crucial for the usefulness of the accident data and high quality is an absolute requirement.

The data collected at the scene and during the investigation of an accident are entered into a database. This database provides information on each type of accident.

The accident data collection follows the manual prepared based on Council of Ministers Decision No. 739, dated 9 September 2015. The accident form is shown in the following figure.

Figure 3.1
Accident form

Accident Form		State Police	
Natyr e Aksidentit: FATAL		SEVERIOUS INJURY	
1. Accident No.:		7. Position of GPS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =	
2. Date:		8. Code of the OName =	
3. Hour:		Signature	
5. Place:		6. Road No.:	
9. Type of Accident		21. Vehicles involved	
Veh/Veh head to head	Rural Area	Car	1 2 3 4
Veh/Veh behind	Urban Area	Minibus, 8+1	
Veh/Veh by side	Open space	Minibus, > 8+1	
Veh/Veh overpass		Bus	
Veh/Veh in curve		Truck <3.5t	
Veh alone overturned		Sports cars	
Veh coll. with water		Truck >3.5 t	
Veh alone		Truck + trailer	
Veh/pedestrian		Motorcycle	
Veh/cyclist		Cart driven by animal	
Veh/animal		Bicycle	
Veh/other		Tractor	
Bicycle / pedestrian		Other	
Others not defined			
10. Road Geometry		22. Vehicle Deficiency	
- Straight road		Not known	1 2 3 4
C-Curve		Steering axle	
O-Circle		Brakes	
T-Junction		Wheels	
Y-Junction		Windshield	
+ Junction		Difficult visibility conditions	
X-Junction		Overloaded	
Bridge		Other	
= Cross road/rail			
Tunnel			
11. Surroundings		23. Vehicle Condition	
	Speed under the speed limit	Registered	1 2 3 4
	Speed limit not assigned	Not registered	
	Speed limit assigned in km/hour	Technically suitable	
		Technically not suitable	
		Insurance already paid	
		Insurance not paid	
12. Surface Type		24. Vehicle age	
Bitumen	Day	0-2 years	1 2 3 4
Gravel	Night	2-7 years	
Earth	Dawn/Sunset	7-12 years	
		Over 12 years	
13. Road Condition		25. Driver behaviour	
Good	1 2 3 4	No visibility	1 2 3 4
With potholes		No stop signal in use	
Undulating		Did not give priority	
Low skid resistance		Not respecting traffic signs	
With dust		Bad overpassing	
		Approaching without attention	
		Careless driving in curve	
		Rapid change in approaching	
		Careless turning movement	
		Sudden braking	
		Driving without respecting driving distance	
		Parking out of regulation	
		High speed	
		Difficulties in seeing	
		Driving without respecting lateral driving distance	
		Tired, ill	
		Other	
14. Weather		26. Alcohol test	
Dry	1 2 3 4	No alcohol	1 2 3 4
Rainy		Alcohol over the limit	
Snow		No test	
Fog			
15. Other factors		27. Pedestrian Behaviour	
Stolen car	1 2 3 4	No visibility	1 2 3 4
Hit and run		Crossing without attention	
Road works		Pedestrian crossing	
		Crossing different point	
		Walking	
		Other	

Source: State Traffic Police, 2016.

According to information gathered from the Ministry of Health, computerized medical information systems are still not common at hospitals. At present, it is the responsibility of the traffic police to collect the correct information about the accident and injuries, including the follow up on seriously injured persons who may die within 30 days, following the international definition. According to the traffic police this is done diligently.

The accident database is accessible by both the State Police and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. There is close collaboration between these two institutions when it comes to sharing accident-related data.

The database is organized into 12 tables covering the following topics:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ General accident information | ■ Vehicles involved |
| ■ Vehicle defects | ■ Vehicle documentation |
| ■ Vehicle age | ■ Driving license |
| ■ Driving experience | ■ Nationality of the driver |
| ■ Driver behaviour | ■ Alcohol test |
| ■ Pedestrian behaviour | ■ Persons involved |

The tables cover 32 different accident variables which can be cross-tabulated against each other.

Two applications, both in the Albanian language, have been created. The data entry application is used for transferring information from the accident form to the database.

The location of an accident is indicated by means of a GPS handset. The database, with the geographical coordinates, can then be transferred to GIS to show the accident location on maps. The GIS accident database is located in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and is also used by ARA for defining high-risk road sections on the national road network. The system was set up in 2005 and the World Bank through SweRoad trained the personnel both in the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy.

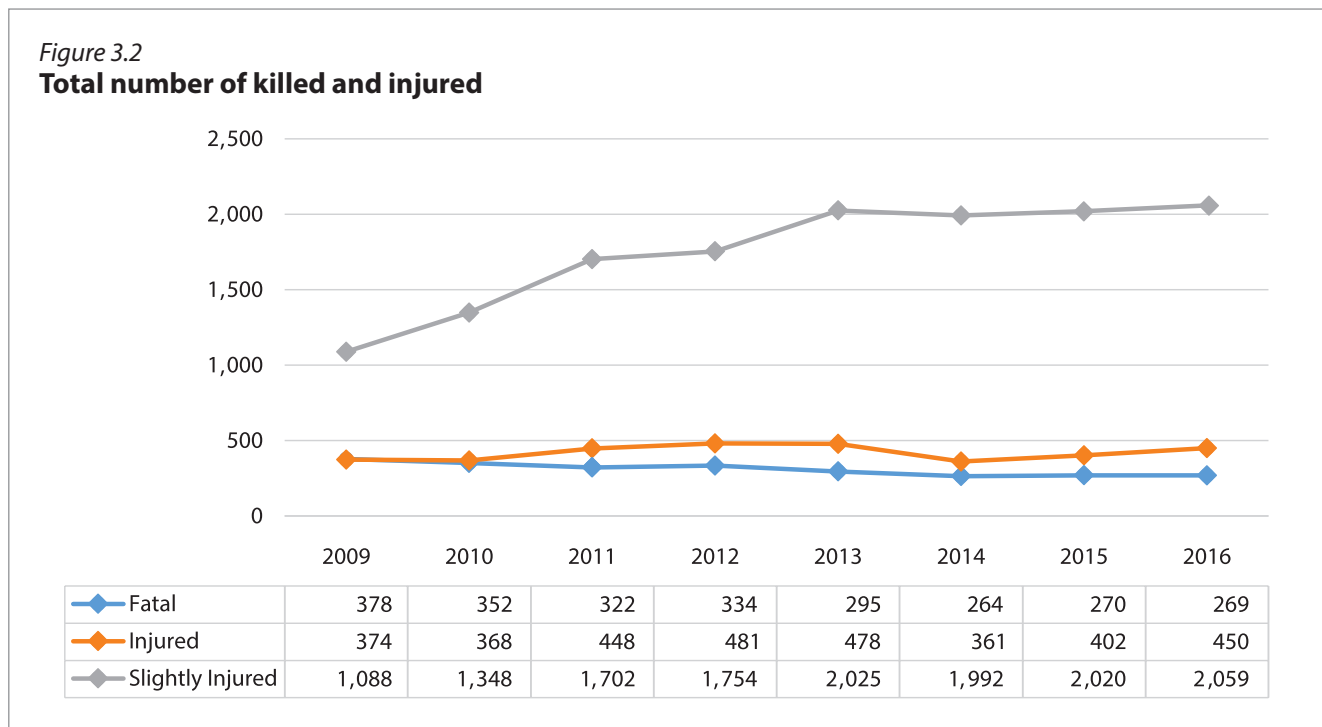
The analysis application then uses the data that has been entered as the source for the various analyses that the 32 included variables can provide. A report – a cross-tabulation of two variables – is made in two simple steps. Selections may be made from the database, typically the year. On the next screen, the row variable is indicated, perhaps accident type, and the column variable as well, maybe driver behaviour.

Accident data are also published/disseminated by the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT). The main data and statistics can be found on the website of INSTAT, while a yearly report on road accidents can be found on the website of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy.

The Accident Database System was developed in MS Access and after years of use the files generated by the software are big and the software is not working properly. The Ministry of Interior is already using a platform in Oracle. The intention is to merge the accident database system with the main platform.

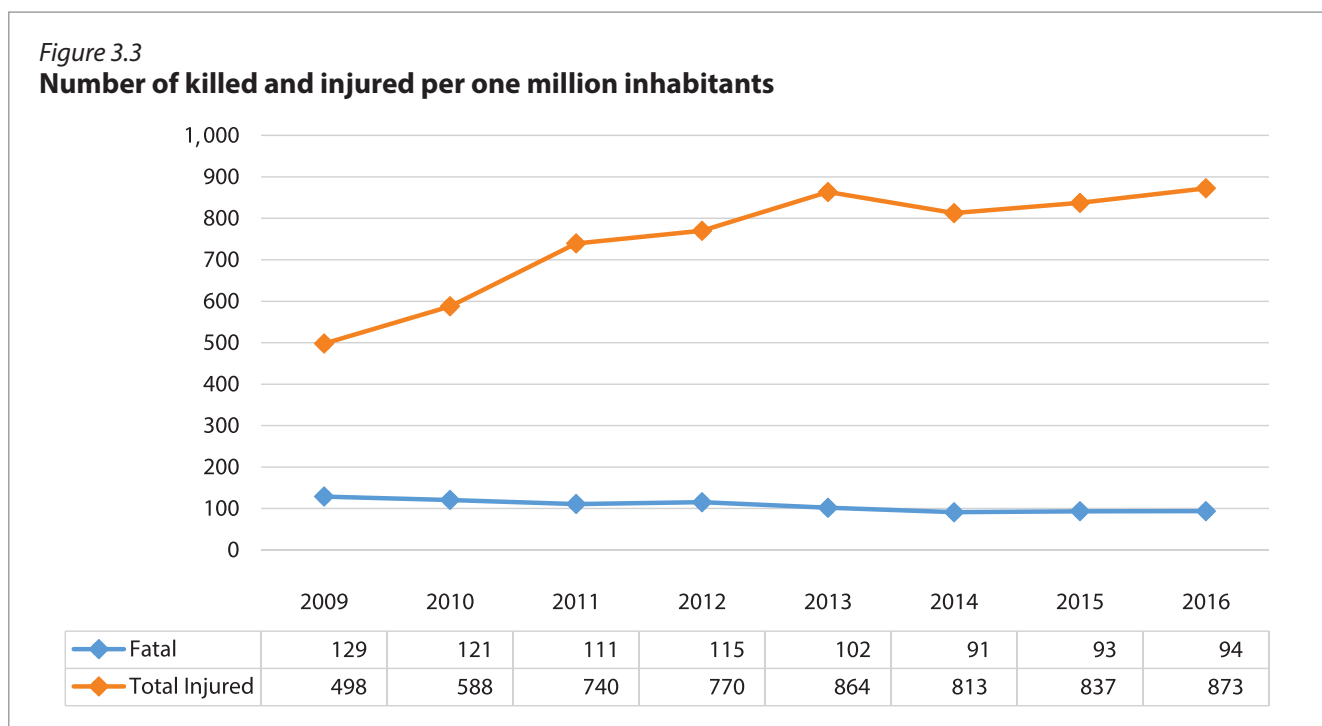
The number of people injured in accidents between 2009 and 2015 is based on data provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. From this data, it can be seen that 2012 and 2013 were the years with the highest number of casualties (calculated as killed and injured). A serious injury is defined as either one for which a person suffers deterioration of health and the inability to work for a period of more than nine days or if any of the human organs are badly damaged. It includes fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushing, severe cuts and lacerations, or severe general shock which requires medical treatment.

The number of people killed and injured since 2009 is shown below:



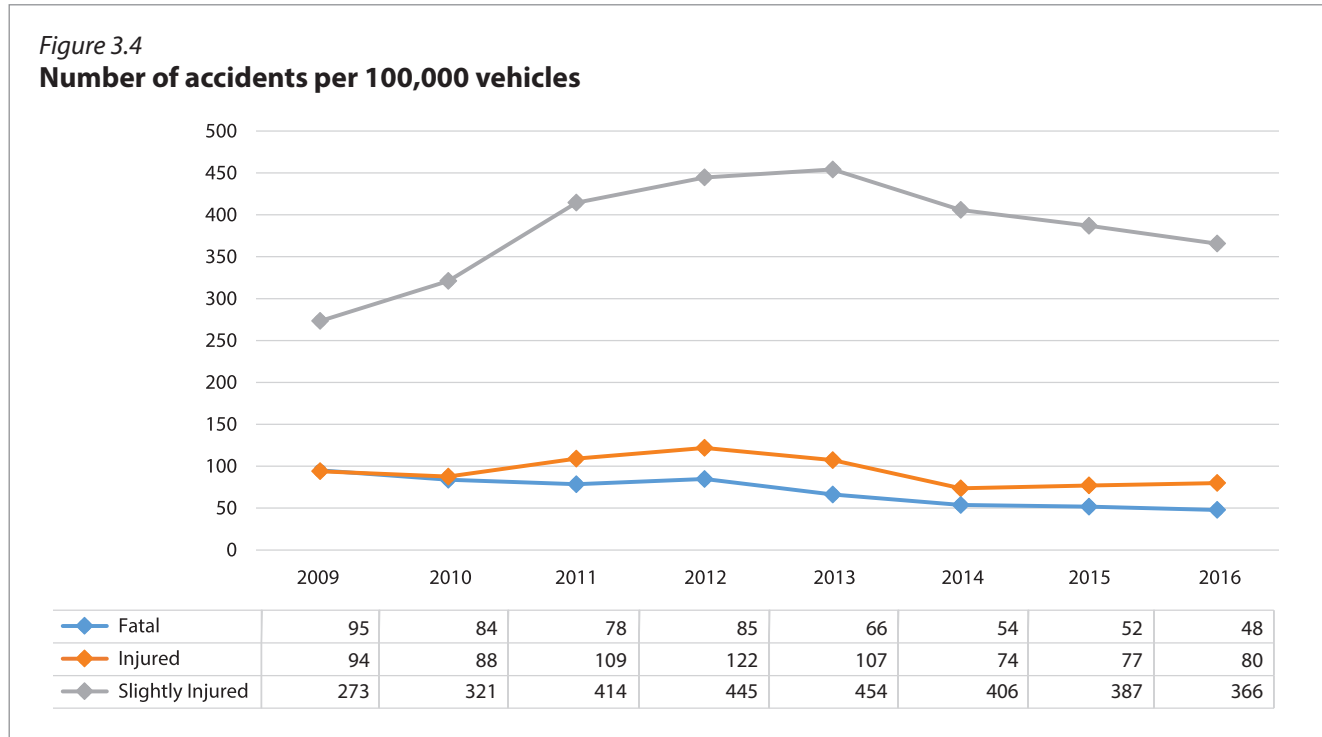
Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

The Figure 3.2 shows that the number of people killed and injured during the last two years has remained stable. However, the main indicator of road accidents is the number of accidents per person or per number of vehicles. The number of accidents per one million inhabitants (public risk) is shown below.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Since the number of vehicles in use is lower due to problems with the national vehicle database, the number of fatalities and injuries per 100,000 vehicles (transport risk) is biased. However, the number of fatalities per 100,000 vehicles was less in 2016 than in 2015.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

3.2 Road infrastructure

The road network, including urban and regional roads opened during the summer of 2017, accounts for a total of over 15,000 km.

Table 3.1
Albanian road network

Road network	Length (in km)
Main roads	3,400
Regional roads	4,411
Rural roads	4,980
Urban roads	2,500
Total	15,291

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

The main road network, which is 3,400 km long, is administered by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy through the Road Authority. The local road network consists of 4,411 km of district roads, which provide rural links of district importance and are maintained by district road departments within the Regional Road Authorities. The communal network is 4,980 km in length and is administered by the respective municipalities and regional councils or *qarks*; the 2,500 km long urban network is also under the municipalities. According to the definition of a motorway in the Albanian Road Code, there are no road segments that meet the conditions of a motorway.

As a consequence of the new administrative division most of the rural and urban roads are administered by municipalities and regional councils. They have very little experience in road safety and high-risk road section analysis. In order to improve the road safety know-how of local governments, the central Government has to prepare trainings, manuals and guides which will help municipalities and regional councils to improve road safety.

Albania's network of main roads is depicted on the map below:

Figure 3.5
Map of Albanian road network



In the last 10 years, the majority of transport investments made have been directed at road infrastructure and the construction of the main road corridors (North-South Motorway Durrës-Kukës as well as some segments in Pan-European Corridor VIII). The aim of this investment has been network integration into the SEETO Comprehensive Network and Trans-European Transport Network system. Total investments in the Albanian road network over the period 2010-2014 amounted to EUR 1.064 billion, of which EUR 700 million were financed from the state budget and EUR 364 million were financed through foreign loans. Overall, businesses consider that the quality of Albania’s transport infrastructure, particularly roads, has improved in recent years.

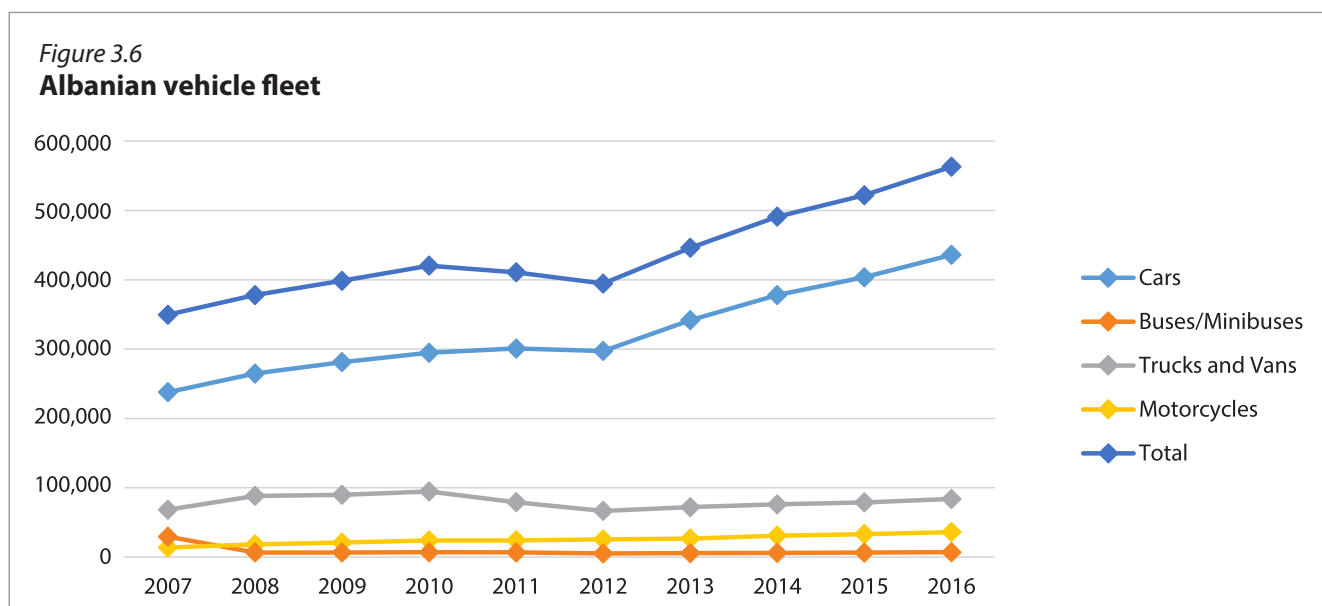
Regarding forthcoming investments, the following road infrastructure projects are included as priorities for the development of Albanian road corridors:

- On the planned TEN-T Comprehensive Network:
 - Adriatic-Ionian Corridor:
 - Construction of the second lane on the Fushe Krujë-Shkodër road;
 - Construction of the Thumanë-Kashar/Vorë road;
 - Construction of the Tepelena, Lezhë and Tiranë by-passes;
 - Route 7:
 - Construction of the second lane on the Milot-Rreshen road;
- On the Albanian national road network:
 - Reconstruction of the Vlorë River road;
 - Construction of the Arbri road section.

3.3 Road vehicle fleet

For almost half a century (from the end of the Second World War to the first democratic elections of 1992) Albania was under the communist regime. During this period the country witnessed total economic, political and social isolation. During the last 25 years, Albania has undergone a long transition process from a centrally planned economy to a free market oriented one built on the principles of private ownership and free enterprise.

This change introduced Albanians to car ownership. Before the transition cars were only owned by the state, private vehicles were not allowed and Albanians did not have driving permits or driving experience unless they were working as drivers. Therefore, driving is a relatively new skill with at most 25 years of experience. Driving education and respect for traffic rules remains a challenge for both drivers and pedestrians. On the other hand, the number of cars and other vehicles has increased substantially, as shown in the figure below.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

The Albanian vehicle fleet has increased dramatically over the last 10 years. Before the 1990s the Albanian vehicle fleet comprised 40,000 vehicles, none of which were private. Today, according to official statistics, the number of vehicles in Albania is close to 563,000.

Table 3.2

Number of vehicles by type

Year	Cars	Buses/minibuses	Trucks and vans	Motorcycles	Total
2007	237,932	29,506	68,329	13,859	349,626
2010	294,729	7,035	94,699	24,022	420,485
2011	300,974	6,723	79,124	24,009	410,830
2012	297,341	5,279	66,538	25,492	394,650
2013	341,691	5,713	72,074	26,664	446,142
2014	378,053	6,093	76,003	30,975	491,124
2015	403,680	6,477	78,839	33,070	522,066
2016	436,013	7,050	83,889	36,096	563,048

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Based on the data provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and by the General Directorate for Road Transport Services there is a difference between the number of registered vehicles and the number of those that have passed the roadworthiness test. The roadworthiness test has to be carried out every year for cars and every six months for buses, minibuses, taxis and vehicles transporting dangerous goods.

Table 3.3

Number of vehicles with a roadworthiness certificate

Type of vehicle	2002	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Motorcycles	841	2,107	8,054	8,830	9,474	9,376	11,702	14,799	16,895
Automobiles	89,775	119,152	173,920	191,787	209,616	232,041	264,234	288,071	305,919
Minibuses	10,392	9,061	13,658	13,553	16,076	14,218	15,858	16,555	16,729
Buses	2,452	2,826	6,640	6,601	6,968	4,035	4,349	4,173	5,152
Trucks	25,474	29,451	38,651	42,891	40,910	42,848	46,008	47,912	48,338
Trailers	2,290	2,546	3,891	4,340	2,029	3,727	3,961	4,161	4,378
Tractors with wheels	371	615	250	198	209	228	292	357	1,088
Total	131,595	165,758	245,064	268,200	290,146	306,473	346,404	376,028	398,499

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

The official number of vehicles in Albania is 563,000, of which 398,499 have passed a recent roadworthiness test. Theoretically, the number should be almost the same. The difference shows that some of the vehicles registered in the national database are out of use. Recently, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy together with the General Directorate of Road Transport Services have prepared a law that will allow the existing vehicle fleet database to be cleaned up by removing vehicles which are not in use anymore.

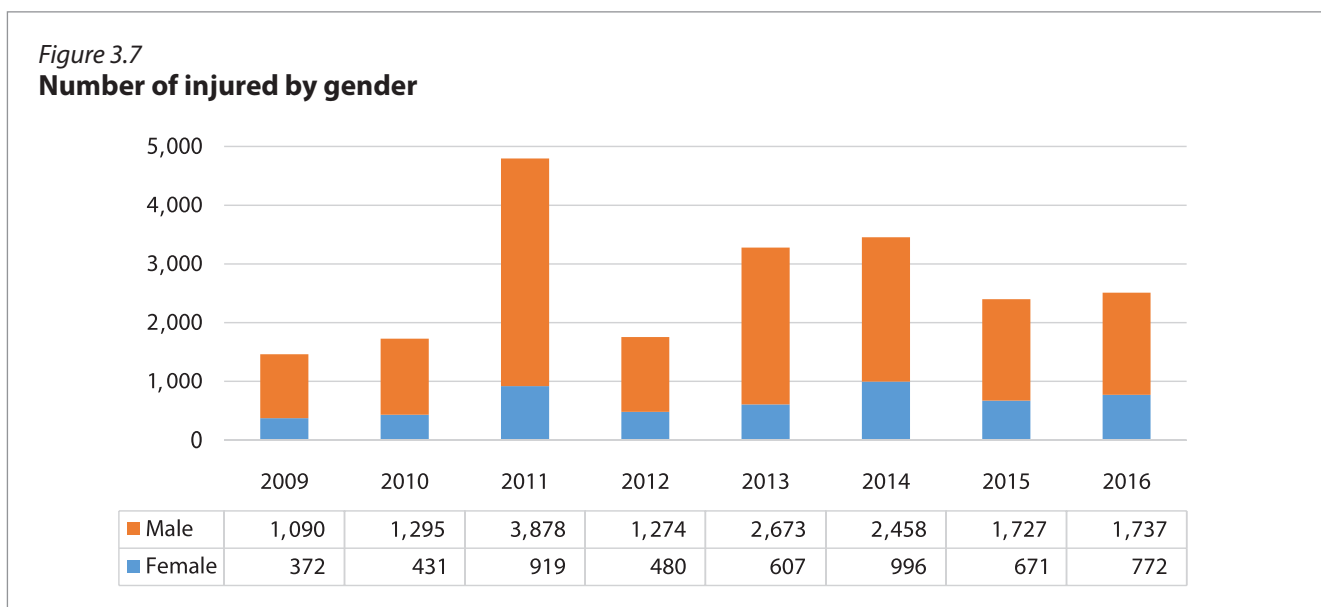
3.4 Road safety indicators

Gender

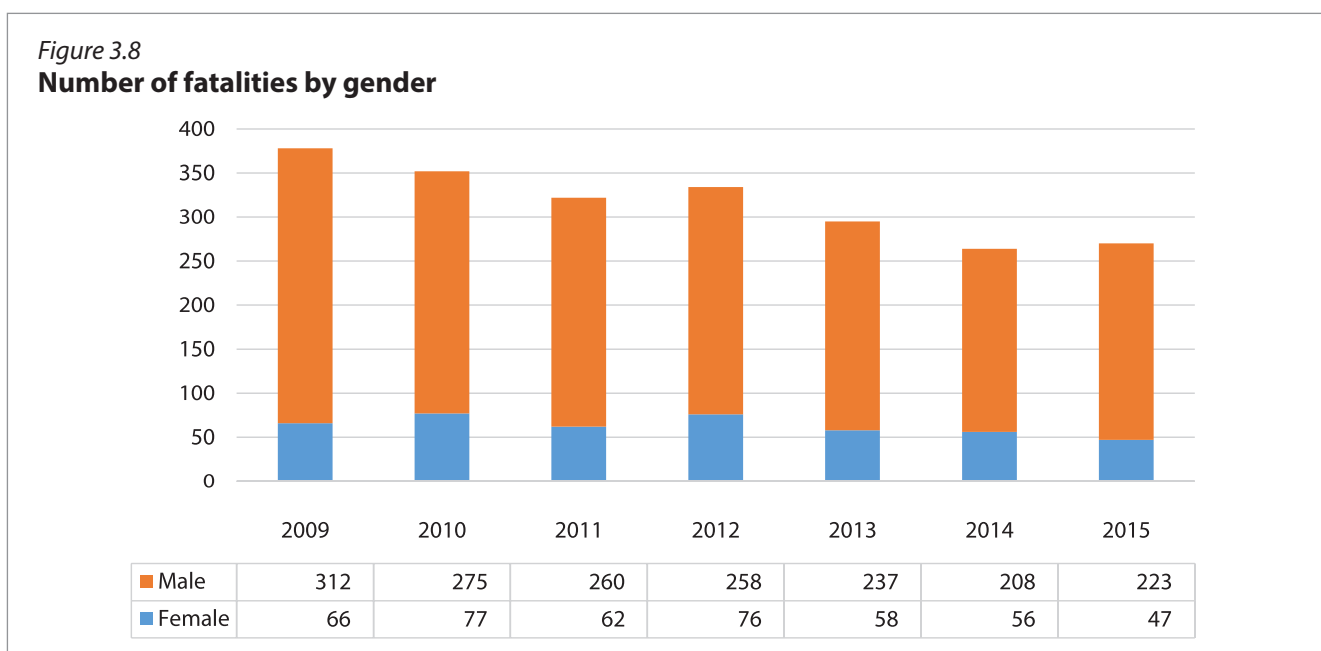
The data disaggregated by gender for 2009 show that the majority of injured people were men, mainly due to the fact that the majority of drivers are men. High exposure of men to road accidents is also explained by longer commutes and working hours as drivers.

The data for 2016 show that the number of men involved in an accident was 3,518 while the number of women was 946.

Another indicator that can help explain the high number of men involved in road accidents is the data on alcohol. In 2016 the number of females involved in accidents with alcohol levels above the limit was zero.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.



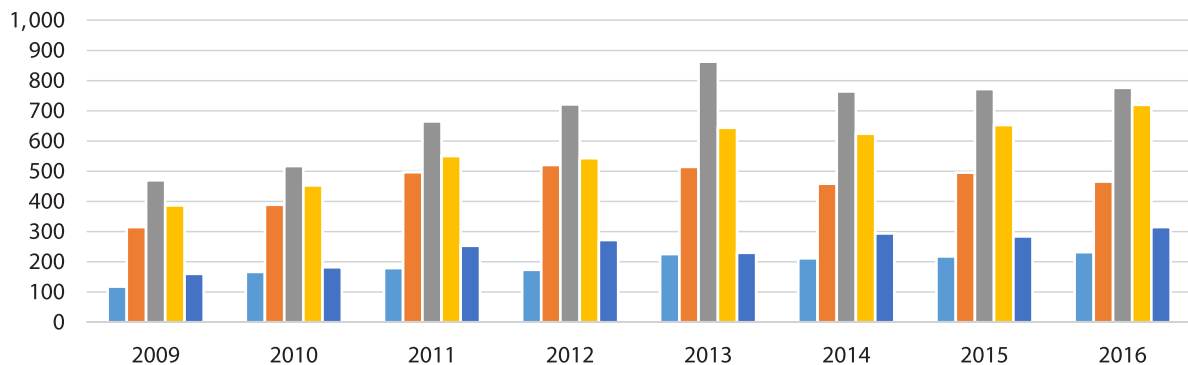
Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Age

The data for 2016 (figure 3.10) show that of all fatalities, the age group 45-64 suffered 33.3% of casualties, and the group 25-44 suffered 27%. The data for 2016 (IARD, 2016) show that road users in the age group 25-44 years were twice as likely to be involved in accidents due to alcohol, compared to the age group of 45-64.

Figure 3.9

Number of people involved in accidents by age group

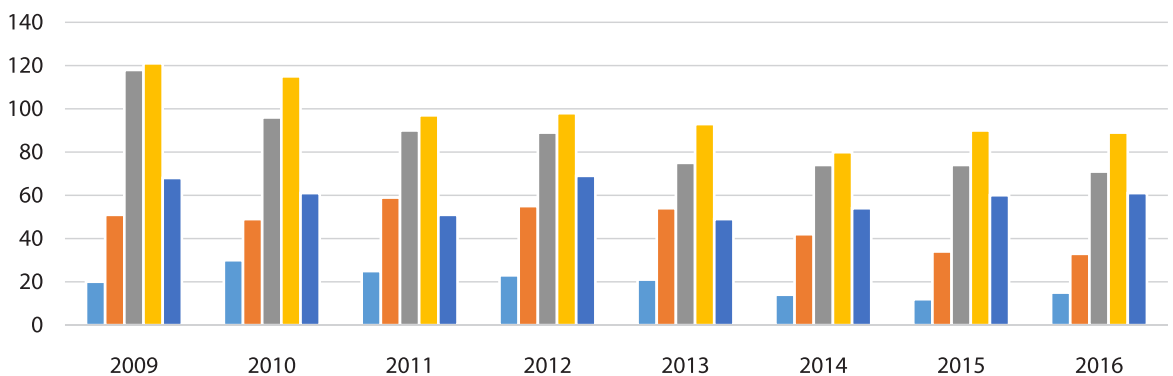


	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0-15	118	167	179	174	226	212	218	232
16-24	315	389	497	521	514	459	495	466
25-44	470	517	665	721	863	764	772	776
45-64	387	453	550	543	644	624	653	720
65+	160	182	253	272	230	294	284	315

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Figure 3.10

Number of fatalities by age



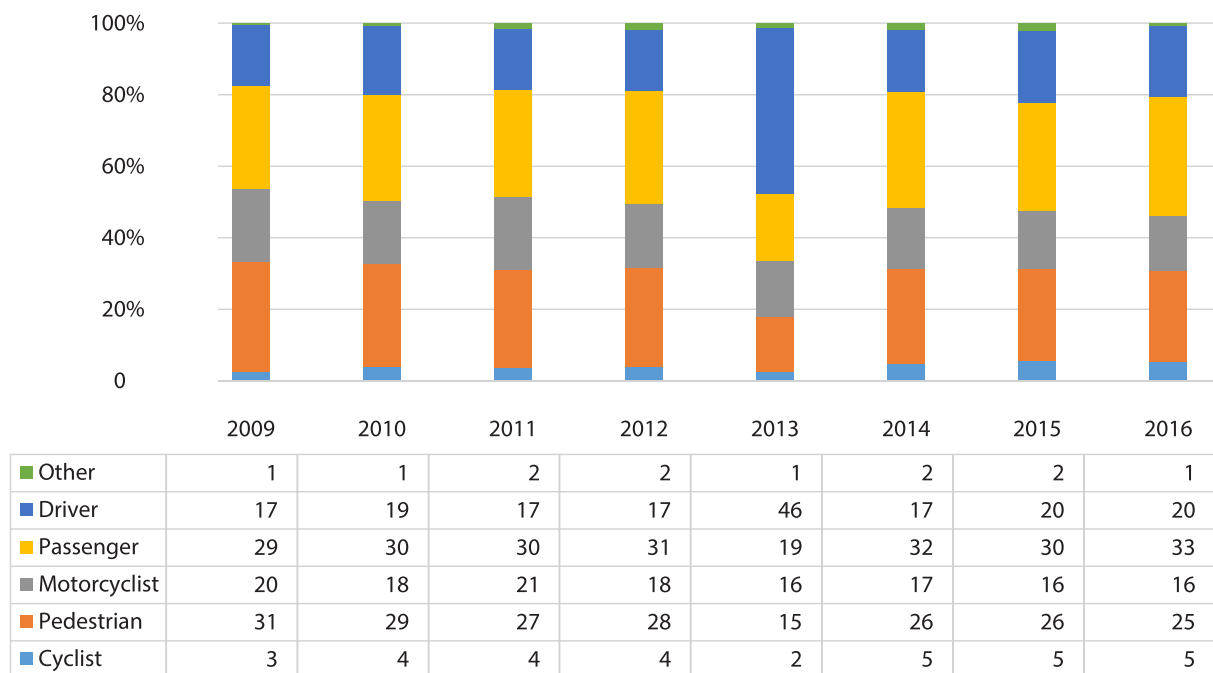
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0-15	20	30	25	23	21	14	12	15
16-24	51	49	59	55	54	42	34	33
25-44	118	96	90	89	75	74	74	71
45-64	121	115	97	98	93	80	90	89
65+	68	61	51	69	49	54	60	61

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Road users

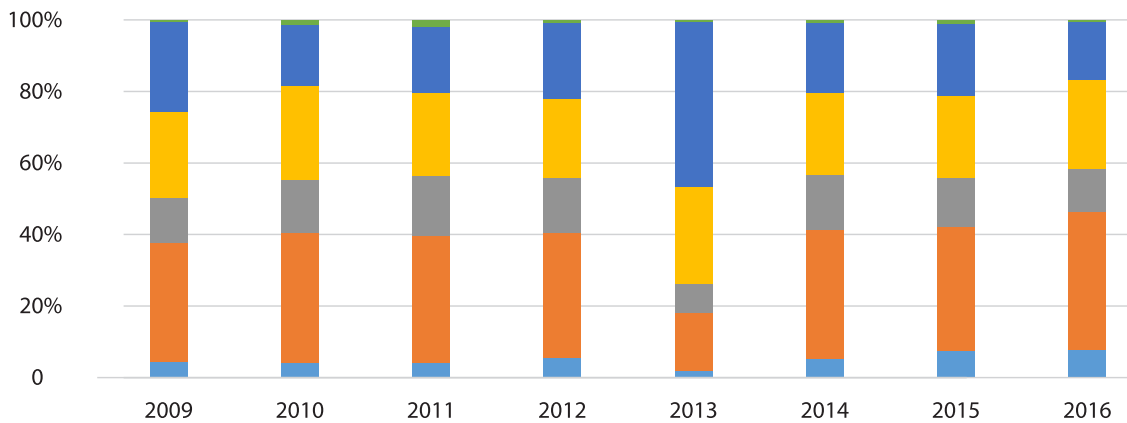
The 2016 data on road user injuries show that the number of pedestrians injured was 25% of the total injured on the road. The number of pedestrians killed on the road was 39% of all fatalities. Over the last three years, fatalities among pedestrians increased from 35% to 39% in 2016, while the number of pedestrians injured remained the same.

Figure 3.11
Percentage of injured by type of road user



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Figure 3.12
Percentage of fatalities by type of road user



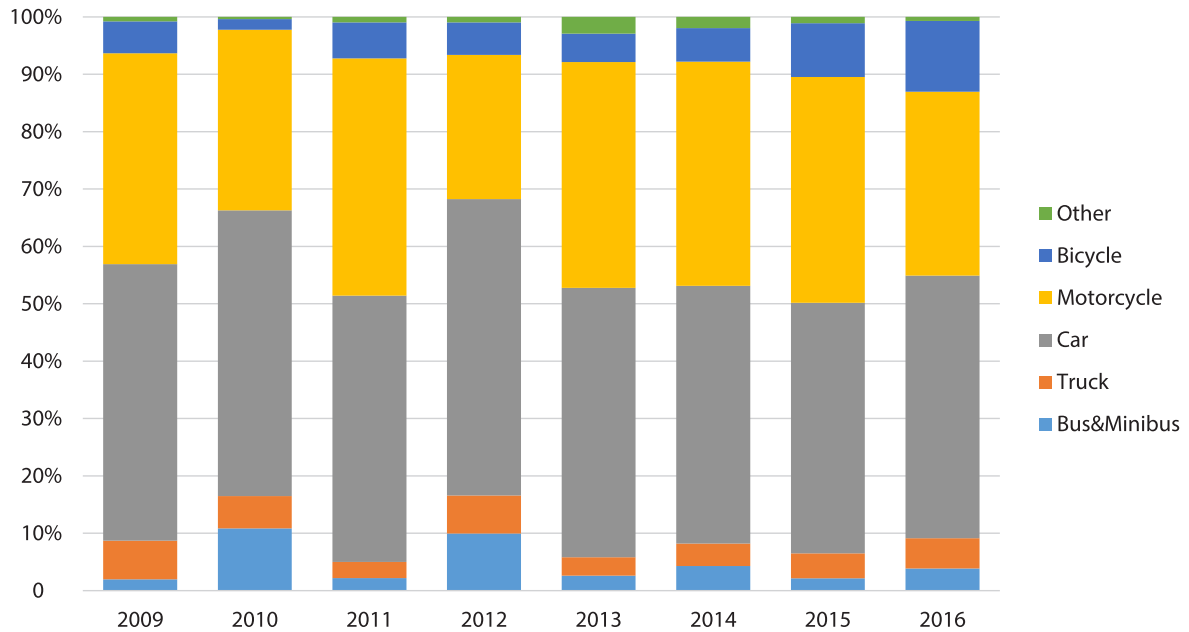
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Other	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
Driver	25	17	19	21	46	20	20	16
Passenger	24	26	23	22	27	23	23	25
Motorcyclist	13	15	17	16	8	16	14	12
Pedestrian	33	36	36	35	16	36	35	39
Cyclist	4	4	4	6	2	5	7	8

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

When categorized by vehicle type, data for 2016 show that passenger cars represented 57% of all vehicles involved in accidents. Motorcycles are second with 32%. The trend of passenger cars and motorcycles being involved in accidents has not changed for many years.

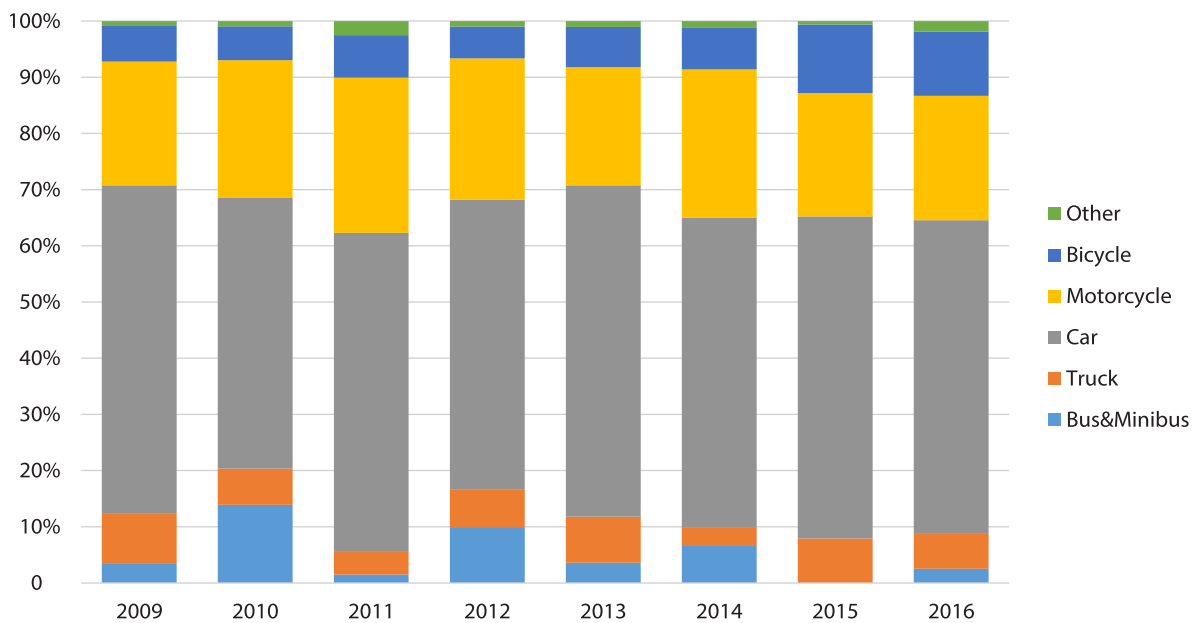
Furthermore, some 12% of those involved in accidents were bicyclists.

Figure 3.13
Percentage of injured by type of vehicle



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Figure 3.14
Percentage of fatalities by type of vehicle

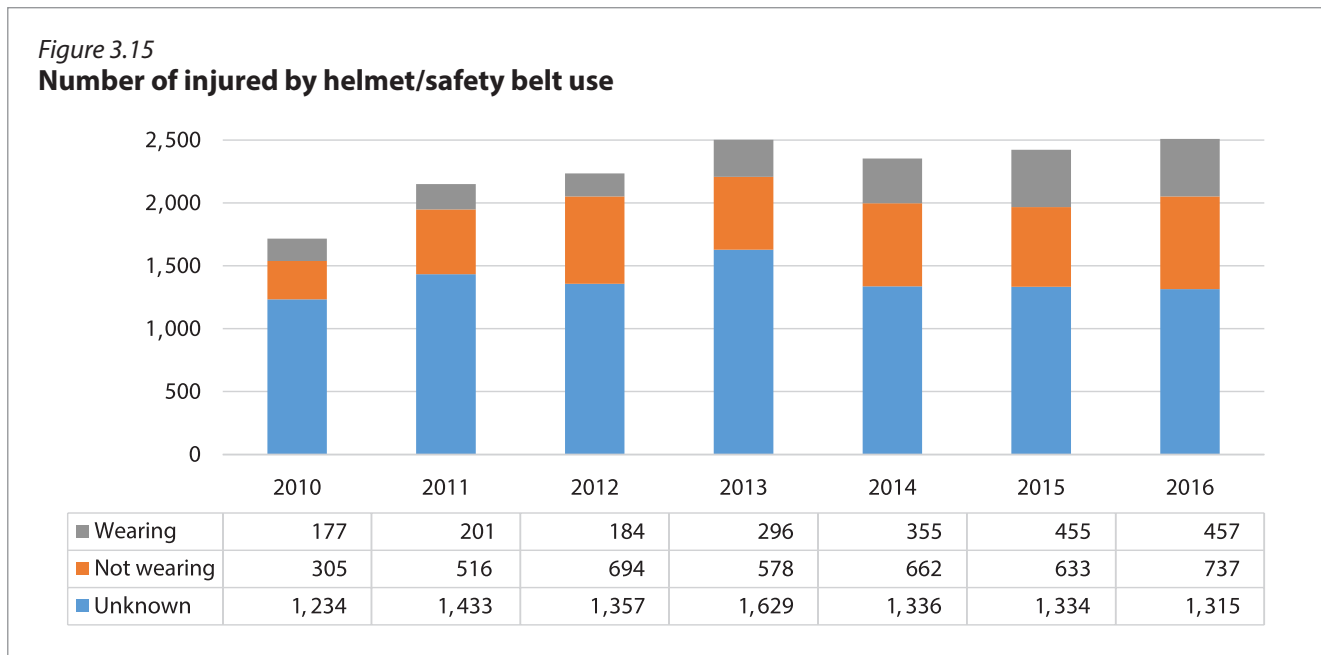


Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

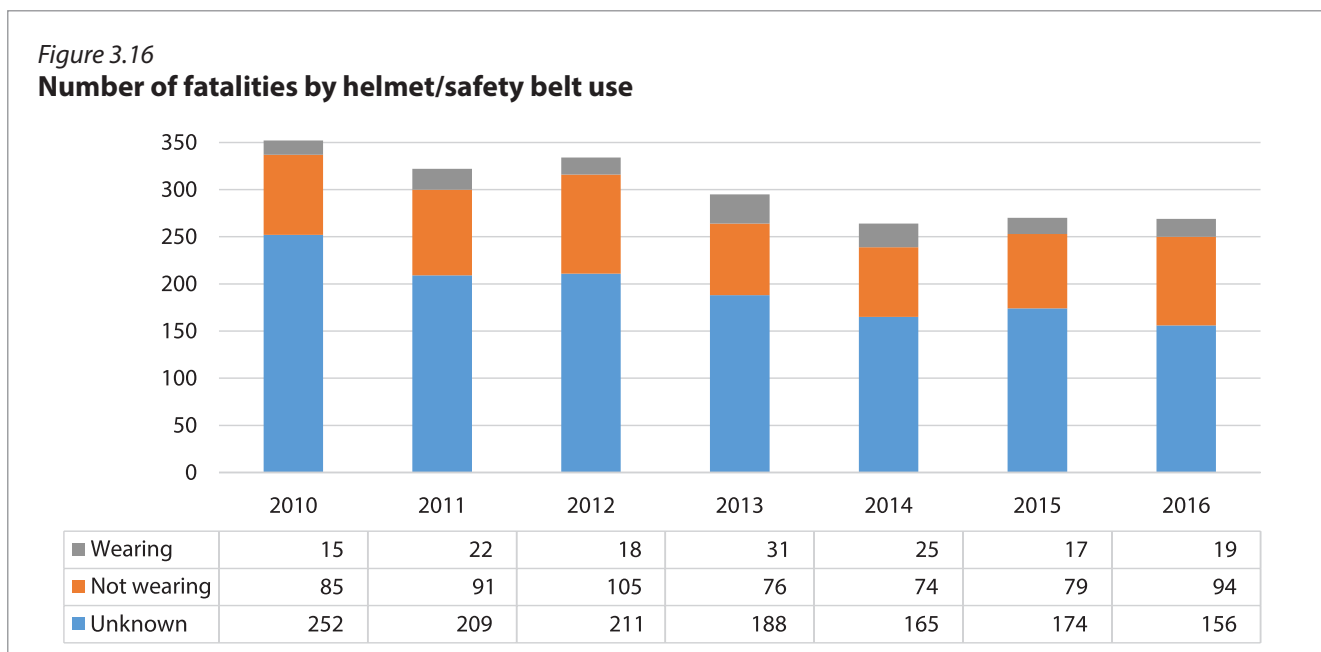
Helmets and seatbelt use

There are no regular surveys on the utilization of helmets and safety belts. In the accident database system, both use of helmets and safety belts are registered as a single figure which makes it difficult to determine whether or not motorcyclists were wearing a helmet or drivers/passengers were using safety belts when involved in an accident. Sources from the traffic police have explained that the “unknown” records are very high because in many cases the police are not present at the scene and the people involved in the accident are taken to the hospital to receive first aid.

However, looking at the statistics for 2016, the number of people involved in fatal accidents not wearing a helmet and or a safety belt was very high, at approximately 82%.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

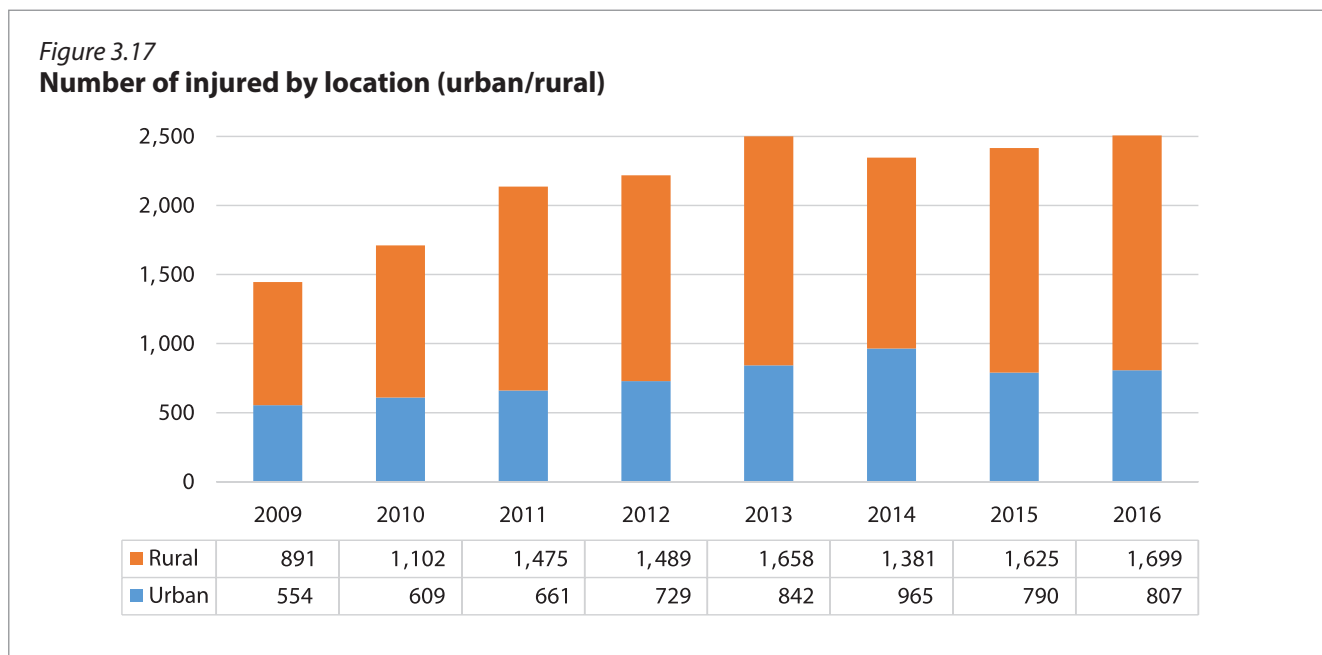


Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

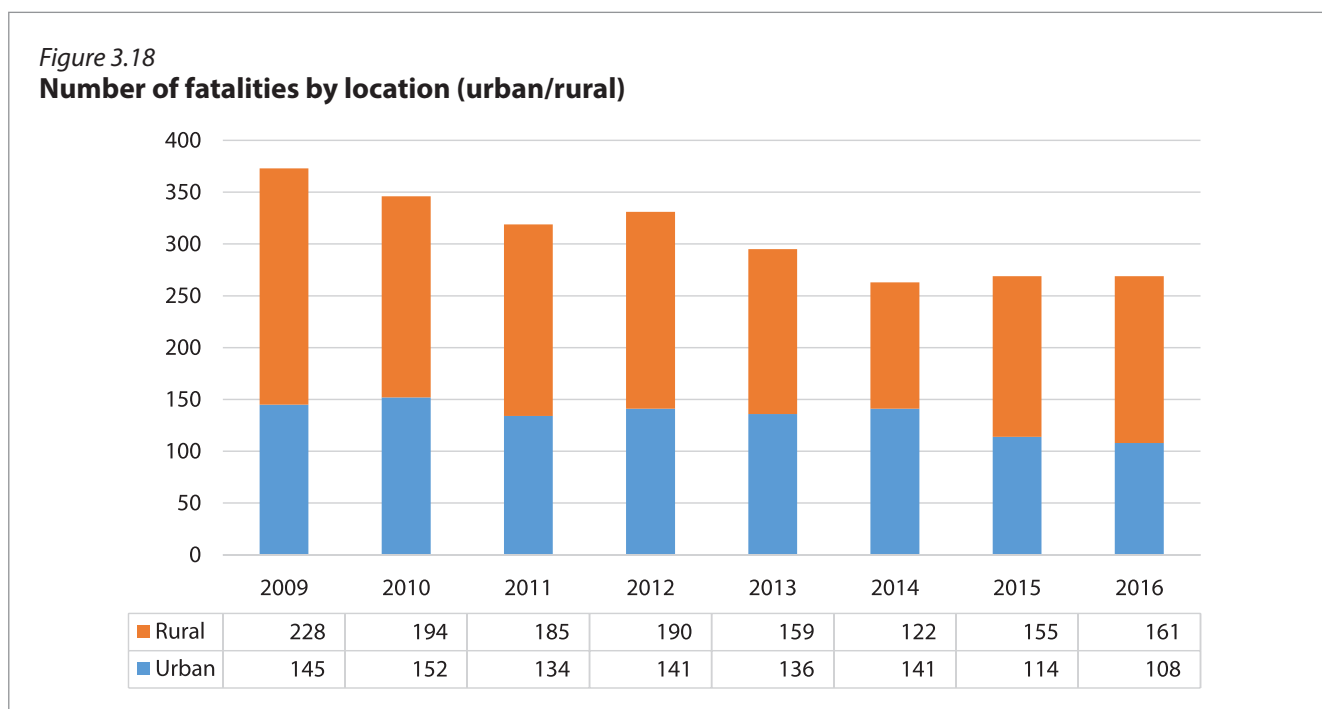
Location of accident: Urban or rural

The place where the accident happened is determined by GPS using the World Geodetic System (WGS) 84 system. It is marked as urban or rural in the database. From discussions held with members of the police, this division is vague and often does not specify whether the accident happened on the national, urban or rural road network, as the software itself does not include a map of all the road networks and their administrations.

The data show that fatal accidents in urban areas make up 57% of all accidents, while those in rural areas make up 42%.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

3.5 Cost of accidents

There is no specific methodology defined by law for calculating the cost of an accident. However, according to the World Bank funded study “Assessing the social costs and benefits of better and safer roads for the bottom 40 per cent and other vulnerable groups: the Albanian case”, the costs of accidents are calculated to be the following:

Table 3.4

Cost of accidents (€)

Type of accident	Cost of accident
Fatal accident	143,099
Seriously injured	11,283
Slightly injured	1,307

Source: The World Bank Study, 2015.²⁰

The study found that road crashes disproportionately affect those in the bottom 40 per cent of the population. The bottom 40 per cent, and especially the bottom 20 per cent, are much more at risk of becoming road crash victims.

Meanwhile, according to article 26 of Law No. 10076, dated 12 February 2009, “On Compulsory Insurance in the Transport Sector” the cost of a fatal accident is up to \$150,000.

According to article 26 of Law No. 10076, dated 12 February 2009, “On Compulsory Insurance in the Transport Sector” the minimum liability limits covered by insurance for biological, existential and moral damages (human cost) caused by a death or serious injury in a road accident have been defined as follows:

- Moral and existential damage from death or partial permanent disability: €7,700;
- Moral and existential damage from other damages: €3,850;
- Moral damage from a total permanent disability: €15,400;
- Existential damage from a total permanent disability: €11,550;
- Biological damage from death or partial permanent disability: €7,700.

The minimum total liability for a person involved in a road accident is about €150,000.

²⁰ Project financed by the World Bank, 2015.

3.6 Funds for road safety

Funding for road safety comes from the State budget. Together with road investments, a specific budget is allocated for road safety. The funds from the central budget are used for the improvement of the main national road network. Local governments also invest in the rural and urban road network to improve safety. However, it is still difficult to determine the total amount of funding invested by local governments.

Over the years, the amount of funds allocated for road safety by ARA has increased. Funds allocated for road safety, including those for road signs on main roads in Albania, are shown in table 3.5. The table does not include investments made by local governments such as municipalities and communes, as they are included in the local budget.

Table 3.5
Road safety investments (€)

Description	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Investments in safety (including signing and marking)	2,500,894	2,212,917	2,179,576	7,739,962	10,661,118	3,214,286

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

3.7 Conclusions and recommendations

The road safety data collection process is already established and accident data are populated by the Albanian State Police. Based on the information collected, a further improvement of the system is proposed:

- Improve accident data for the following variables:
 - Alcohol data – 17% is missing. Testing of the BAC level of drivers involved in accidents with injuries is very important information and should mandatorily collected.
 - Use of safety belts – 46% is missing. Since the non-use of safety belts/helmets is a major safety issue it is important that the traffic police improve the coverage.
 - Vehicle defects – 85% is missing. This item has hardly been reported at all due to the difficulty of making a proper vehicle inspection at the accident scene. To get objective data, the vehicles must be towed to a garage with the proper equipment which is not done due to cost considerations. Still, some visual observations of defects could be made at the accident scene such as worn out tyres and overloading.
 - Accident location (urban versus rural) – The accident data collected show if the accident occurs in an urban or rural area based on the judgement of the traffic officer and not based on a map or GPS coordinates.
- Intermediate indicators of road safety performance on the network – The platform to monitor the level of enforcement of dangerous road user behaviour such as driving at excessive speed, car occupants not using safety belts and supervision and enforcement of drink driving laws is a very important factor contributing to the reduction of accident risks. The traffic police have to conduct surveys and register the results in the database to monitor road user behaviour.
- Data collected for helmets and safety belt use have to be recorded separately.
- Upgrading of accident database software – The accident database has to be upgraded. The difficulties of handling and processing big data files make it necessary to implement a new database system. The purchasing of professional accident database software which is accessible on-line would be one of the solutions.

- Underreporting of injuries is an issue which has to be addressed – Not all injuries from accidents are reported to the police. People with minor injuries move from the scene of the accident to hospital without being registered as injured. Comparing the police data for injuries and the hospital data would reflect the magnitude of injured people not reported. At the present date there is no hospital database system which collects data on slightly injured people. The implementation of such a system would reduce the number of unreported injured people.
- Better categorization of data fields in the Accident Information Database – A lot of information is recorded in the categories “unknown” or “other”, making statistical analysis difficult and not very informative. Further categorization of data fields is strongly recommended.

4. Road safety assessment

4.1 Road safety management

4.1.1 Strategic framework

Albania is committed to achieving the strategic goal of reducing fatalities in the long-term by 50%, as is clearly stressed in the Albanian Road Safety Strategy. Such a goal is in line with the strategic development objectives of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II) 2015 – 2020,²¹ approved by the Council of Ministers on 11 May 2016 defining the main objectives for the development of Albania, including the development of the transport sector. It sets forth the long-term vision for Albanian transport, as an efficient transport system integrated into the region and into the EU transport network, promoting economic development and improving the quality of life of citizens.

Transport development strategy

The Government has increased its attention to road safety reforms, including the adoption of the Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan in 2011, which was based on the definition of strategic priorities, set up with its first Sector Strategy for Transport.²² An important aspect of the Transport Plan was the introduction of a Road Maintenance Programme and within it, the improvement of safety standards and investments.

The National Transport Strategy 2016–2020, approved in 2016²³, includes a draft National Action Plan with priority actions for each mode of transport (road, rail, maritime, air and intermodal).

Road safety strategy

With regard to the road safety strategy, the basic document “The National Road Safety Strategy for the period 2011 – 2020”²⁴ is based on setting up a long-term and effective strategic framework. The document is harmonised with the Regional Road Safety Strategy developed by SEETO. It outlines how road safety in Albania could be improved to the levels currently found in the most successful countries in the Western Balkans Region and draws on the successful experiences and best practices from countries around the world. As part of the overall reform process, a revised Road Safety Action Plan²⁵ was adopted at the beginning of the mandate of the new Government (approved by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Road Safety in January 2014), evidencing an ambitious commitment towards improving road safety.

Long-term goal – Albania²⁶ will make a 50% reduction in road traffic accident fatalities by 2020 compared to the 2009 figures.

It is obvious, however, that Albania faces significant challenges in its goal to create acceptable levels of safety in its road traffic system in line with EU norms. To date, the Action Plan has not been supported adequately by sustainable sources of funding.

²¹ “Strategjia Kombëtare për Zhvillim dhe Integrim 2015-2020 (National Strategy for Development and Integration)” approved by Decree No. 348 of the Council of Ministers dated 11 May 2016 and published in Official Gazette No. 86.

²² Approved on 22 September 2008, published in Official Gazette No.145.

²³ Decree No. 811 of the Council of Ministers, dated 16 November 2016 “On approval of the Strategy for the Transport Sector and the Action Plan”.

²⁴ Official Gazette No. 230, 2016.

²⁵ Report on Road Safety in Albania for the year 2015, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, page 11.

²⁶ National Road Safety Strategy, Republic of Albania.

Overall, a brief analysis of the implementation of the strategy reveals that progress has been made, but much needs to be done.²⁷ This will include not only the enhancement and enforcement of road safety laws and regulations, but also the modernization of safety standards in road design and construction, coordination between stakeholders and increasing public awareness on safety issues.²⁸

As mentioned in the January 2016 publication “Final Strategy and Action Plan” for the Project “Technical assistance for the preparation of the Transport Sector Strategy in Albania” financed by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Programme, such a conclusion seems to be commonly accepted by international stakeholder institutions and funding agencies.²⁹

4.1.2 Inter-institutional coordination

Efforts to develop modern primary legislation on road safety have not been followed up by the development of comprehensive institutional capacities both inside and outside the Government. Such limitations have resulted in a lack of coordination between national and local levels that are involved both in implementation and funding of road safety activities.

There is also a lack of vertical coordination with *qarks* and municipalities associated with little involvement and limitations on the number of road safety professionals.³⁰ Based on information on yearly budgeting and expenditures, it is evident that none of the local governments in Albania have dedicated funds for road safety. It is also the case with major institutional and powerful local governments, such as Tirana municipality.³¹

As mentioned earlier in this document, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy plays a key role in road safety issues. The Ministry develops policies, designs strategies and monitors the implementation of programmes for all modes of transport. It has the power and duty to ensure cooperation and coordination among relevant institutions with a stake in road safety issues, through the Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Committee. Ministry experts serve as employees of the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Road Safety, together with two or three representatives from the traffic police. The MoIE also supervises the implementation of policies by its subordinate institutions.

The MoIE and the traffic police are actively promoting the involvement of the private sector, insurance companies, Automobile Club Albania and a few other NGOs in joint promotional activities for road safety.

A cooperation agreement has been established between the Government (both MoIE and MoI) and the Albanian Insurance Bureau (under the Financial Supervision Authority) aimed at coordination and joint cooperation to increase the efficiency of legislation on road safety and the full implementation of the Road Code.³² The parties have each agreed to contribute to the implementation of the National Road Safety Plan, with the aim of reducing road accidents, deployment of funds and increasing public awareness of road safety issues.

Moreover, it has been jointly decided to establish a National Information Centre for motor vehicles, to be set-up based on a professional study prepared by a group of senior experts from the National Insurance Bureau, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the Financial Supervision Authority. After a good initial start, however, this important agreement has not been fully implemented.

²⁷ SEETO. Road Safety Audit Implementation Report. July 2012. Available from: <http://www.seetoint.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/02/SEETO-RSA-report-final.pdf>.

²⁸ “Technical assistance for the preparation of the Transport Sector Strategy in Albania”, Specific Contract No. 2015/360654, page 29. “The adoption of new legislative measures has not been always accompanied by their active enforcement, a challenge especially problematic when it comes to road safety”.

²⁹ Idem, page 37, “Progress has been made, but much remains to be done. To date the Government has primarily focused on enforcing road safety laws and regulations rather than giving attention to safety audits and black-spot improvements, incorporating safety standards into road design and construction, and increasing public awareness. Road safety is unlikely to improve unless it is given comprehensive and robust multi-pillar (driver, vehicle and infrastructure) attention”.

³⁰ Draft Road Safety Final Report and Recommendations, Country Report – Republic of Albania, 31 July 2014, Demir Hadzic, PhD.

³¹ See chapter 4.6 of this Review under “Urban Public Transport”.

³² MoIE, Protocol No. 2647, dated 28 March 2014.

The inter-institutional cooperation objectives are clear and well-defined in strategies and plans, aimed at increasing efficiency by involving broad-based organizations as stakeholders, combined with the mobilization of adequate technical and financial support for road safety activities.

4.1.3 Funding and resource allocation

Albania suffers deeply from a lack of stable road safety funding and prioritized interventions.

A simple look at the scarce public information available reveals that there is no separate budget allocated for road safety in the overall state budget. There is no dedicated road safety budget item for any of the government agencies dealing with these issues in Albania. Limited road safety actions are funded if included in development projects or traffic improvement plans (for example, projects carried out by ARA, the Albanian Development Fund, donor organizations and municipalities, have road safety components (road signs only)).³³

Road safety interventions are normally regarded as a key responsibility of Government and are financed through the budgets of concerned public sector agencies. In the case of Albania, although the Government collects taxes that should be used for road safety improvements (general tax revenues, road funds, fuel tax, etc.), the public is not informed on how these taxes are being used for road safety improvements and earmarked to support spending on road safety issues in general.

Direct budget allocations for road safety are uncommon and bodies that deal with road safety issues (Inter-Ministerial Committee) generally suffer from a shortage of funds.

Despite a formal commitment,³⁴ the contribution of insurance agencies to road safety is lacking as is almost any sponsorship by private businesses in general. The situation is the same for private business sector sponsorship of road safety campaigns or other contributions. They sometimes contribute small amounts through NGOs working in the field of road safety (awareness campaigns or similar activities).

It has been strongly recommended from various sources, (e.g. international agencies, projects and programmes in the field of road safety) that road safety financing in Albania should come primarily from funds allocated to the regular budget. It should be allocated to each government body concerned and be regarded as part of their regular tasks to be performed. The Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Committee should have a dedicated budget from the Government and additional support from insurance companies and private businesses should be promoted.

4.1.4 Recent road safety projects implemented with the support of international organizations

In the road transport sector, support was provided to the General Directorate of Road Transport Services (GDRTS) by the EU-funded Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2012 Project "Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure." In the framework of this project, a detailed report and inventory of the existing legislation in the transport sector in Albania was developed, followed by a detailed analysis on the gaps vis-à-vis European legislation. Other products included a Draft Action Plan on compliance of Albanian legislation with EU legislation, as well as a roadmap for the updating of legislation. Based on a thorough assessment of the training needs of the former Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and its subordinate structures a training programme on legal standards and best practices in inspections and certifications in road transport was implemented.

³³ The Results-based Road Maintenance and Safety project states that "road safety aspects will be incorporated into the maintenance contracts through addressing black-spots identified under an initial road safety audit, and through a process of ongoing audits, whereby additional road safety issues can be identified, and then addressed by the contractors under emergency/contingency funding".

³⁴ SEETO. Road Safety Audit Implementation Report. July 2012. Available from: <http://www.seetoint.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/02/SEETO-RSA-report-final.pdf>.

Training activities on the implementation of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), the digital tachograph, etc. were also carried out in 2016.

In mid-2015 the World Bank started an integrated project (Results-based Road Maintenance and Safety Project) offering Albania \$66 million of assistance focused on improving the safety of Albania's primary road and primary-secondary road networks, and on strengthening sustainable and efficient road asset management and safety practices, for the benefit of road-users.³⁵

Component 2 of the project (institutional reforms) targeted the objective of this component to support institutional reforms at both ARA and the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, aimed at enhancing capacity in road safety and road asset management on a country level. The project is specifically assisting with the following activities:

- (a) **Sub-component 2.A:** Operationalize road safety in ARA, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and IMRSC, by strengthening organizational and policy-oriented actions, introducing road safety audit training accreditation courses, supporting road safety media campaigns and developing an integrated database to enhance the Accident Information System (AIS);
- (b) **Sub-component 2.B:** Institutionalize Road Asset Management Systems (RAMS), by enhancing ARA's capacity to collect and analyse road data, conduct road condition surveys to collect input data for RAMS, and provide training to ARA staff on using the system to plan and budget for multi-year maintenance and investment expenditures.

4.1.5 Promotion (awareness raising and campaigns)

Promotional activities are partial, without monitored results. Several road safety campaigns have been conducted recently by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the State Police, albeit with limited effects.

The Ministry of Education has increased its efforts to teach school children proper behaviour in road traffic. Often the books have been provided by NGOs.³⁶ Teachers have not received any special road safety training or education.³⁷

4.1.6 Research and development and knowledge transfer

The Institute of Transport is the only organization engaged in research and development on the Albanian road sector, as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. The research work carried out by this institute is focused on transportation issues only. There have been no specific research programmes and/or initiatives dedicated to road safety exclusively. In spite of this, a few academic institutions have been involved in different projects funded by EU institutions but not explicitly targeting road safety issues. Their role should be appreciated, especially with the need to develop good practice guidelines and protocols.

The need for research and development activities is largely recognized. As stated in the Action Plan for implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy, (point C4-research programme for road safety), the IMRSC has emphasized the need for research and development actions. The Plan envisaged the provision of training on the control and management of traffic³⁸ on a regular basis. There is also a need for the creation of a core group of local trainers that can act as trainers of trainers. In addition, the Plan required the implementation of a research programme dealing with the monitoring and evaluation of activities in the field of road safety.

³⁵ www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania.

³⁶ Shoqata Shqiptare per Sigurinë Rrugore dhe Ambientin (Albanian Association for Road Safety and Environment) has published books such as "Practical guidelines for road users", "Manual of road education and techniques for driving mopeds and motorcycles", etc.

³⁷ In 2015 a promotion and awareness project "Implementing road traffic saves our lives" funded by Swedish Support for the Community Policing programme was implemented by the Albanian NGO the Civic Association for Road Safety that included workshops and seminars on road safety targeting elementary, high schools and university students, as well as teachers.

³⁸ Action Plan for Implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy, 2011-2015.

The Action Plan also called for the organization of an annual research seminar to raise awareness of the research community and to create a forum for knowledge transfer of ideas and results. These ambitious plans are far from being implemented. For the time being, R&D activities are limited to the work of the Institute of Transport³⁹ and the voluntary contributions of a few NGOs.

4.1.7 Proposed measures and conclusions

Analysis of the system for road safety in Albania has revealed the following shortcomings in dealing with road safety issues:

- Limited political and government/administrative support on a regular basis for the implementation of road safety strategy, action plans and best practices, as well as law enforcement in general;
- The IMRSC is seen more as a policy organization, does not meet regularly and the existing technical secretariat does not have real coordinating power;
- There is no dedicated road safety fund;
- There is a limited capacity and power to deal with road safety issues within local governments which in turn results in poor involvement in road safety and the lack of the necessary tools and know-how in road safety management;
- A lack of experience, coordination and joint actions to achieve tangible results in all aspects of road safety, with the most visible negative impact in monitoring and evaluation.

As reiterated in several policy documents and EU progress reports, Albania should consider further actions in education, information and public awareness raising, in addition to efficient enforcement measures.⁴⁰

Furthermore, “there is an increased need for strengthening the leadership for road safety management in Albania”.⁴¹ The Road Safety Strategy states that “to ensure sustainable progress in road safety at the national level, it is recommended to introduce a lead agency to ensure cooperation of road safety work by giving to this administration an independent role”.⁴²

Proposed recommendations to improve road safety management are introduced in groups of actions, based on their relevance:

Legislation improvement

- Despite considerable progress,⁴³ legislation should be in full compliance with international/United Nations legal instruments and the EU *acquis communautaire*, mainly related to accident investigation, road safety databases, driving permit systems and fines;
- Identify and assess the needs and gaps and establish an efficient road safety management structure for implementation of legislation aligned with international legislation and the EU *acquis*;
- New or revised legislation has to be planned for sustainable implementation and take into account any changes in traffic and road conditions, so as to meet future expectations;

³⁹ The Institute of Transport has a section for R&D activities comprising three experts. As referred to on its website <http://ital.gov.al/studime> a number of studies and projects have been carried out most before 2008.

⁴⁰ The eighth EU-Albania Sub-Committee Meeting on Transport, Energy, Environment and Regional Development, Tirana, 30 March 2017, recommended that Albania “regularly update its information on adoption, implementation and enforcement of legislation in particular concerning transport of dangerous goods, road safety, road haulage licences, driving licenses and vehicle inspections, environment and social aspects”.

⁴¹ “Technical assistance for the preparation of the Transport Sector Strategy in Albania” Specific Contract No. 2015/360654, page 37: “Strengthening the capacity of the Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Council (IMRSC) – created in 2002 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and composed of eight members – introducing road safety audit training accreditation courses, supporting media campaigns, and enhancing the Accident Information System available are some key priorities to be addressed in the near future”.

⁴² National Strategy on Road Safety of Albania, approved by Government Decision No. 125, 2011.

⁴³ Chapter 14, Progress Report of Albania, 29 August 2016.

- Review and update legislation regarding road vehicles in Albania;
- Adopt new or revised by-laws and regulations to further enhance the consistent enforcement of traffic laws.

Management and coordination

- Strengthen coordination work at the national level, under the guidance and focused on the priorities set-up by the IMRSC secretariat;
- Transform⁴⁴ the IMRSC into a national Road Safety Coordination Council as an independent body under the Prime Minister's Office. Coordination and secretariat functions should be provided by relevant staff in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy;⁴⁵
- Strengthen the capacity (institutional, human and financial) of key road safety stakeholders (both national and local) to carry out more proactive road safety responses, by providing adequate training on management issues and human resources development;
- Despite recent progress, ARA's performance regarding road safety issues should be improved by concrete actions linked to road safety auditing or road safety planning and road work zones management;
- Adopt a partnership approach to mobilize and coordinate government, the private sector and NGO/ community to expand the range of organizations involved;
- Review safety system guidelines and procedures for better road safety management, from lessons learned including the review of forward planning and allocation of resources.

Administration

- Further develop the capacities of all road safety stakeholders in the design and implementation of interventions focused on the reduction of casualties and accidents;
- Further strengthen and expand road maintenance on the national network in line with the Transport Strategy 2016–2020 by establishing and implementing an adequate road assets management system;
- Continue work for the elimination of high-risk road sections and implementation of intelligent transport systems as per the targets set in the Transport Strategy and its Action Plan.

Road safety funding

- Use earmarked funding exclusively for road safety programmes and projects. Make information on funding publicly available;
- Provide incentives and funding from the central budget on a competitive basis to interventions targeting road safety interventions;
- Promote extra-budgetary funding to enhance financial support for road safety (e.g. fees from insurance companies or a fee from Red Cross first aid courses).

Public campaigns

- Awareness of the public on road safety policies and initiatives should target both drivers and pedestrians. Prepare and launch road safety campaigns including the development of information and material for the general public, and road safety awareness initiatives within the education sector and community groups for hazard avoidance and accident prevention;

⁴⁴ SweRoad – Final Report, Technical Assistance to the Government of Albania on the Results-Focused Road Safety Project, October 2010.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

- Support the further development of traffic education and road safety;
- Procure extra funding for campaigns;
- Monitor and measure the effects of campaigns.

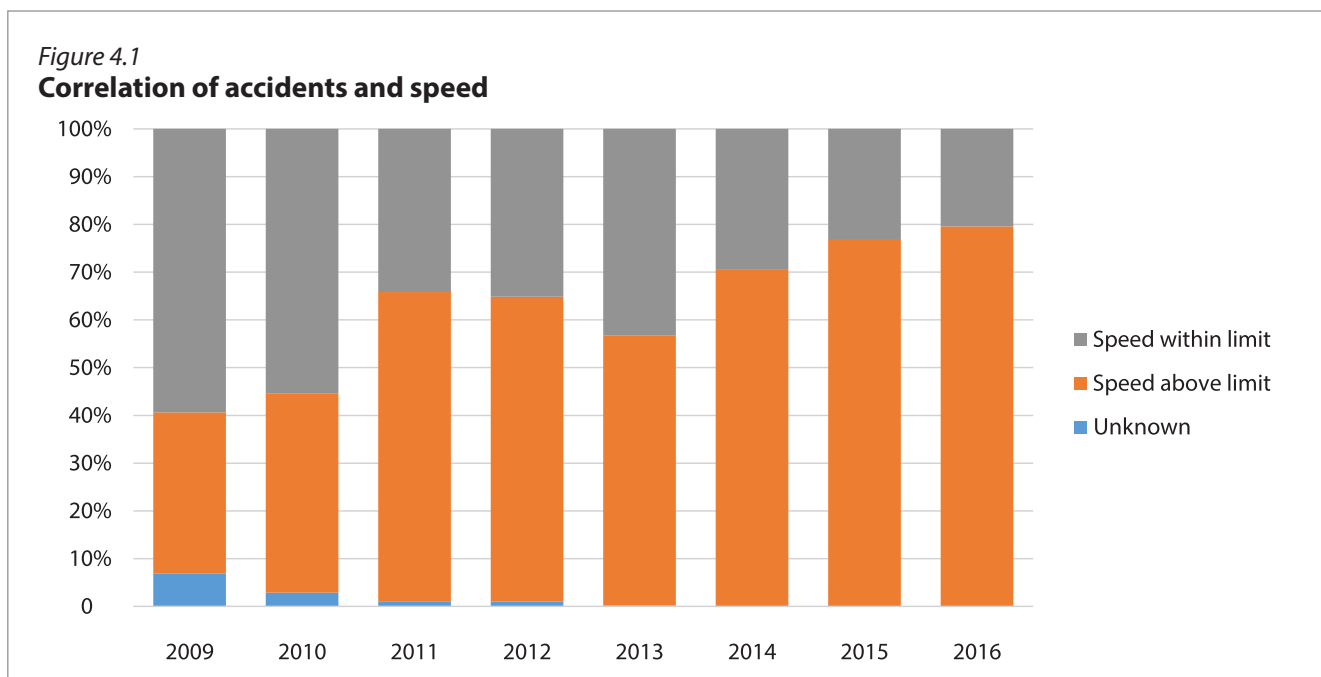
4.2 Safer roads and network

The road network accommodates most of the passenger and freight traffic in Albania. It is classified into the - national, rural and urban road network.

The Government has been focused on developing road infrastructure for the last 20 years, as the old network was constructed based on standards from the 1950s. After 2000 the Government together with financial institutions such as the World Bank, EIB and EBRD financed the development of the road network. Priority was given to the main road corridors which link Albania with neighbouring countries. The rest of the network has been upgraded and improved according to domestic traffic demand.

Despite large investments in the road sector, Albanian Design Standards for Roads and Bridges were only approved in 2015. Design Standards for Roads are applicable on the national and rural road networks, while Design Standards for Streets have not yet been prepared. Local governments prepare street designs based more on knowledge of the designer and local conditions than following a design guideline.

The construction and upgrading of the existing road network has caused an increase in the operating speed, which is one of the main reasons for the increase in road accidents in Albania. The design speed of the old Albanian road network was 40-50 km per hour compared with the new roads on which the operating speed is 80-100 km per hour. As can be seen in figure 4.1, the cause of more than 75% of accidents in 2016 was excessive speed.



Source: Ministry of Interior, 2017.

A key element which contributes to road safety is land use planning. After 1990, the population living in rural areas moved to big cities and surrounding areas. Illegal construction took place near the main road network, which has to accommodate not only national traffic but urban traffic as well. The planning process did not take into account traffic and safety implications. This led to the situation on new district roads, where direct frontal access was also permitted – increasing the number of road traffic conflicts. The following figure shows private properties which have direct access to one of the most important and busiest motorways in Albania – Tirana-Durres.

Figure 4.2
Buildings alongside the Tirana – Durres motorway

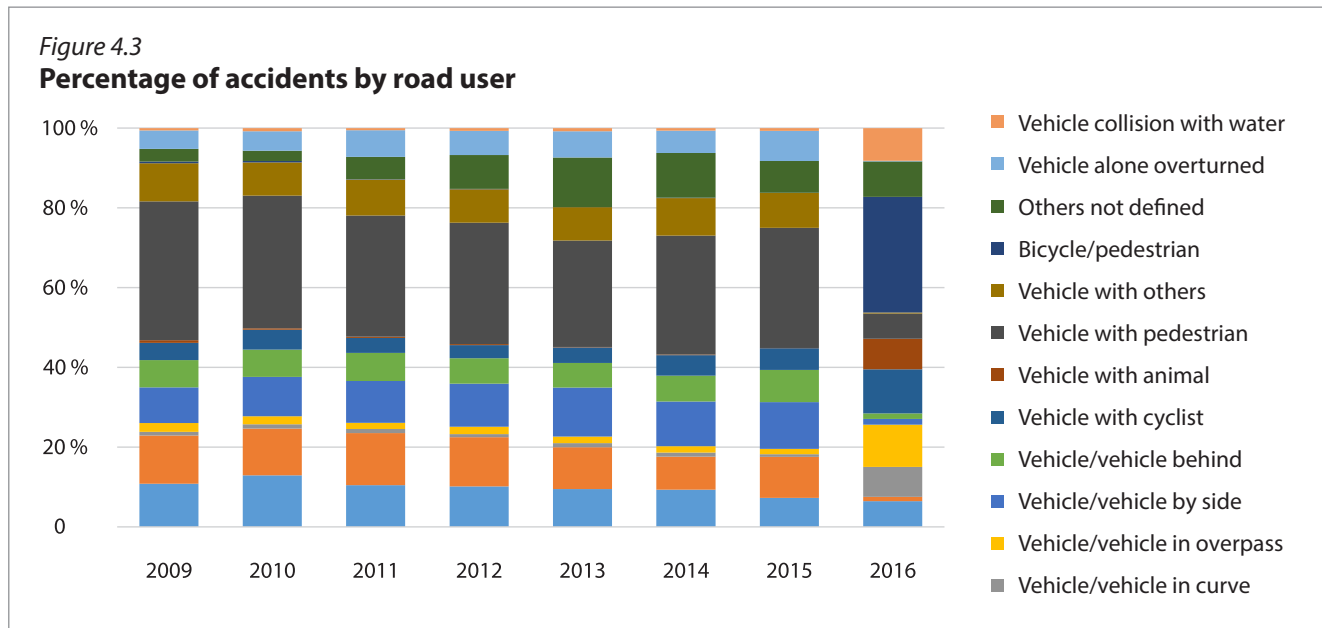


Source: Google maps, author, 2017.

There is a discrepancy between the Albanian Road Code and other documents related to urban planning. According to Albanian legislation municipalities issue construction permits while the right of access is given by ARA. In the case of construction permits issued by municipalities, ARA faces the reality of buildings having already been constructed when asking for access to the road network.

4.2.1 National road network

Lack of a road network hierarchy and appropriate facilities such as underpasses, overpasses and bus stations, creates difficulties for road users and especially pedestrians. This is one of the reasons that fatalities among pedestrians have increased especially in rural areas. The figure below shows that nearly 30% of accidents involve cars and pedestrians of which 80% occur in urban areas.



Source: Ministry of Interior, 2017.

The definition of “urban area” in the accident database system is not strictly linked to areas inside cities and towns but to populated rural areas also. This is one of the reasons for the high percentage of killed and injured pedestrians in urban areas.

Road safety inspections are a routine activity which has to be carried out by ARA and which is mandatory by law. There are no guidelines which define the frequency and the methodology for conducting road inspections by ARA.

Road safety audits are a very important task during the road design phase. Road safety audit guidelines have been prepared by SweRoad. The training of licensed road safety auditors has started, but safety audits for each road design project are not yet routine.

The lack of in-depth accident investigations means that the contribution of the road infrastructure to road accidents and casualties is not fully taken into consideration.

4.2.2 Urban road network

Despite large investments in the urban road network, there are many deficiencies due to the lack of road design standards in urban areas as well as in the urban planning process.

Pedestrians in urban areas face difficulties because of the quality of sidewalks, signal phasing and aggressive driving.

Table 4.1

Type of accident by urban and rural areas

Type of accident	Open spaces	Rural area	Urban area	Total
Vehicle alone overturned		60	85	145
Vehicle collision with water		8	13	21
Vehicle alone		113	52	165
Vehicle/vehicle head to head		52	90	142
Vehicle/vehicle in curve		8	12	20
Vehicle/vehicle in overpass		7	15	22
Vehicle/vehicle by side	1	65	106	172
Vehicle/vehicle behind		26	89	115
Vehicle with cyclist		37	109	146
Vehicle with animal		5	1	6
Vehicle with pedestrian	2	134	538	674
Vehicle with other		31	156	187
Bicycle/pedestrian			3	3
Others not defined		73	141	214
Total	3	619	1,410	2,032

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2017.

Road accident statistics for 2016 show that 20% of accidents in rural areas involved collisions between vehicles and pedestrians, compared to 70% in urban areas.

In some cases, due to the lack of sidewalks, pedestrians are forced to use the carriageway. Vulnerable road users suffer most from bad infrastructure conditions because road administrators are more focused on accommodating vehicles than on other road users.

In urban areas sustainable safety uses a road categorization in which through traffic is concentrated on motorways and other main roads. In residential areas, which have a living, shopping or work function, through traffic is discouraged by setting a speed limit of 30 km/h, and by speed reduction measures such as speed humps, road narrowing etc. Speed limits are also an important factor which can contribute to decreasing the number of road accidents. The Albanian Road Code defines the speed limit according to the type of road network and geometric characteristics, but there is no manual which goes into detail on how and where these speed limits are to be applied. Based on the Road Code the speed limit in urban areas is 50 km per hour.

The Zone 30 concept is not often used in urban areas in Albania. The inclusion of the standards for designing Zone 30 areas in the Design Manual for Streets would contribute to safer roads and streets in built-up areas.

4.2.3 Road signing and marking and Intelligent Transport Systems

The Albanian Road Code clearly defines signing and marking design standards, including the types of road signs, dimensions and construction standards. The Albanian Road Code was drafted based on the Italian Road Code and is in line with the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968) and the European best practice.

The application of the signs and markings based on the Road Code is not correct in many situations. The maintenance backlog for signing and marking is also an issue which has to be addressed. On many urban roads horizontal markings are lacking.

An intelligent transportation system for the national road network is missing. The only intelligent transportation system is in Tirana, which has an ITS centre for urban traffic management. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy plans to set up an ITS system for the national road network in the next 2-3 years. The project consists of monitoring and management of road traffic on the main Albanian motorways. It will be financed by the Government with technical assistance from the World Bank.

4.2.4 Road work zones

The management of road work zones is very important during road construction and maintenance. A Road Works Zone Manual has been prepared by the Transport Institute based on the Road Code. It defines the ways traffic is managed when construction and maintenance work is taking place.

The companies carrying out the maintenance activities on the road are responsible for the safety of traffic and workers during road works. The construction company has to prepare a traffic management plan and submit it for approval to the traffic police as well as the road administrator (ARA for national roads, municipality services for local roads).

The use of the Road Works Zone Manual is very limited due to a low awareness among the police and road construction companies.

4.2.5 Proposed recommendations

Based on the findings above, it is recommended:

- Road Safety Inspection Guidelines – The preparation of Road Safety Inspection Guidelines is very important for the systematic, on-site review of the existing road network to identify hazardous conditions, faults and deficiencies that may lead to serious accidents. Following the principle “Prevention is better than cure” road safety inspections would make it possible to evaluate existing road traffic facilities and improve road safety performance;
- Road Access Guidelines – The preparation of a Road Access Guidelines which describes how secondary roads and services should be linked with the main national network. It has to establish procedures and standards to protect the functions, capacity and safety of the motorway system. It also has to establish who has right and under which conditions to access the main road network;
- Implementation of RSA Guidelines – Conduct road safety audits during preliminary and detailed design stages, as well as pre-construction, construction and post-construction stages on national roads;
- Design standards for streets – Many traffic accidents are directly related to street design and inappropriate speed in urban areas. That is why the preparation of design standards for streets is important for local communities;
- Manual for setting and managing speed limits (Speed management) – Excessive and inappropriate speed is the most important factor contributing to the road injury problem in Albania. The higher the speed the greater the stopping distance required, and hence the increased risk of an accident and

grave consequences. A Speed Management Manual is a very important tool for improving road safety and it could be a constitutive part of design standards for roads;

- Law enforcement for implementation of road work zone traffic schemes – Work zone enforcement is critical for maintaining safety and obtaining motorist compliance with traffic control regulations. However, due to the restrictive nature of a work zone (narrow lane widths, reduced number of lanes, work activity, etc.), it is often difficult for a police officer to be effective. Thus, legislation has to be changed in order to improve work zone design and integrate automated law enforcement methods. Training and sensitization of the Police department and construction companies on the rules and regulations related to road work zones safety is crucial for achieving better results;
- Revision of the Road Code regarding pedestrian crossings – There is a difference between Albanian and European legislation regarding driver behaviour to pedestrians. The difference is in the way drivers give priority to pedestrians. In EU countries drivers give priority to pedestrians not only when they are on the zebra crossing but also when they are approaching it, so the Albania Road Code should be amended accordingly;
- Introduction of Zone 30 – The inclusion of Zone 30 as a definition in the Road Code would help municipalities implement Zone 30 areas which is a new and rare practice in Albania.

4.3 Safer vehicles

4.3.1 Vehicle standards and imports

Albania is not a vehicle producer. Vehicles are imported from other regions, mainly Europe, with fewer from Asia and the United States of America. It is estimated that new vehicles constitute only 5% of the vehicle fleet.

However, all vehicles which enter Albania must conform to the general regulations set by the Road Code. Articles 61 and 62 of the Code define the main dimensions and axial weight of vehicles. In addition, articles 194-290 of chapter 3 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Road Code specifically define the characteristics and dimensions of vehicles that are in use on the Albanian road network.

As Albania aspires to become a part of the European Union, legislation is constantly being amended to be in line with EU legislation. Regulations on approving types of vehicles allowed to circulate in Albania were approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers of 19 June 2011.

In 2011, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy approved requirements on the characteristics of vehicles and ways to register them.

Albanian legislation is based on the following EU Directives:

- Directive 2007/46 of 5 September 2007 establishing a framework for the approval of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles;
- Directive 2002/24 of 18 March 2002 relating to the type-approval of two or three-wheel motor vehicles;
- Directive 2003/37 of 26 May 2003 on type-approval of agricultural or forestry tractors, their trailers and interchangeable towed machinery, together with their systems, components and separate technical units.

Albania has also acceded to the United Nations Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals, of 20 March 1958.

In reality, only vehicles which have a certificate of conformity issued by European institutions or by other state organizations can be registered and used in Albania.

4.3.2 Periodic technical inspections

A properly maintained and fully functioning vehicle meeting all safety requirements is less likely to be involved in a road accident. Roadworthiness checks not only ensure the vehicle is working properly, they are also important for environmental reasons and for ensuring fair competition in the road transport sector. There are two types of assessment: periodic technical inspections, where owners have to take their vehicle to a specialist centre and on-the-spot roadside inspections.

Periodic technical inspections

The Albanian Road Code ensures that all vehicles and trailers are inspected at regular intervals. The law states that cars have to be inspected once a year and taxis, buses, minibuses, ambulances and trucks transporting dangerous goods twice a year. The law provides the basis for checking that vehicles are in a roadworthy condition and meet the same safety standards as when they were first registered. Albanian legislation has adopted European Commission Directive 2010/48/EU of 5 July 2010.

During the vehicle inspection procedures, the vehicle has to go through detailed inspections of its systems and equipment, which in a direct or indirect manner influence the safety of the passengers, the driver and the safety of all other road users, including other drivers and pedestrians.

The vehicle is tested in two ways:

- Inspection of the systems of the vehicle using the latest electromechanical vehicle inspection equipment; and
- Visual inspection of equipment and systems in the vehicle, which influence safety and comfort.

The Government has commissioned the company SGS Albania to conduct the inspection process for all vehicles in Albania. SGS Albania is the only company that provides such a service. There are clear signs from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy that in the future technical inspections will be opened up to all certified organizations in line with the practice in some other European countries. Currently, there are 15 technical inspection centres in Albania in the main economic areas of the country.

The technical inspection covers the following areas:

- Identification of the vehicle
- Braking system
- Steering system
- Visibility checks
- Lighting equipment and parts of the electrical system
- Axles, wheels, tyres, suspension
- Chassis and chassis attachments
- Nuisances including exhaust emissions.

In the case of failure of one of the systems checked, the vehicle operator or driver is notified in writing and after the system is repaired, the vehicle has to be revised for a second time by the technical inspectors. The exhaust emissions test is very important and vehicles which do not pass it are not allowed on the road.

The technical inspector issues a roadworthiness certificate which covers the following elements:

- Registration plate number and county symbol of the state of registration
- Place and date of test
- Overall assessment of the vehicle
- Date of next periodical test
- Name of the inspection organization and signature of the inspector responsible for conducting the test.

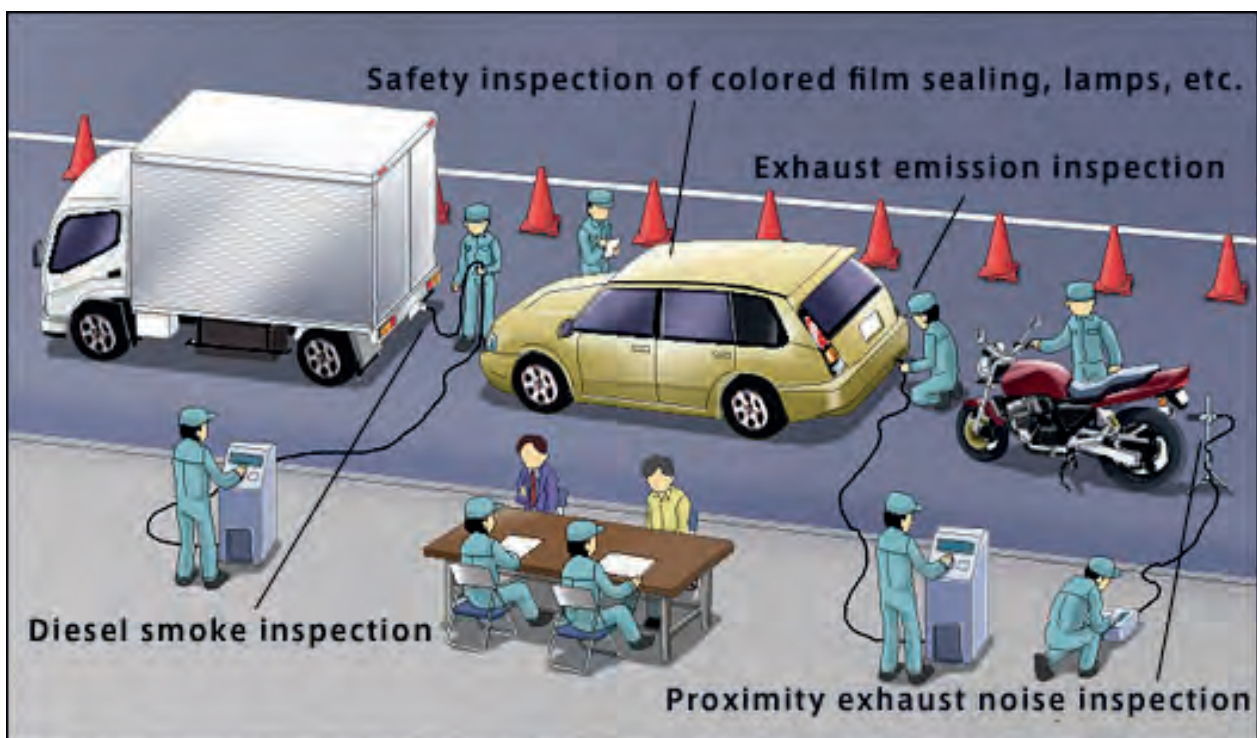
The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy is responsible for monitoring the performance of periodic technical inspection units.

Roadside inspections

The Road Code provides some basic principles for roadside inspections of commercial vehicles, but there are no specific guidelines which reflect the provisions of EU Directive 2014/47/EC. The Road Code provides that unannounced roadside inspections of commercial vehicles can be carried out. These checks cover brakes and the vehicle's overall condition. Drivers are required to provide the recent inspection reports for the vehicle showing that it has passed the mandatory roadworthiness test.

Figure 4.4

Roadside inspections



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

The Directorate of Road Transport Services which is under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy is responsible for roadside inspections. Inspections are conducted by inspectors, who check the documents, and whether there are any problems with the condition of the vehicle and the axle weight of heavy vehicles.

Regarding documents, all passenger and goods vehicles, excluding private cars, have their license plate, driver's license, and municipality certificate checked. Vehicles which are used for public transport are checked for any changes which may have been made to their design (e.g. if an unregistered seat has been added). Vehicles used for the transport of goods have their maximum payload checked along with their documentation. The Road Code determines the permissible maximum axle load which is checked with axle load weight devices.

Currently, roadside inspections are not carried out according to the EU Directive but an IPA project financed by the EU will establish the procedures for roadside inspections together with the equipment required to carry out such inspections. One of the objectives of the project is to prepare technical specifications for hardware and facility equipment to be supplied and installed for roadside vehicle checks, including training for their effective operation and maintenance. Inspection procedures should be updated, required equipment provided as well as training of inspectors and resourcing for carrying out roadside inspections.

EU Directive 2014/47/EC on technical roadside inspections of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles covers the following categories of vehicles:

- Motor vehicles designed and constructed primarily for the carriage of persons and their luggage comprising more than eight seating positions in addition to the driver's seating position – vehicle categories M2 and M3;
- Motor vehicles designed and constructed primarily for the carriage of goods and having a maximum mass exceeding 3.5 tonnes – vehicle categories N2 and N3;
- Trailers designed and constructed for the carriage of goods or persons, as well as for the accommodation of persons, having a maximum mass exceeding 3.5 tonnes – vehicle categories O3 and O4;
- Wheeled tractors of category T5, the use of which mainly takes place on public roads for commercial road haulage purposes, with a maximum design speed exceeding 40 km/h.

The Directive does not affect the right of Member States to carry out technical roadside inspections on vehicles not covered by the Directive, such as light commercial vehicles of category N1 having a maximum mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes, and to check other aspects of road transport and safety, or to carry out inspections in places other than public roads.

The deficiencies categorized in the Directive are the following:

- Minor deficiencies having no significant effect on the safety of the vehicle or impact on the environment, and other minor non-compliances;
- Major deficiencies that may prejudice the safety of the vehicle or have an impact on the environment or put other road users at risk, or other more significant non-compliances;
- Dangerous deficiencies constituting a direct and immediate risk to road safety or having an impact on the environment.

During a roadside inspection a vehicle may be subject to an inspection of its cargo securing, in order to ensure that the cargo is secured in such a way that it does not interfere with safe driving, or pose a threat to life, health, property or the environment. Checks may be carried out to verify that during all kinds of operation of the vehicle, including emergency situations or uphill starting manoeuvres:

- Loads can only minimally change their position relative to each other, against the walls or surfaces of the vehicle; and
- Loads cannot leave the cargo space or move outside the loading surface.

4.3.3 Dangerous goods

Albania has acceded to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and approved Law No. 118 “On the Transportation of Dangerous Goods” in 2012. This law aims to increase safety in the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail.

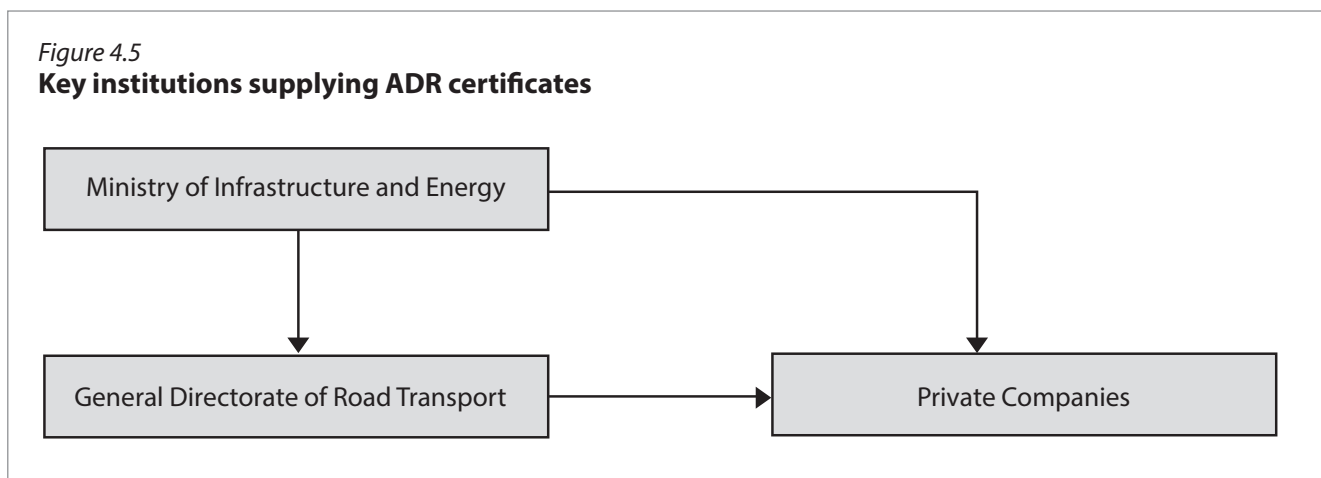
The law defines:

- a) the procedures by which transport of dangerous goods by road and rail must be carried out;
- b) the responsibilities of the different parties involved in dangerous goods transport, such as the consignor, the carrier, the consignee, the packer and the person who prepares the packages for transport;
- c) the conditions for training and testing personnel responsible for the preparation of packages for dangerous goods transport;
- d) the procedures for appointing, training and testing dangerous goods safety advisors;
- e) the conditions that vehicles and drivers must meet for dangerous goods transport;
- f) the competences of government institutions regarding transport and supervision of the implementation of the law.

The law applies to transport of dangerous goods in Albania and for international transport.

The law is not applicable in the following cases:

- For vehicles that belong to or are under the responsibility of the Armed Forces of Albania or those of other countries, according to the conventions in force;
- Inside the perimeter of an enclosed area, where the goods are produced, treated, processed, stored, or moved within the area;
- When this process is in accordance with the exclusionary provisions of ADR or RID.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

In order to obtain a certificate for vehicles or their drivers, the vehicles are checked by licensed companies together with the equipment required in the case of an accident. There are three companies which have the right and technical capacity to issue certificates for vehicles and training certificates for drivers in conformity with ADR.

Based on the licensing process, companies are issued with certificates in accordance with ADR procedures as well as the training certificate for drivers that prove that the driver has undergone the necessary training. Both certificates issued to companies are in compliance with ADR or RID. The process is monitored and supervised by the Directorate of Road Transport Services.

However, the companies are focused on the training of drivers dealing with fuel transport which is the main dangerous commodity transported in Albania.

Roadside inspections are also carried out in the case of dangerous goods. The control is mostly focused on documentation or first aid equipment or fire extinguishers. An all-inclusive technical control is not possible due to the lack of the required infrastructure.

4.3.4 Proposed measures and recommendations

Following the above-mentioned findings, it is recommended:

- Roadside inspections – Roadside inspections are crucial to achieving a continuous high level of roadworthiness of commercial vehicles throughout their use. Such inspections contribute not only to road safety but to a reduction of vehicle emissions. The construction of fully equipped facilities nearby the main national road corridors is recommended, which can test the vehicles and certify whether the vehicle is in compliance with safety requirements;
- Training of inspectors for roadside inspections – The training of inspectors to conduct the technical roadside inspections is crucial. The Directorate for Road Transport Services has to organize seminars and workshops for training technical staff. Both the traffic police and the Directorate for Road Transport Services have to set up joint units to operate the mobile equipment during roadside inspections;
- Liberalization of the vehicle periodic technical inspection process – Up to now SGS Albania is the only company that has had the right to conduct vehicle periodic technical inspections in Albania. The liberalization of the process is seen as a very important step for reducing the costs for road users and increasing the level of service. The information collected by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy shows that road users are experiencing long waiting times and relatively high prices for the technical inspection of vehicles;
- Capacity building – Improvement of legislation and implementation of laws and regulations require reforms in the organizational structure of the Directorate for Road Transport Services. In the meantime, ongoing training of technical staff who deal with imported vehicle registrations is very important. The technical staff requires specialist knowledge of vehicle homologation as well as procedures for vehicle registration;
- Imported vehicles – Since Albania is not a vehicle producer, the Directorate for Road Transport Services has to focus on the safety requirements which imported vehicles have to fulfil. Some countries do not provide full vehicle information. In order to obtain such data, the Directorate of Road Transport Services is looking into the possibility to participate and be part of European initiatives such as the European car and driving license information system (EUCARIS) and the European Type Approval Exchange System (ETAES) which in addition to financial costs requires the updating of information systems;
- Transport of dangerous goods – The national competent authority should update national legislation to be in line with the ADR. The provisions of existing regulations which may overlap with ADR should be assessed: regulations for security, tunnels, training for drivers and safety advisers, transport of dangerous goods by other modes, traffic restrictions, etc.

4.4 Road user behaviour

Despite the measures taken and the progress made so far, Albania still has much to do in the road safety field. Along with investments in infrastructure, the Government has primarily been focused on amending road safety laws and regulations with a view to aligning them with EU directives and on stricter law enforcement; so far, these improvements have not been conveyed to road users as benefits when it comes to their road safety.

Even though the rate of fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants dropped from 12.06 in 2010 to 9.36 in 2015, road safety remains a major social and public health issue, as the number of accidents with either fatal casualties, serious or slight injuries has increased significantly over the years.

4.4.1 Driver training

Albania has ratified the United Nations Convention on Road Traffic of 1968⁴⁶ and has adopted and amended its legislation accordingly. The training of drivers and issuance of driving permits is regulated by the Road Code. The recent changes in 2014 brought this law in full alignment with EC Directive 2006/126/EC on the driver licensing process according to the European model. In addition, Council of Ministers Decision No. 940, and a Guideline of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure No. 682/4 regulate the process for training new drivers in driving schools and the procedures for obtaining a permit.

Given that the ability and responsibility of drivers is a prerequisite for safe roads, some of the recent legal changes relate to the health of drivers. Health and psychological checks are now mandatory for candidates for a driving permit, as well as a document which shows that the prospective driver does not have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

At the institutional level, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (through the Directorate of Road Transport Services) organizes and co-ordinates the entire driver training system. It determines the requirements for driving schools, their licensing, requirements for drivers, development of guidelines on driving theory and practical training, and conducts the examination process and issuing of driving permits. In addition, the Ministry of Health, through health centres or special commissions (for those with specific health conditions), performs the health examinations of candidates for a driving permit.

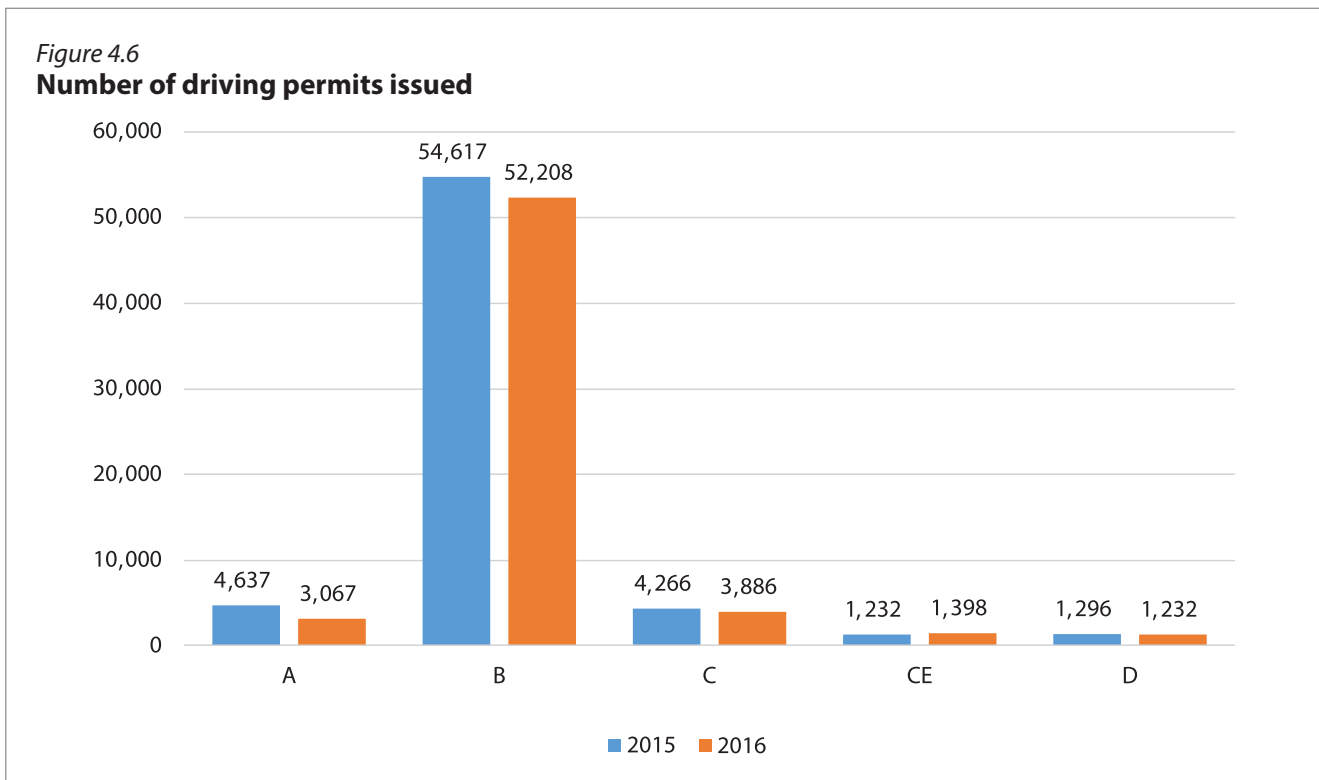
Prospective drivers are required to attend first aid training (eight hours) delivered by the Albanian Red Cross and successfully pass it. Around 40,000 prospective drivers attend this training every year. The 120 instructors are professionals and the training curriculum is in accordance with the standards and certified by the Global First Aid Reference Centre.

Obtaining a permit to drive a motor vehicle in Albania is possible for anyone who meets the physical and psychological requirements, is at least 16 years old to obtain a motorcycle permit (under 50 cm³) and at least 18 years old for other driving permits. The driving test consists of two parts - a theory part with multiple choice questions and a practical part where the driver's skills and aptitude in real road traffic conditions are assessed.

The exams meet the requirements and main principles of the EC Directives on driver licensing. The latest legal amendments have strengthened the theory examination; as of January 2017, prospective drivers must correctly answer at least 90% of all questions in order to pass the theory test.

The percentage of those who passed the theory test was 64% in 2016, compared to 64.5% in 2015. The percentage of those who passed the practical test in 2016 was 81%, compared to 84% in 2015. Seventy two out of one hundred and sixteen drivers who had their permit suspended registered with the regional directorate to re-obtain it.

⁴⁶ Vienna Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968, as amended.



Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Improvements have been made in the driver’s examination application process, which is now online. Also, all applicants participating in the theory exam have their documents digitally verified.

Driving schools train those who are applying for a driving permit and prepare them for the theory and practical examinations. The main legal framework for opening, licensing and managing driving schools is the Road Code of Albania (article 121); and the Regulation on Implementation of the Rode Code of Albania (article 313). Detailed rules and regulations are defined in the Guideline of the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure No. 682/4.

Table 4.2
Data on driving schools and driving permits

Year	Number of people holding a driving permit	Number of driving schools
2014	717,688	287
2015	758,800	300
2016	820,595	305

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, 2017.

Among experts, the shared opinion is that there is more to be done to improve the process of training in driving schools. The theory training consists mainly of learning the meaning of traffic signs and gaining a basic understating of the legal framework. As for the practical/traffic test, it is usually performed directly in the city, however at a low speed and it does not fully check the driver’s skills and ability to react in risky situations or driving behaviour.

By obtaining a driving permit at an earlier age, more novice drivers will be added. There is no probationary period for novice drivers. The only scheme applied in Albania affecting novice drivers within the first three years of obtaining a permit is when such a driver is found to have exceeded the speed limit. In this case, higher fines are applied, ranging from €7.5 to €22 (1,000 to 3,000 ALL)⁴⁷ and, in addition to this, the driving permit may also be suspended for 2 to 8 months (article 117/1 of the Road Code).

Driving schools in Albania operate as a private activity. They are licensed according to Law No. 10081, dated 23 February 2009 "On licenses, authorizations, and permits in the Republic of Albania", following technical and professional requirements. Later amendments made to the Road Code in 2011 also include the driving school system, their licensing and monitoring (article 121). Again, in 2016, Albanian legislation related to driving schools and licensing was upgraded⁴⁸ in accordance with Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on driving licenses.

The activity of driving schools is supervised by the Directorate of Road Transport Services, however, the supervising and monitoring process is not clear. It would be advisable to establish certain indicators, including the number of trained drivers that pass the theory and practical test above a "certain benchmark" or the average number of trained drivers involved in serious road accidents causing serious injury or death, etc. In addition, the database containing information on driving schools should be improved and be made available to institutions so that data on the drivers they have trained can be combined with the information on accidents and fines. This would allow the authorities to perform in-depth analyses of the performance of driving schools based on statistical data, to better supervise the driving school system and propose measures to improve it.

4.4.2 Professional drivers

Professional driving certificate

Transporting goods or passengers requires the driver to obtain a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) in addition to the regular driving permit.

The main provisions for obtaining the CPC are defined in article 115/1 of Law No. 8378, dated 22 July 1998 "The Road Code", as amended. To fully comply with Directive 2003/59/EC, secondary legislation was approved, specifically Guideline No. 3606/2 (18) dated 20 October 2011 "On issuance of the CPC to drivers with a C, CE, D, and DE permit". The Guideline defines the process of qualification and periodic training to obtain such a certificate, the required documents, requirements for driving schools to be authorized to provide training for prospective CPC applicants and the testing process.

The Guideline defines the theory and practical test process. There are 60 questions in total and the applicant has to correctly answer at least 85% of them in order to pass the test. The practical test also consists of two parts: during the first part, drivers are tested on how they react in real situations while driving. The second part assesses the applicant's abilities related to loading the vehicle, accommodating the passengers, the importance of mental and physical abilities while driving, etc.

Later amendments to this Guideline (2015) allowed drivers who had obtained their CPC before October 2015 to renew the certificate with no obligation to undergo training or testing. They have to submit a health certificate showing they are capable of operating vehicles for which the CPC is needed, an identification card and pay the fee. This process is open until October 2020.

The number of CPCs issued increased significantly, reaching 22,648 in 2016, compared to 895 in 2015.

All drivers who obtained their driving permit after 21 October 2015 have to attend the initial theory and practical training and pass the corresponding tests in order to obtain the CPC. The training programmes are approved by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and implemented by authorized driving schools.

⁴⁷ Exchange rate €1 = 134 ALL.

⁴⁸ This is aimed at streamlining the licensing process and reducing the burden of documentation for businesses.

A CPC is valid for five years and its renewal is possible only if the driver completes continuous training and successfully passes the theory test.

Social aspects of road transport

Albania is engaged in improving its transport-related legislation, as part of its commitment towards EU membership. It follows the requirements of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), and the EC regulation on mandatory use of tachographs.

The Road Code, specifically in articles 176 and 177, defines which vehicles must be equipped with a tachograph. A regulation was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 1243. This regulation applies to any domestic transport enterprise, both for domestic and international transport. The legal framework was completed later by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 1054. The General Directorate of Metrology is the institution responsible for approving the types of digital tachograph and the tachograph cards. The Guideline of the Minister responsible for transport No. 4, (2014) defines the rules on the operation of technical centres/workshops to calibrate/repair the tachograph.

To record the driving times when using the digital tachograph, all drivers are legally required to obtain and use a driver card. The Directorate of Road Transport Services is the authority in charge of issuing the driver card and the company card. As of April 2016, a contract has been signed to produce these cards for the next five years.

Table 4.3
Number of digital tachograph cards issued since 2016

Card type	2016	2017
Driver card	336	902
Tachograph workshop card	14	8
Company card	15	8
Total	365	918

Source: Directorate of Road Transport Services, 2017.

Those who are required to possess any of these cards have to apply and submit the required documents to the regional office of the Directorate of Transport Services in the location where the applicant resides. All applications and cards issued are registered in a database. The applicant obtains the card within 21 working days following approval.

Drivers and their employers are legally required to record their activities and keep the tachograph records (analogue). These records are subject to checking by the institutions in charge of enforcing regulations governing drivers' working hours. Much less can be said about the enforcement of the use of digital tachographs and the related cards – according to an expert in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, monitoring has not started yet, although a pilot project is under preparation.

Tachographs are installed and repaired in licensed/authorized workshops. As of December 2017, there were 12 such licensed workshops, five of which are state-owned.

4.4.3 Road safety education

The issue of traffic safety education is relatively new for Albanians. The majority of current drivers did not have the possibility to grow up learning about safe road behaviour in their early childhood, or the necessity of using a helmet or a seatbelt. As such, they find it difficult to get used to such rules.

Basic road safety education is obtained through the school system, starting at preschool until the end of high school. The education on traffic rules ends here for those who do not enrol in a formal driving training school.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the Ministry of Health through the Institute of Public Health, draft the curriculum. The main concepts of road safety are taught as part of a civic education class to all pupils aged 6-18 years old.

The number of hours devoted to road safety varies from 4-6 hours in elementary and middle school (out of the 36 hours civic education is taught each academic year) up to eight hours in high school (out of the 70 hours civic education is taught each academic year).⁴⁹ The main topics covered include the role of each road user while in traffic, the basic traffic rules, and the main legal aspects. The topic of road safety is also discussed when other health-related issues such as drinking and the use of drugs are discussed.

Despite efforts and some improvements, some issues remain related specifically to the curriculum itself, the way the subjects are taught, and training of teachers. The quality of the current curriculum is questionable as it is not produced by road safety experts. Under free competition, each publishing house prepares and publishes its own version of school books, leaving less space for experts to contribute. Some experts believe that education on traffic rules and road safety should even be taught as a separate subject in upper elementary school.

The formal education on road safety and traffic rules does not continue beyond the completion of high school. The high school curriculum requires each student to complete a number of hours of community service. Most high school students serve at the Red Cross in first aid programmes, which include road safety topics, thanks to an agreement between Regional Education Departments and the Red Cross. In addition, the Red Cross organizes teams of students at each high school to compete at a regional and then at national level on topics related to first aid and/or road safety. This programme is organized nationwide and throughout the year and raises awareness not only for students but for the community as a whole.

No formal classes are taught at university level. The only exception is the Faculty of Public Health where a special course on the epidemiology of trauma (including from road crashes) is taught at Masters level, intended for future public health experts.

Education through public awareness programmes or targeted projects is used although not as much as it should be. The main reason mentioned is the lack of funds. Awareness activities are mostly through foreign donor supported projects, involving relevant institutions.⁵⁰ Another issue is that these projects are mainly focused on the main regions/cities.

4.4.4 Road user behaviour – risk factor analysis

Developments in transport planning and road design in Albania have focused on providing for motor vehicles and have not paid equal attention to the safety of other road users, such as pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. On the other hand, it is not clear whether the road users themselves fully understand that their risky behaviour is also a major contributory factor in accidents.

Much remains to be done as these efforts have not been fully accompanied with preventive measures such as education and promotion.

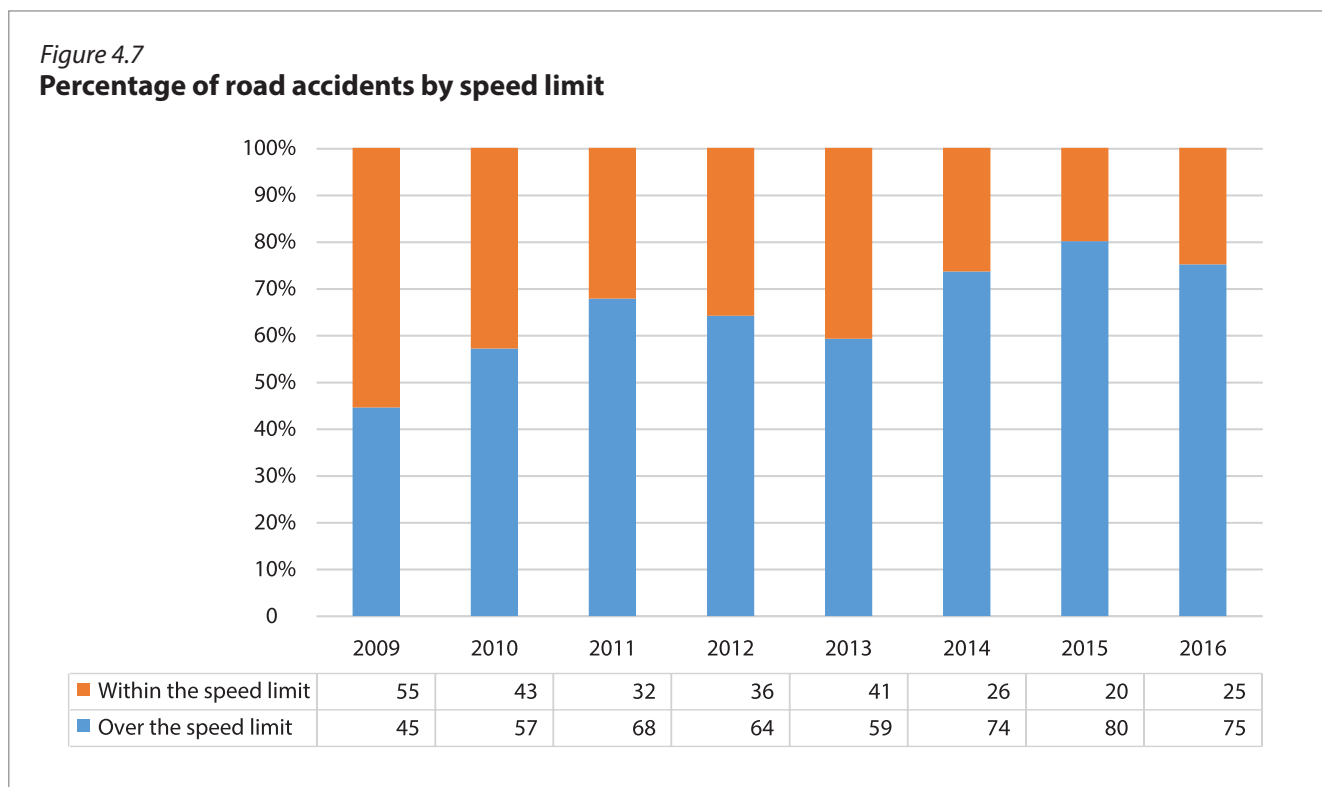
⁴⁹ Institute for Education Development, Published curricula. <http://izha.edu.al/new/biblioteka>.

⁵⁰ In 2015, PAMECA IV launched a road safety awareness initiative targeting youngsters (high school students) as new road users with regard to norms of educational behaviour. <http://pameca.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Engl.-V-Leaflet-final.jpg>.

Speeding

Speeding has become a significant cause of fatal accidents in Albania. The new and better roads built after 2000 have made drivers more open to speeding. Speeding is common among all vehicle users, including drivers and motorcyclists. Studies and statistical data (2009-2016) show that risky road user behaviour is one of the most significant contributors to any road crash.

In order to implement the actions foreseen in the Road Safety Action Plan, several legal amendments were approved in 2011 and 2014, specifically on the penalties for driving above the speed limit. The number of fines increases yearly, but the number of accidents involving a fatality or serious injury, caused by speeding, continues to be very high. In 2016, 192 fatal accidents were caused by driving above the speed limit, accounting for 75% of fatal or serious accidents.



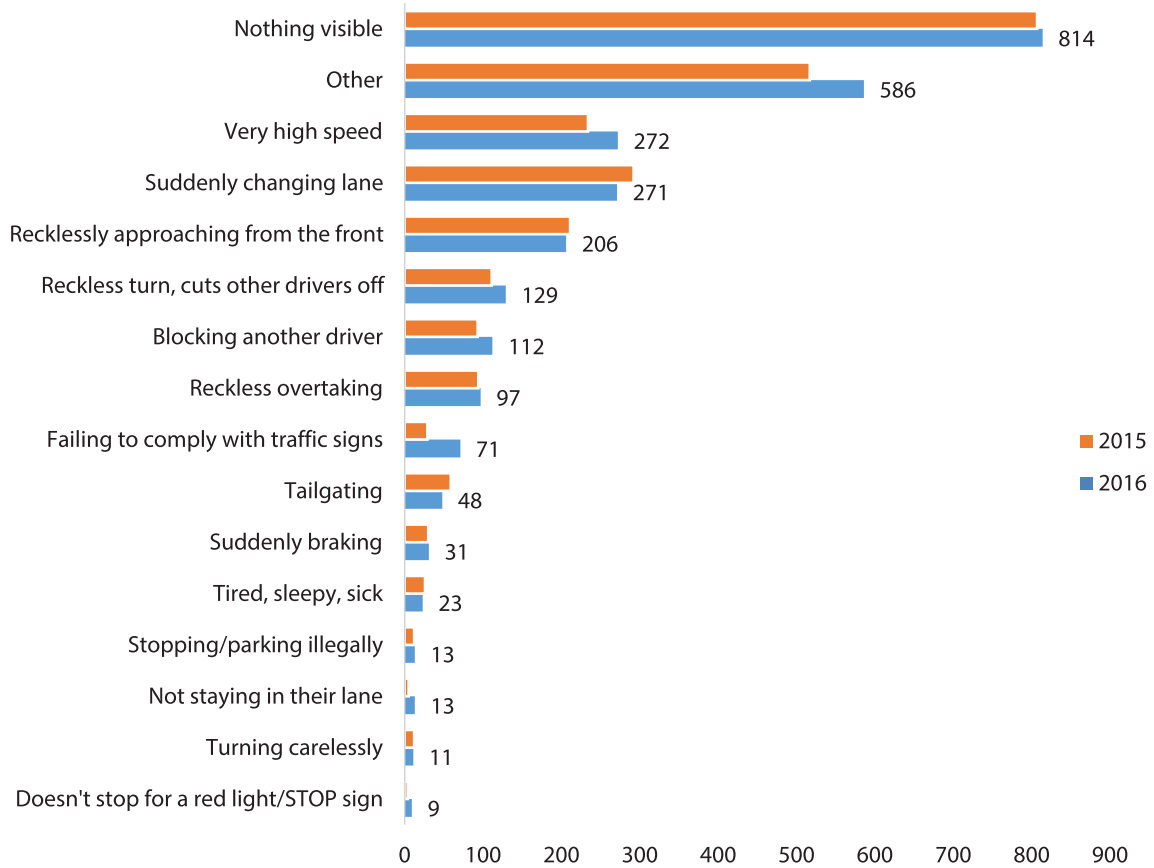
Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

According to the official classification, based on which the data in the Accident Information Database are recorded, Albanian drivers demonstrate the risky behaviours listed in the figure below. Analysing the reported data,⁵¹ it can clearly be seen that four main risky behaviours including driving at high speeds, sudden lane changes, carelessly approaching other drivers from the front, and reckless overtaking, are responsible for a large number of accidents. The category Other is high, but the data available do not allow further analysis of this category.

⁵¹ It should be noted that these are the categories defined by the Albanian police and other relevant bodies. They might need further evaluation. However, the analysis here is based on these official data.

Figure 4.8

Driver behaviour causing accidents with minor, serious or fatal injuries



Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

Although there are no targeted studies on driver behaviour and speeding, the general perception is that drivers do not see speeding of 10-20 km/h above the limit as dangerous. The view that a good driver is one that respects speed limits is not shared among all road users. The research on road user behaviour and speeding suggests several reasons why drivers speed.^{52 53} The findings of these international research studies were discussed with Albanian experts and there is agreement among them that some of the main reasons for speeding include:

- Considering the speed limit as too low, so they allow themselves to challenge those limits, or considering themselves as experienced drivers;
- Believing that they will not be caught by the police for speeding;
- Believing, especially among new and young drivers, that speeding is not that dangerous;
- Feeling constrained by those who drive too slowly and overtaking them by speeding;
- Considering those that drive at the speed limit as not good drivers, etc.

⁵² London: Department for Transport, Road Safety Research Report No. 112, Understanding Public Attitudes to Road-User Safety – Literature Review: Final Report, September 2010.

⁵³ https://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/knowledge/speed/many_drivers_exceed_the_speed_limit/speed_choice_why_do_drivers_exceed_the_speed_limit_en.

Driving under the influence – alcohol⁵⁴ and drugs

There are a considerable number of drink driving-related fatalities in road crashes in which no alcohol measurements are taken. Although there are no special traffic police monitoring units to detect drunk drivers, in the past two years the road traffic police has intensified its enforcement work through increased (twice weekly) road checks, and the number of breath checks has increased annually.

Individual awareness of personal responsibility for drinking and driving, and the fear of getting caught and penalized, is growing. Schemes such as designated drivers, or sober driver programmes from taxi stands are relatively unknown. Alcolocks⁵⁵ are not yet used in Albania. Seriously addressing drinking and driving is something new for the Albanian people.

There is no single governmental agency responsible for the design and implementation of road safety campaigns, and no specific “champion” to combat drink driving in Albania. Some organizations assist the authorities by conducting road safety campaigns, in which messages on drinking and driving are occasionally included. There have been World Bank and United Nations initiatives, as well as special police (the EU-assisted PAMECA project) and other activities.

In 2010, ten national and international organizations collaborated to create the Albanian Coalition for Road Safety, with the aim of increasing public awareness, educating the public on road safety measures, and advocating for responsible driving. The campaign called “Mendohu Mire” (Think Better) targeted four key areas: speeding, drink driving, safety belt use and traffic rules.

The Government has increased its attention to road-safety reforms, including the adoption of a Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan in 2011, and government authorities recognize that drinking and driving is an acute problem. Nonetheless, relevant government departments are often understaffed, and coordination is poor between entities (both public and private) mandated to address road safety.

The Albanian Road Code includes blood alcohol concentration (BAC) definitions of three levels of alcohol impairment (<0.2 g/l non-impairment; 0.2-0.5 g/l driving under the influence; >0.5 g/l drunk driving). Depending on the level of impairment, the penalty includes a fine (500-15,000 Albanian Lek/€ 4-120), driving license suspension, demerit points or imprisonment.

Since the Road Code was adopted in 2011, some rules have changed to make penalties tougher. If legislation is changed or amended, the relevant information is broadcast to road users through mass media and official websites, including that of the Road Traffic Police. Normally, journalists follow potential changes in traffic-related rules and regulations.

In 2015, Albania adopted a driving permit demerit point system. A driver has 20 points issued upon receipt of a driving permit. For drinking and driving, up to 10 points can be lost. If all points are lost, the driver will have to attend courses and to pass a written exam.

In 2016, the legislation related to driving schools and licensing was upgraded in accordance with Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006, on driving licenses.⁵⁶ Driving school curricula now include the topic of drinking and driving. In addition, several strategies have been drafted by the Ministry of Health, including a strategy on public health and health promotion; strategy on prevention and reduction of alcohol-related health damage; etc.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD) prepared an assessment of the drink driving situation in Albania. The full assessment is available in Annex 1.

⁵⁵ Breath test devices that prevent a motor vehicle from starting when a driver's BAC is elevated.

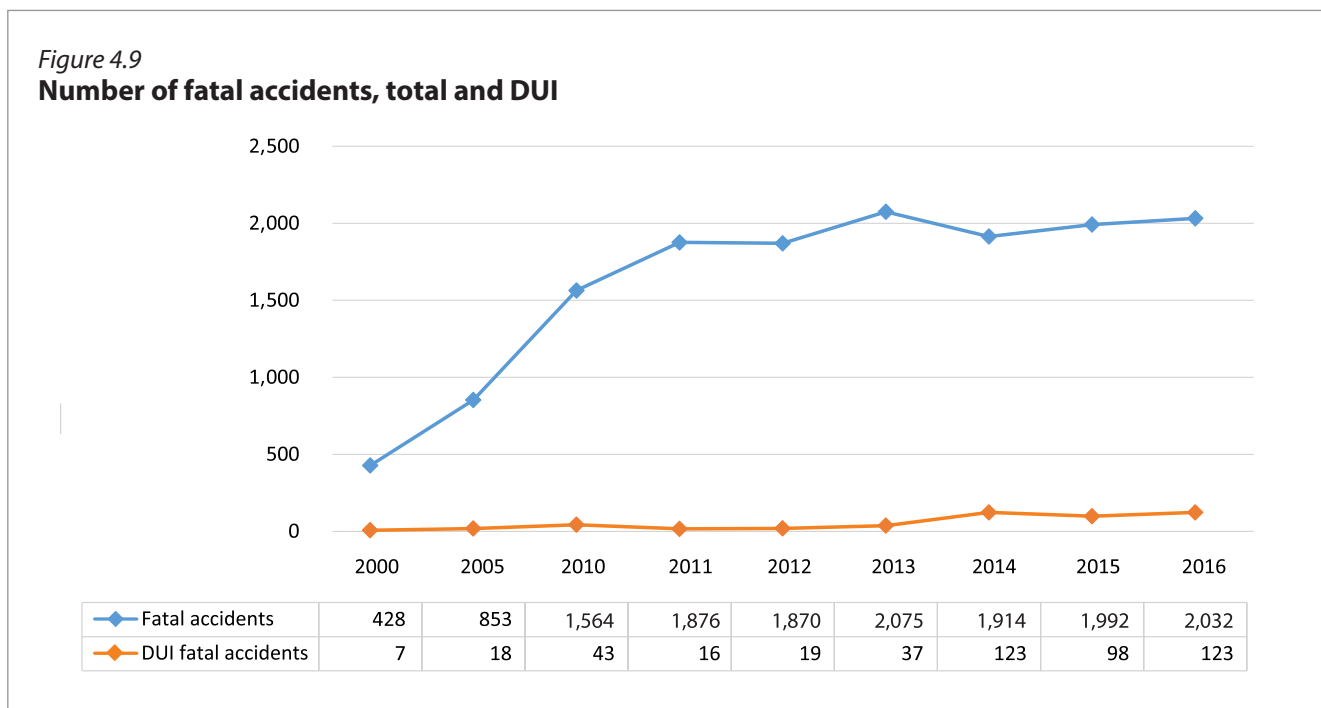
⁵⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3A124141>.

⁵⁷ <http://www.shendetesia.gov.al/al/baza-ligjore/dokumenta-strategjike>.

Road traffic police officers are equipped with up-to-date and certified breathalyzers. They do not possess any toolkit to detect or measure the use of drugs or psychoactive substances. In case of road crashes with casualties, blood tests are conducted by medical professionals. The courts require police evidence, data and measurements during trials, as well as blood test results; courts make decisions based on evidence received from the police.

Although legislation and law enforcement have been the focus of attention for better road safety in the past decade, it is also important to pay attention to preventative, informational and educational work with drivers and other road users. Addressing drink driving will be a key component of these efforts.

As shown in the figure below, data reported on accidents with a fatality or serious injury show that only a small percentage of them happened while the driver had a BAC above the limit, with the highest in 2014 and 2016, at around 6%.



Source: INSTAT, 2017.

The frequency of drinking and driving behaviour is not fully known. There are no intermediary indicators and relevant data available from roadside inspections. Experts consulted for this assessment acknowledged that the number of roadside tests conducted by the police to test for alcohol use has increased considerably. This is also mentioned in the Annual Report on Road Safety, 2016, although no data are presented.⁵⁸ A proxy indicator could be the number of fines for driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, which has increased since 2014.

⁵⁸ Annual Report on Road Safety, 2016, page 6.

Driving under the influence of drugs

The term “drugs” encompasses a wide variety of substances, including some illegal but widely used ones; others prescribed, legally purchased and taken; others bought over the counter.

The crash risk posed by drugs is more complicated to ascertain than for alcohol and depends on the drug concerned. Since different types of drugs stay in the bloodstream for different lengths of time, this can complicate the ability to link positive drug presence with accident risk. The risk of getting involved in a road traffic crash is increased to varying degrees depending on the psychoactive drug used. For example, the risk of a fatal crash occurring among those who have used amphetamines is about five times higher than among persons who have not used them.⁵⁹

The Road Code (article 184) states that users of narcotic and psychotropic substances are prohibited from driving a vehicle. If there are reasons to think that the driver has been using narcotics or psychotropic substances, traffic police, without mentioning any other obligation provided for by the law, may take measures to accompany the driver to the relevant institution dealing with drug users. Further verification is conducted, following guidelines issued by the Minister of Health, drafted in cooperation with the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Transport. Based on this verification, the respective institution that has issued the driving permit is notified. The latter orders the driver to undergo a medical examination and might, as a precautionary measure, suspend the driving permit until a medical examination proves the driver is in a fit condition to drive.

The fines have increased from about €4 to €110 (5,000 ALL to 15,000 ALL). In addition, the driving permit may be suspended for up to a year or even two years in the case of a repeat offence, if that is verified by the relevant authorities.

Detecting and measuring levels of psychoactive substances is more complicated than detecting alcohol on the breath and requires special resources and tools/kits as well as trained police to recognize impairment and carry out tests. Given the lack of such tools/kits; the traffic police have performed very few checks regarding drug use.

Educational and awareness efforts on this topic are mostly lead by the Institute of Public Health or NGOs, organizing various awareness events on specific days, targeting middle and high school students. They focus on the effects of alcohol and drugs in general health and specifically on certain activities including driving. In addition, the traffic police and some donor-supported projects are also involved in a number of programmes in collaboration with middle and high schools.

The available evidence from research conducted by the Institute of Public Health suggests that the distribution of alcohol consumption in the general population follows similar patterns as the distribution for smoking, with an increasing trend especially among females and young individuals.⁶⁰

Use of seatbelts and helmets

The Road Code, article 175, requires the mandatory use of seatbelts for the driver and front seat passengers for all vehicles produced from January 1978, and even for passengers seated in the rear seats of vehicles produced after May 1990.⁶¹ Child restraint systems have to be used for children up to 12 years. The law foresees fines when seatbelts or car seats are not used and even driving permit suspension in the case of drivers not using the seatbelt. However, enforcement of the child restraint law in Albania scores only 4 out of 10.⁶²

⁵⁹ World Health Organization, Policy brief: Drug use and road safety.

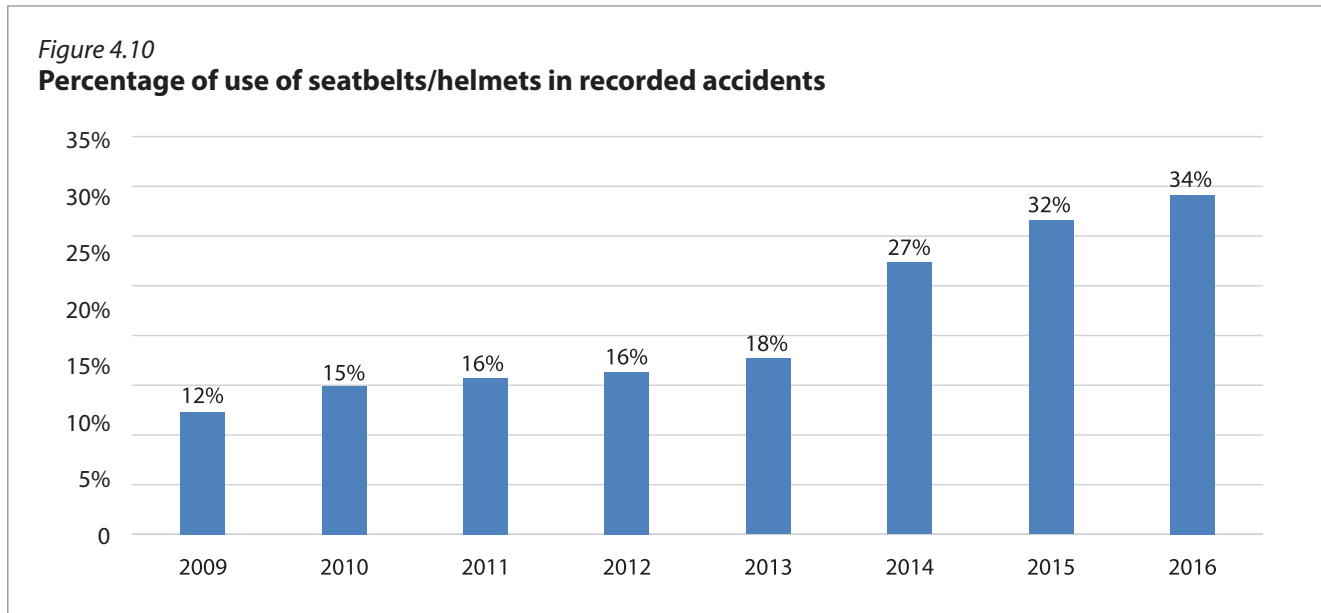
⁶⁰ Institute of Public Health, National Health Report, Health Status of the Albanian Population, 2014.

⁶¹ Excluded are vehicles used for public transport or where standing up is allowed; people of a certain height; those with a medical condition as certified by a medical certificate; children for whom car seats should be used.

⁶² WHO, Country profile. Road traffic injuries, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/country_profiles/albania.pdf?ua=1.

The Road Code, article 169, is clear on the mandatory use of helmets for motorcyclists and their passengers, including children.

The data available from the Accident Information Database do not clearly differentiate between the use of seatbelts and helmets; they are recorded in the same category at the time the road accident happened (whether those involved in an accident were using a seatbelt or a helmet). They are also reported together in the Annual Reports on Road Safety.⁶³ The 2016 report also mentions that the use of child restraints is not monitored but is believed to be at a low level.



Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

Data show an improving trend in the use of seatbelts and/or helmets among those involved in an accident⁶⁴ (figure 4.10). The same improving trend in seatbelt or helmet use continued during 2016, reported at 34.2%; however far from the objective set for 2020 of 80%.⁶⁵

When analysed by road user (figure 4.11), the data show that seatbelts are increasingly being used especially among drivers. A notable increase in helmet use is observed among motorcyclists as well.⁶⁶

⁶³ Annual Report on Road Safety, 2016, page 7.

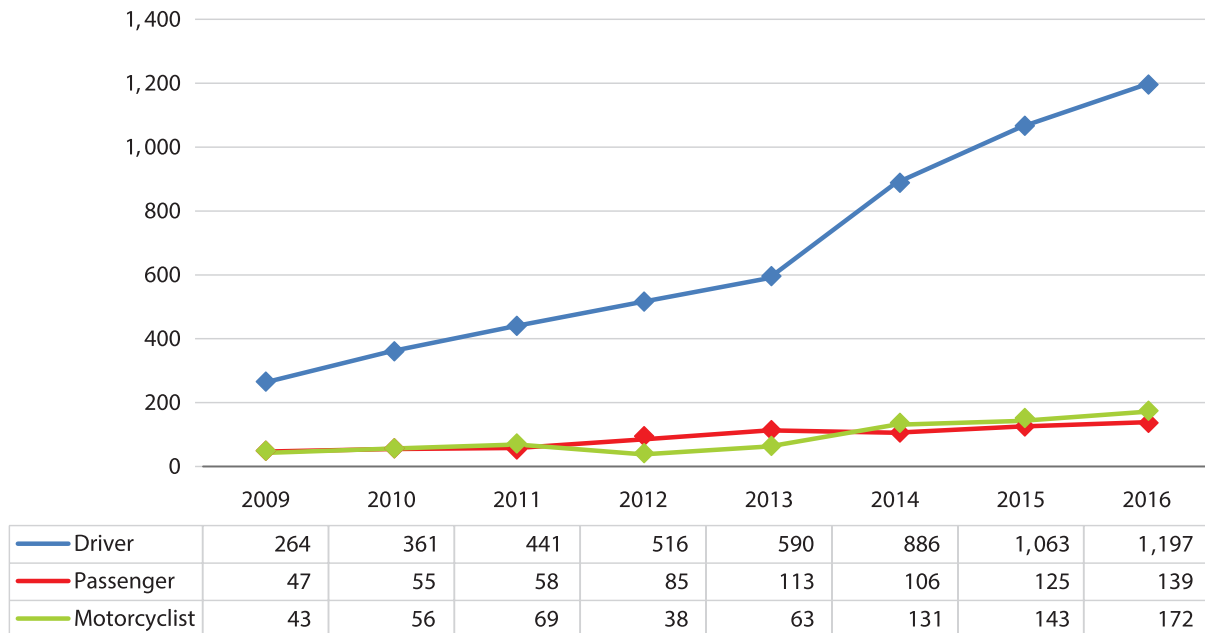
⁶⁴ The data include all accidents and all types of injuries, even those categorized as "unknown" in the database.

⁶⁵ Annual Report on Road Safety, 2016, page 7.

⁶⁶ The data include all cases when a seatbelt or helmet is recorded as used in any type of accident (fatal, with serious or minor injuries).

Figure 4.11

Use of seatbelts or helmets by road users when involved in a road accident

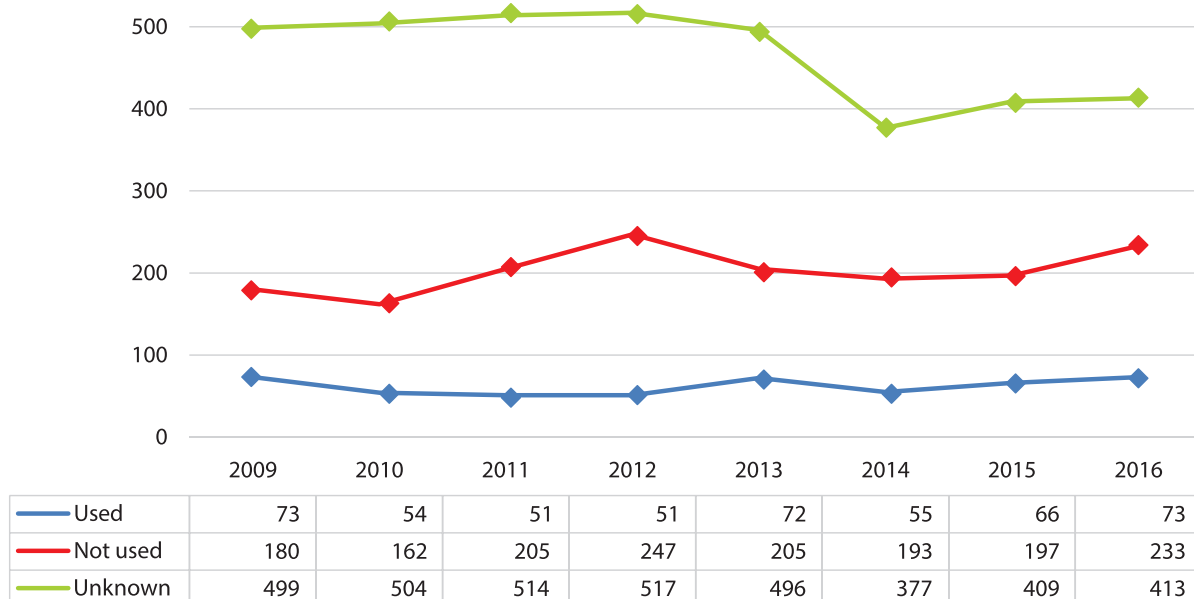


Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

Analysed by the severity of the injury in an accident (figure 4.11 and 4.12), it is clearly shown that the probability of being fatally or seriously injured in an accident when not using a seatbelt or helmet is three times higher than for those who do use them.

Figure 4.12

Use of seatbelts, killed or seriously injured



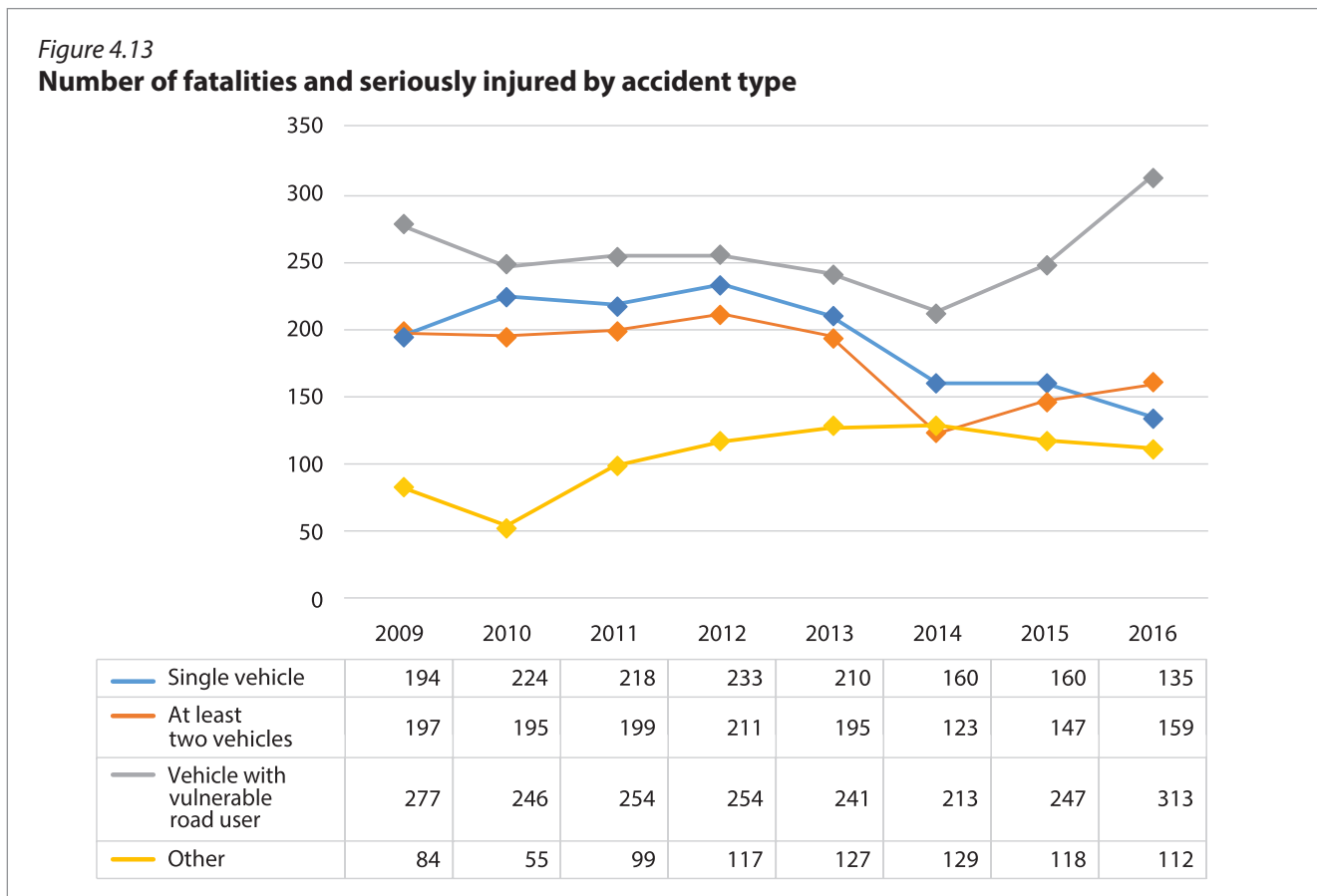
Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

The use of seatbelts and helmets is still low, showing that there exists a great potential to enforce the law on the regular use of seatbelts among drivers and passengers and helmets by motorcyclists.

Regarding the use of helmets, the issue of cost should be taken into consideration. Low income families, mainly in rural areas, that can only afford to buy a motorcycle instead of a car, might not be able to afford to buy the helmets. The same could be true for child restraints as families might need to transport more than one child. The policies toward this group should consider subsidizing the cost of helmets/child restraints.

4.4.5 Vulnerable road users

This group includes all road users such as pedestrians, motorcyclists, cyclists, disabled people, children and the elderly. As they lack the physical protection of vehicles, they are more exposed to the risk of being fatally or seriously injured when involved in an accident.



Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

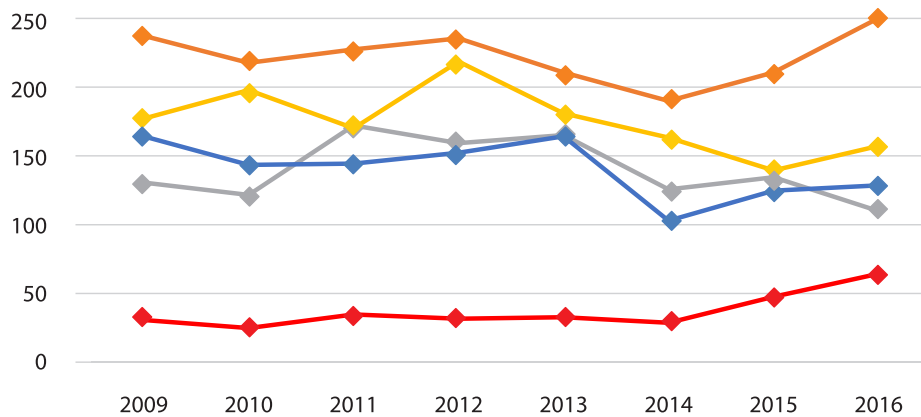
The higher exposure to risk for vulnerable road users mainly comes from the intensity of the traffic mix and the lack of separation between them and vehicles, as well as the risky behaviours of many road users. This is obvious in almost all main urban streets, and very often on national roads. Along several main national roads, communities nearby frequently use the national road for their everyday household tasks. Houses, schools and other facilities are located near main roads. While they might understand the risk of being involved in a car crash, their everyday life depends on walking or riding a motorcycle along the national road or even crossing it.

However, the risky behaviour of both drivers and vulnerable road users plays its own part in an accident and some of the main issues identified include:

- Lack of courtesy and tolerance between road users;
- Lack of consideration for their own safety or that of other road users;
- Not fully understanding and managing risks while using the road/street;
- Intentionally not obeying traffic/road signs;
- The perception among individuals that the 'other' driver or 'other pedestrian' is to blame for the accident, not themselves.

Figure 4.14

Number of fatalities and seriously injured by road user

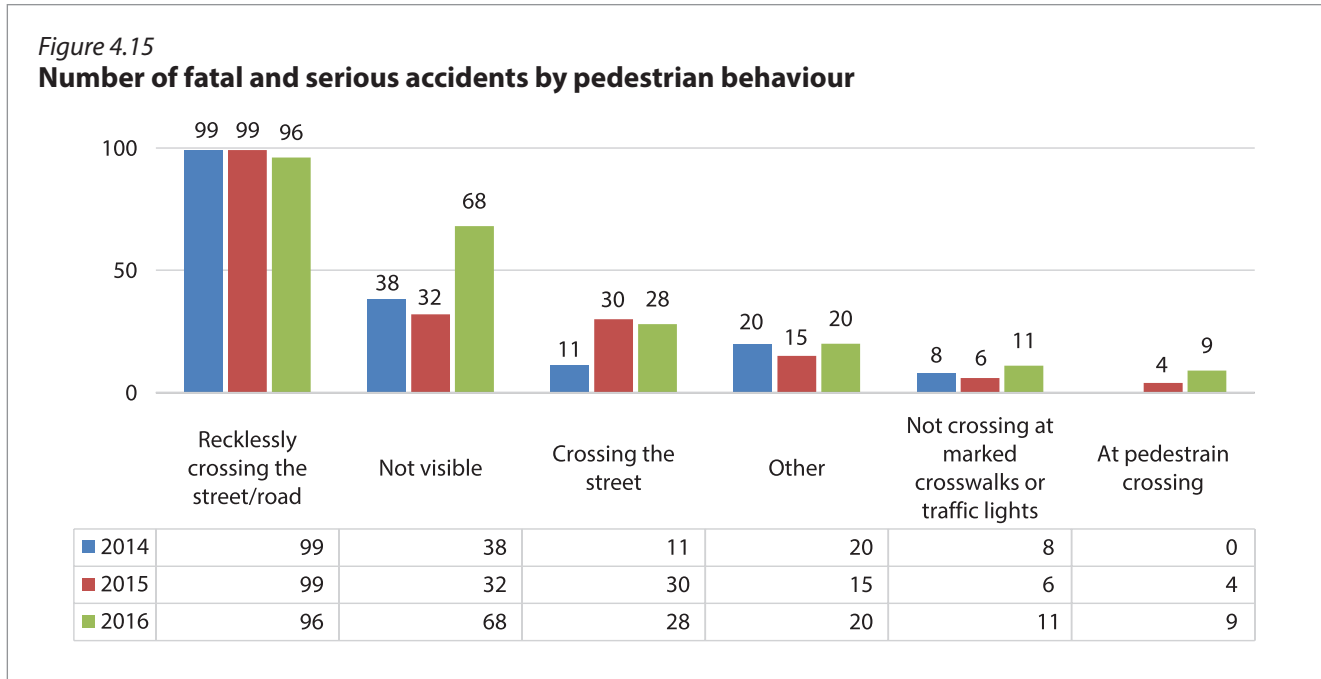


—◆ Cyclist	31	25	35	32	33	29	48	65
—◆ Pedestrian	240	220	230	238	213	192	213	253
—◆ Motorcyclist	132	123	174	161	167	127	136	111
—◆ Passenger	179	200	172	221	183	165	141	159
—◆ Driver	166	145	146	154	166	104	126	130

Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

Pedestrians

Figure 4.15 shows that the vulnerable group most involved in traffic accidents are pedestrians, followed by passengers and motorcyclists. Figure 4.15 on pedestrian behaviour shows that the main cause of accidents involving pedestrians is careless road use. When people are walking, they usually choose the shortest route and do not want to spend any extra time on the trip. They obey the rules when they think it is sensible and necessary. Taking the shortest route can mean that they do not use overpasses or pedestrian crossings. They may not obey traffic lights, if waiting for the green light seems to take too long.



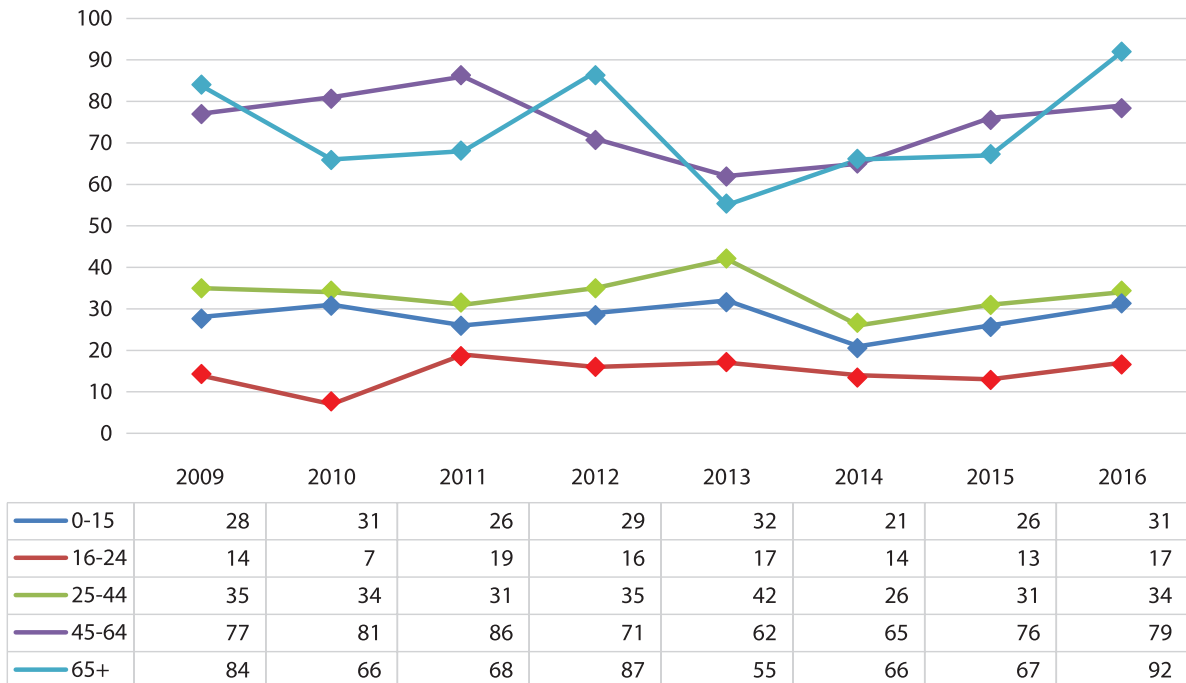
Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

The data displayed in figure 4.15 refer only to the behaviour of pedestrians when involved in a fatal or serious accident. When involved in an accident, a pedestrian is most likely to have crossed the road/street without taking sufficient care. The statistics do not show whether this, mostly single person's behaviour, is caused by just choosing not to follow the traffic rules or because pedestrians do not know or understand the traffic signs.

According to a research study conducted in 2016, only two out of 160 cars stopped in front of a zebra crossing during 60 minutes of observation at one of the non-signalized crossings in the city while a total of 330 people tried to cross the street in that time period.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Report – deliverable of Work Package 2 (Analysis of Cultural Patterns). Project Traffic Safety Cultures and the Safe Systems Approach towards a Cultural Change, Research and Innovation Agenda (TraSaCu). 31 October 2016. Available from: <http://www.trasacu.eu/page/2>.

Figure 4.16
Number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured, by age group



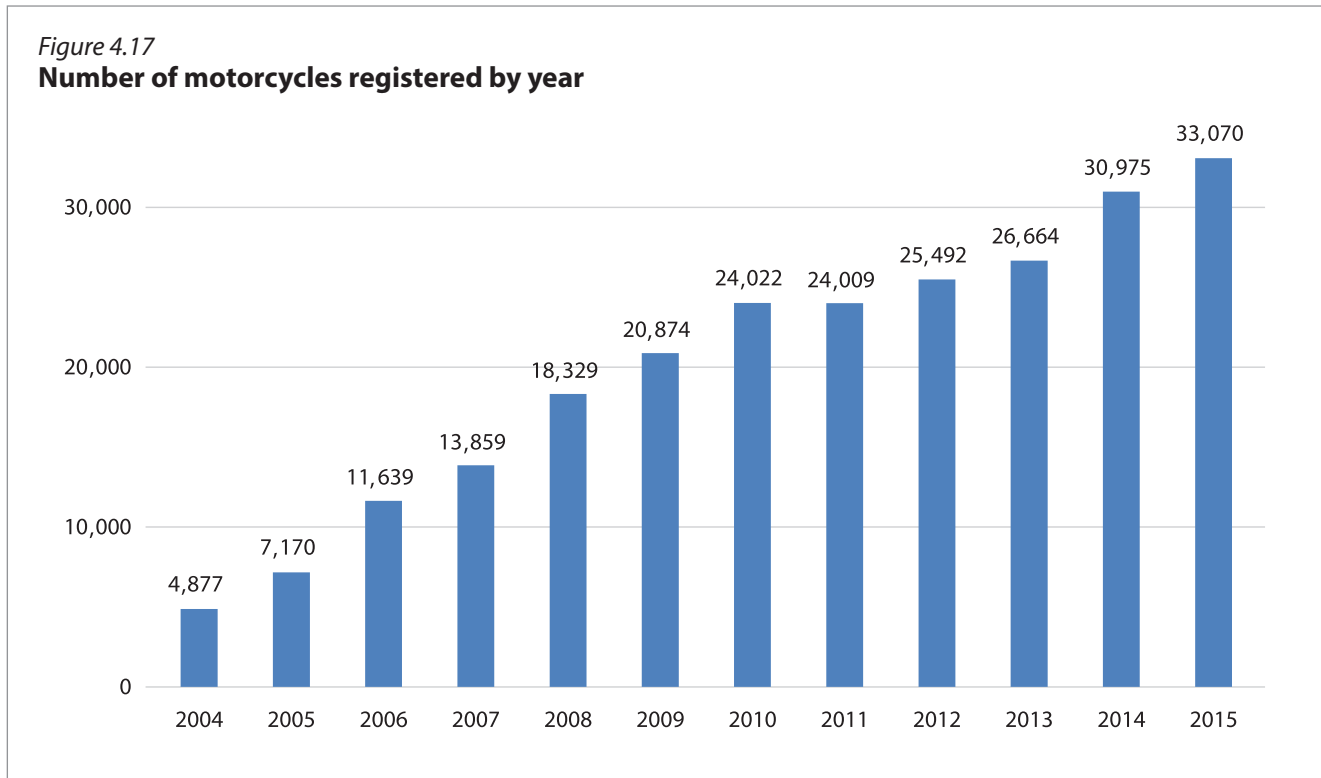
Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

Analysed by age group, the oldest (65 years old and above) are the most vulnerable among pedestrians. On average, the likelihood of a serious injury or death is almost three times higher than in other age groups. As policies at local government level aim to reduce the use of cars in city/town streets, the number of pedestrians is expected to increase.

The elderly uses the roads increasingly as pedestrians or users of public transport. Suitable street infrastructure to allow for safe use by pedestrians along with education and awareness programmes should be the focus of both central and local government policies.

Motorcyclists

The number of motorcycles is growing continuously, from less than 4,000 in the year 2000 to 24,000 in 2010, with the most significant increase from 2005. They are a convenient, cheaper alternative for low income families, and an alternative to traffic congestion and parking in cities.



Source: Accident Information Database, author's calculations, 2017.

When it comes to road accidents, motorcyclists are second only to pedestrians among vulnerable road users. Changes in the law requiring motorcyclists to pass a test and obtain a permit, the mandatory use of helmets for all motorcyclists, and efforts made by the traffic police to raise awareness among this group seem to have brought about some improvements.

The rising trend in the use of motorcycles might continue in the future. This will include both rural areas (mainly low-income families that cannot afford a car) and urban areas, due to the advantages in reduced time and cost (parking) to get around traffic-congested cities.

Cyclists

Cyclists have a difficult position in traffic. Generally, the lack of dedicated lanes puts them at risk as they share the city streets with vehicles. It is not uncommon to see cyclists along national roads in rural areas. The identified causes of accidents involving cyclists include: the cyclist is not seen by the driver especially at intersections; drivers go too fast in urban areas while there is no cycle lane; cyclists themselves often disregard traffic signs and traffic lights and dodge through cars without taking sufficient care; bicycles often lack lights or reflective devices so they are not easily seen at night, etc.

Just like pedestrians, they choose the shortest possible route to reach their destination, which sometimes leads them to use one-way streets in the wrong direction, or cycle on sidewalks, creating conflicts with pedestrians. As the data in figure 4.14 shows, the number of fatally and seriously injured cyclists doubled in 2016 compared to five years previously.

Given the policy of encouraging cycling, the number of cyclists is expected to increase in the main cities. This poses a challenge to city administrators to provide a suitable and safe environment for them.

4.4.6 Law enforcement

The data on risky behaviour among road users and fines imposed on them for the period 2011-2016⁶⁸ show that law enforcement can bring about significant results in improving road safety. Although there has been no research study, experts share the opinion that the increased number of fines for speeding (which more than tripled from 6,155 in 2013 to 20,973 in 2016) has contributed to some extent to the reduction of this risky behaviour as a factor in road accidents. The number of fines issued to pedestrians has increased, as their careless behaviour on the roads/streets puts them at high risk of being involved in a road accident.

After several years of increases, the number of fines for offences such as failure to comply with traffic signs or driving without a seatbelt decreased significantly in 2016. This could be seen as a sign that law enforcement is working and drivers themselves are being more careful and aware of at least obeying these traffic rules.

Table 4.4

Number of fines by main/selected traffic offences

Type of offence	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Failing to comply with traffic signs	59,082	37,293	36,988	52,472	72,117	47,568
Failing to comply with the speed limit	33,002	29,020	6,155	15,979	19,313	20,973
Safety distance between vehicles	4,098	2,094	1,930	2,637	3,289	3,550
Wrong/reckless overtaking	41,703	17,174	15,263	25,055	33,210	49,935
Using a phone while driving	10,032	20,368	24,496	46,949	42,740	62,000
Driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs	646	747	676	1,358	1,688	1,755
Driving a vehicle with technical problems	34,567	45,418	44,927	52,393	46,150	51,146
Riding without a helmet	6,879	4,534	2,616	10,247	8,691	8,023
Driving without a seatbelt	125,609	126,561	80,809	153,436	143,086	79,548
Stopping or parking illegally	124,591	102,893	123,624	168,629	170,415	120,275
Offences by pedestrians	314	539	1	35	946	318
Total	585,595	481,994	397,539	612,116	637,092	445,091

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2017.

While thought to be well regulated, there are still drivers or motorcyclists that use the roads without the appropriate permit. Also, among those involved in a crash, a percentage of drivers were found to not have a permit.

Further analysis should be done following the legal changes regarding the demerit point system to obtain information on the number of points deducted due to speeding related to the characteristics of drivers, etc. Legal changes foresee that a driver who goes above the speed limit by more than 20 km/hour loses three points for a first offence and five points for a repeat offence. Aggregated statistics show that since April 2015 when the implementation of the system entered into force, points have been deducted from 6,607 driving permit holders, while 66 had their permits suspended. In 2016, more than 9,700 drivers had points deducted and 116 had their permits suspended, an increase of almost 50%.

⁶⁸ The data show selected fines, those comprising the highest percentage among all types of fines issued.

The efforts of the traffic police to enforce laws need technical support and resources. Placement of speed cameras or other automated devices needs to be urgently considered to help police detect risky behaviours. Also, it is urgently needed to equip the traffic police with the necessary tools to detect whether or not a driver is under the influence of drugs, as currently this aspect of the law cannot be enforced.

4.4.7 Main findings and recommendations

- Driver training – It is recommended to review both training phases. For the theory test, prospective drivers should be introduced to and given detailed explanations about road safety attitudes/culture, in order to better understand real-life situations and the specific risks they present. For the practical/traffic test, making the driving student practice on a specially built track for a certain number of days would help them build confidence, before going out onto the streets/roads. Also, this test should check the prospective driver in several driving situations, e.g. when merging into traffic, making a U turn, lane crossing, overtaking, driving behind other vehicles, parking, etc.
- Stricter law enforcement – Risky behaviours among drivers such as speeding, drink or drug-driving, or not respecting the traffic rules, etc. have remained the same over the years, despite efforts. Strengthening law enforcement could contribute to changing key risky behaviours. The traffic police should be engaged in continuous traffic surveillance. For this purpose, they should be appropriately trained and equipped with speed cameras, alcohol or drug testing kits, etc. to continuously monitor the traffic and be able to penalize anyone who is indulging in such risky behaviours on the roads.
- The problematic behaviours shown by all road users, especially pedestrians, have not changed over the years. To change this trend, more efforts should be put into public education and awareness. Nationwide campaigns and special education programmes should employ different media channels and target all age groups and all types of road users. The campaigns should promote safe behaviours especially towards vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists).
- Education on road safety – Future focus should be placed on increasing the number of hours devoted to road safety and traffic rules at both elementary and secondary schools. The teaching methods should be less lecturing and more focused on practicing the traffic rules and allowing pupils to debate the risks of the road. Importantly, the curriculum needs to be revised by road safety experts.
- Drink driving – Roadside tests should become routine. Additionally, continuous awareness campaigns would be very helpful in tackling this concern.
 - Focus interventions on human behaviour through education and awareness campaigns;
 - Focus drink driving prevention programmes on men, while also spreading information aimed at reducing the tolerance for drinking and driving among all road users;
 - Identify gaps in national legislation; start related advocacy work with politicians and lawmakers and within communities.
- Drug driving is an emerging road safety issue and the lack of comprehensive data does not allow the scope of the problem to be fully understood. Special kits to test drug use should be made available to enforcement officers. Awareness campaigns, especially targeting the youth, need to be carried out on a continuous basis.
- Research and studies on all road user categories – Independent studies or research are sporadic and not publicly available. Also, there are no published sociological studies addressing safe road-related issues, especially on road user behaviour. It is recommended that such studies be conducted as frequently as possible to serve as a basis for developing evidence-based road safety policies.

4.5 Emergency services and first aid at road accidents

It is well accepted by experts, in both the transport and health fields, that adequate emergency assistance at the moment of an accident and transport of injured people to hospitals are essential elements for saving lives.

Currently, access to emergency services is considerably better than in previous years. Specific improvements include the introduction of a single emergency number, the establishment of the National Emergency Centre of Albania and the functioning of a dispatch centre in Tirana, providing emergency services in Tirana following this new system, training of trauma doctors and nurses and the renovation of some emergency care units.

After many years of having different numbers to call in case of an emergency (a different number for the police, fire department, emergency care), significant improvements can be noted in this respect. Since 2016, Albania has a unique number, 112,⁶⁹ in place serving as a single call platform in case of emergency, including road accidents. The number 127 is also used in cases of emergency. Calls are forwarded to any of the three key actors in case of an accident: the police, fire department and hospitals.

Hospitals send equipped ambulances based on the information received on casualties. There are on average 2-3 ambulances in each district, except Tirana which has a few more, with a total of around 130. The fleet of ambulances has recently been renewed but is still generally outdated. In Tirana, where this new system is already in place, there are 20 centres from which ambulances are dispatched. The National Emergency Centre can also use three helicopters that can reach any point in Albania in a short time.

Trauma care units are part of regional hospitals while emergency care is available at local hospitals. The serious injury cases in Tirana are brought to the military hospital, which is the main trauma care provider. There is a shortage of trauma doctors and nurses in several local and regional hospitals and the Government is taking serious steps to motivate doctors to work in these hospitals. Also, in the framework of the Italian-Albanian Development Swap Agreement (IADSA), doctors and nurses of emergency care units in five local hospitals in seaside areas are trained and new equipment has been provided to these units.⁷⁰

It is worth mentioning that a number of private insurance companies are becoming an important factor in improving emergency services. In cooperation with private hospitals, under health insurance packages, these private companies provide ambulance services and insurance coverage in case of road accidents. Anyone can buy such insurance to receive emergency service in the case of a road accident.

The Red Cross continues to be a key player in providing training in basic first aid treatment. It provides official training to any prospective new driver. Anyone applying for a driving permit must undergo formal first aid training, proved by a certificate. In addition, the Red Cross is engaged in training school teachers (training of trainers) to later teach their pupils first aid techniques. The programme covers all middle and high schools, aiming to have at least one trained teacher. In addition, the Red Cross has provided training on first aid techniques to traffic police and firefighters. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, under the programme for continuous education, the Red Cross has also trained nurses at local hospitals in first aid techniques.

4.5.1 Recording of accidents and hospital data

The establishment of a National Emergency Centre, with an integrated IT system to record information on accidents, could very well serve another important goal, that of recording and providing comprehensive data on traffic accidents and casualties. Until now, the traffic police has been responsible for recording this information. Hospitals also keep records of medical treatments of those involved in an accident. There is some cooperation between these two institutions as the traffic police is assigned to each hospital to record any accident casualty. Also, the traffic police must track and record the victim's health situation for up to 30 days following the accident, in accordance with the Albanian classification of accident casualties.

⁶⁹ As part of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, a donor funded project.

⁷⁰ <http://www.shendetesia.gov.al/al/newsroom/lajme/vijon-trajnimi-i-personelit-per-sherbimin-e-ri-modern-te-urgjences&page=4>.

All accidents causing fatalities or serious injuries are recorded in the traffic accident database. Other accidents with minor injuries might not be recorded as those injured do not require emergency care. There are also no consolidated hospital records on those involved in road accidents.

Even though a patient's health condition and any change are rigorously registered in hospital charts, this information is not centrally managed in a database, so that it can be compared with the police records. When someone is registered as seriously injured but dies after 30 days following the accident, this casualty continues to be recorded as seriously injured in the police database because that information is only in hospital data.

4.5.2 Proposed measures and recommendations

The lack of data from hospital records does not allow the findings on traffic accidents and casualties to be compared. In this context, establishing such a database, underreporting of road accidents and the legal classification of casualties are issues that need attention and rapid implementation.

4.6 Urban public transport

A local government can play an important role in improving a country's road safety system. This is more evident when it comes to the exercising of their legal responsibilities such as public services, and it is the case with urban public transport.

There have been few projects focused only on urban road safety improvements. Projects aimed at national road safety improvements or strengthening national road authorities have occasionally included components targeted at pedestrians, which focus on urban problems.

4.6.1 Accessibility

Statistical data on accessibility to urban public transport are not available or are not produced on a regular basis. Limited statistical information is included in the data on the overall number of passengers using this type of transport, as found on the website of the Albanian Institute of Statistics, but only for the period 1993-2011. Urban public transport has undergone a period of deep reform and is now largely privatized or operating under concession agreements by public operators. This reform has gradually led to a better quality of service and greater accessibility.

One of the best examples is in Tirana, where urban public transport has faced major changes. The new management of the city has targeted important objectives, such as extending coverage of urban public transport to the entire city, increasing the number of buses in its fleet,⁷¹ providing dedicated lanes for urban transport, as well as the application of new information technology systems for the control and monitoring of bus timetables.

In addition, the municipality has undertaken other measures to better organize the traffic flow at busy crossroads within the city and in the suburbs. The municipality has invested in the construction of a new terminal for inter-city buses and opened dedicated lanes for cyclists and made available 1,000 new bicycles for use by the public in 2017. A specially tailored master plan for bicycles has been developed and approved.

The city has been involved in urban transport improvement projects, such as the "Tirana Urban Traffic Control Management System (T-UTC)", that includes ITS deployment financed by the municipality of Tirana, and the "On-line fleet management system for urban buses in Tirana" financed by a private company.

⁷¹ The target was to put into operation 200 new buses in 2017, as referred to in discussions with the Director of the Transport and Mobility Department of Tirana municipality.

4.6.2 Urban transport safety

Even though the progress is not well recognized and backed up statistically, it is considered positive in terms of legal and regulatory interventions aimed at improving road safety in urban centres in Albania. Efforts have been focused on reducing vehicle speeds by traffic calming and enforcement and providing safer environments for vulnerable road users.

Education has also played a key role in the approach to road safety, for example with the initiative safer traffic and protection of sidewalks close to schools, started by Tirana city, which has been extended to most of the city's crossroads and roundabouts. Awareness activities and better coordination work in improving road safety within the city are managed by the Department for Transport and Traffic of Tirana municipality. However, the municipality lacks a dedicated road safety unit within its organizational structure.⁷²

Recently, the Government has taken actions to better regulate inter-urban transport. Such actions are part of the overall reform of the system aimed at providing a more efficient, affordable and safer inter-urban transportation network. This is based on changes to the regulatory framework and diversification of licensing procedures and has resulted in a more regulated system, better organized with an improved on-time record and a higher quality fleet. It is expected that the reform process will soon also result in much safer interurban transport.

Much emphasis has also been placed on managing a multi-sectorial approach at local levels in towns and cities with strong links to urban planning and development strategies and providing sufficient opportunities for community participation. To date there is little data on the effectiveness of urban safety improvements, but there are some promising signs from pilot interventions aimed at improvements at junctions, segregated lanes for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians and traffic calming.

Recently, almost all the urban centres of Albania have developed their new Territorial Development Plans. Although there are no special provisions for road safety measures, it is anticipated that the implementation of these plans will have an indirect, but tangible influence on improving the safety of urban transport in the most developed areas of the country.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the urban road safety problem requires a multi-sectorial and well-coordinated approach. Where direct measures have included interventions on improving vehicle technology, road infrastructure and so on, the institutional capacity building has often been underplayed and focused on outputs such as designs for improvements, rather than leaving behind a sustainable urban safety culture and monitoring structures in place.

4.6.3 Proposed measures and conclusions

Among the key issues related to urban transport in Albania are the following:

- Over recent years neither transport infrastructure nor transport services have kept pace with population growth and the rise in the number of private cars. These changes have increasingly fostered demand for more efficient transport infrastructures, as well as integrated plans for urban development and traffic management in bigger cities;
- The lack of streets with adequate traffic capacity hinders the operation of public transport and accessibility to many areas of the city and is sometimes a potential cause of road accidents;
- The occupation of roadsides is one of the major causes of traffic jams with a reduced level of service and slowing traffic flows;
- The majority of new constructions in Albania during the last two decades have been built without car parking facilities, and as a result, cars are parked on the streets, creating traffic congestion. Pedestrians are the category of road users which suffers most from the present situation in terms of an insufficient number of road crossing facilities.

⁷² Tirana municipality's web page. Available from: <http://www.tirana.al/programi-transparences/organigrama>.

More specifically, serious issues that affect the safety of urban transport in Albania are:

- The introduction of urban road safety improvements has been slow and implementation is not primarily constrained by lack of knowledge, but by lack of commitment and inadequate institutional capacity and funding;
- Very few safety projects have focused on urban problems or solutions but there has been an increasing emphasis on vulnerable road users, particularly those in large cities;
- There is little evidence of crash reductions from improvements in urban transport but there are a few promising results from junction improvements, the construction of segregated lanes for non-motorized vehicles and the introduction of traffic-calming devices.

The following actions are recommended:

- Increase local capacities – It is evident that safety issues are of equal importance for national, inter-urban and urban road transport. It is suggested to address in greater detail strengthening road safety responsibilities and capacities at the local government level – by legal/regulatory reform and providing technical assistance and capacity building training for local authorities;
- Ownership by local stakeholders and local community participation is recognized as important for successful implementation of local road safety measures. It involves strengthening of capacities and better cooperation between all local agencies/stakeholders, and public consultation with residents. Studies and analysis of the needs of different road user groups, especially pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists should be an important input to local road safety plans.

5. Conclusions and main recommendations

Road Safety Management		
Strategic Priorities	Recommended Actions	Timeline
Strengthen the technical and financial capacity of IMRSC to act as a lead national road safety body and increase capacities of local road safety stakeholders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate with all road safety decision makers to increase capacity (institutional, human and financial) and role of IMRSC and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy for coordination and implementation of road safety activities. 2. Improve capacities of local road administrations to plan and implement road safety activities defined in the national road safety strategy. Ensure ownership by local stakeholders and local community participation. 3. Establish earmarked funding exclusively for road safety programmes and projects. Make information on funding publicly available. 	2018-2020
Improve the capacity of government agencies to effectively collect and analyse accident data and provide all stakeholders with access to the national accident data online.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve data collection for several road safety indicators, especially speeding, driving under the influence, safety belt and helmet use and minimize missing data. 2. Improve data on accident location and its use for identification and elimination of high-risk road sections. 3. Establish national hospital records database to be allow comparison with road accidents data base. 	2018-2020
Strengthen the traffic and road safety legislation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update road safety legislation to be in full compliance with international/United Nations legal instruments and the EU <i>acquis communautaire</i>, mainly related to road vehicles, vulnerable road users, accident investigation, road safety databases, driving permit systems and fines. 2. Adopt new or revised by-laws and regulations to further enhance the consistent enforcement of traffic laws. 	2018-2025
Safer Roads and Infrastructure		
Strategic Priorities	Recommended Actions	Timeline
Improve national road design standards and guidelines and improve implementation of road safety audits and inspections.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a set of national guidelines (Road Access Guidelines, Road Safety Inspection Guidelines, Speed Management Guidelines, etc.) to ensure safe road design and protection of right of way. 2. Ensure full implementation of adopted road safety audit guidelines. This includes conducting capacity-building on road safety audits and inspections for all road administrations. 3. Improve design standards for streets to accommodate better the needs of vulnerable road users. Standards should include school zones and Zone 30. 	2018-2021

Safer Vehicles		
Strategic Priorities	Recommended Actions	Timeline
Improve vehicle safety through periodic and roadside vehicle inspections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure appropriate conditions for implementation and enforcement of roadside vehicle inspections by construction of fully equipped facilities nearby the main national road corridors and training of inspectors. 2. Liberalize the vehicle periodic technical inspection process. 3. Strengthen capacities of the Directorate for Road Transport Services to deal with vehicle inspections and registration of imported vehicles. 	2018-2019
Improve safety of transport of dangerous goods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The national competent authority should update national legislation to be in line with the ADR. The provisions of existing regulations should be assessed: regulations for security, tunnels, training for drivers and safety advisers, transport of dangerous goods by other modes, traffic restrictions, etc. 	2018-2020
Safer Road User Behaviour		
Strategic Priorities	Recommended Actions	Timeline
Improve road safety education in primary and secondary schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve curriculum, teaching methods and increase the number of hours devoted to road safety and traffic rules at both elementary and secondary schools. 	2018-2020
Improve driver training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review both training phases – For the theory training introduce component about road safety attitudes/culture; For the practical/traffic training gradually expose the driving student to more real life driving conditions. 	2019-2022
Stricter law enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance capacities of the traffic police to identify risky behaviour, especially speeding, driving under the influence, and non-respect of vulnerable road users. 2. Initiate national road safety campaigns to promote safe behaviours especially towards vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists). 	2018-2022

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Annex 1 An Assessment of Drink Driving in Albania⁷³

Introduction

Traffic crashes cause a great deal of human and economic suffering in modern society and preventing crashes has been an increasing priority in low- and middle-income countries. In many traffic crashes, drinking and driving is regarded as an important factor.

To address this situation, this review assesses drinking and driving in the Republic of Albania. The review will identify the most critical aspects of reducing this risk factor and its consequences, as well as explore information that will help design an effective, strategic approach for a programme to reduce or prevent road crashes involving drink driving.

The overall goal of this review is to assess the nature and the magnitude of the problem by reviewing the statistics, legislation, current practices, institutional capacities and public initiatives for reducing and preventing drinking and driving.

The specific objectives are to:

- Provide evidence of why a programme aimed at preventing alcohol-related road traffic crashes is necessary;
- Develop an understanding of the nature of, and contributing factors to, road traffic crashes involving alcohol;
- Understand the current mechanisms in place and the effectiveness of any previously implemented solutions, particularly in terms of legislation and enforcement;
- Identify baseline data that could be used to monitor progress once a drink-driving programme starts; and
- Map previous and current drink-driving programmes as well as relevant stakeholders to ensure consistency and to avoid duplication.

This assessment is relevant and timely because road-traffic injuries are both a national public health and a development problem for Albania. The magnitude of the problem runs parallel to the rapid development of the national road infrastructure.

Traffic-related accident rates in Albania are higher than in other Eastern and Central European countries. The most recent statistics released by the Albanian State Police for the year 2016 illustrate the scale of the problem. In 2016, there were 2,033 road crashes with casualties (while fatalities have been decreasing, the figures for injuries have been steadily growing for the past 10 years).

Approximately 85 per cent of all road crashes are caused by the lack of care of drivers and violations of traffic rules. Among the main violations of Albanian traffic rules in 2015, the road traffic police cite: improper overtaking (24.8 per cent), driving without a valid license (17 per cent), speeding (11.2 per cent) and drinking and driving (4.9 per cent).

Background and context

The Republic of Albania is located in the Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe. Although the country has made notable progress in economic development in recent decades, with a solid transition to a market economy and to democracy, it still has major challenges related to corruption, governance, the judiciary and income distribution.

⁷³ Prepared by the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD), Washington D.C., United States of America, 2016.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *National Human Development Report* released in 2016, Albania has made significant progress in terms of economic development, and its overall performance is considered a success story among countries in transition. Albania is now passing from the phase of establishing a democracy and a market economy to actually consolidating them. The UNDP report states that, regardless of its progress in building democratic institutions, Albania has still not been able to find solutions for some of its major challenges, especially those related to corruption, the judiciary and governance.

Albania has managed to develop economically from a low-income country to an upper middle-income country, but this economic progress has not been accompanied by a similar level of human development, and benefits have not been distributed equally. Still, Mrs. Cihan Sultanoğlu, Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States at UNDP, said in 2016: “Democracy is only too vibrant in Albania: political parties and rotational power, constitutional institutions, free media and civil society all have a voice.”

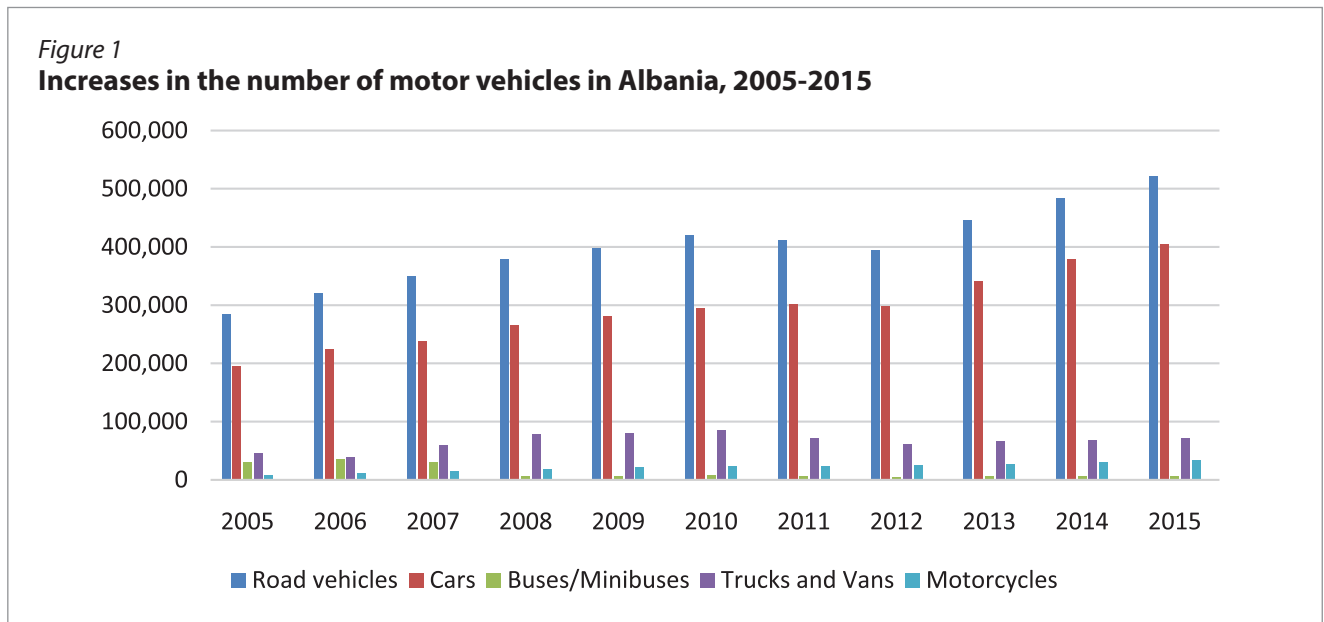
Research strategies utilized

Information for this assessment was gathered through a review of the relevant literature and data (see references). Stakeholder interviews were conducted when possible using the IARD Drink Driving Situation Assessment Guidelines (2010; part of the Global Actions on Harmful Drinking initiatives).

Findings

Transportation and road safety

The economic and political changes in Albania have had a direct influence on the transport system and road safety. Since the 1990s, Albania has undergone significant changes: from a closed country in which privately owned cars were not allowed, into a country that is rapidly becoming a market economy with a developing road infrastructure and a growing number of public and private vehicles (see figure 1 below). The number of vehicles has grown from 129,707 in 1993 to 522,066 in 2015. The number of vehicles per 10,000 population has grown annually by 5-6 per cent in the past five years.



Source: INSTAT Albania, 2016.

Despite great efforts to improve the organization of road transport and road safety, and some success in reducing the numbers of road-crash deaths and injuries, a visitor to Albania will inevitably witness on the roads and streets what the Albanians call “organized chaos”. Neither drivers nor pedestrians are accustomed to following traffic rules, preferring instead an old-fashioned equilibrium between cars, bikes, cattle and people; everyone seems to follow their own needs rather than the traffic rules. This appears particularly dangerous at crossroads. Safe driving habits are a definite and expressed concern within the country, as the major roads in Albania are steadily improved.

The World Bank emphasized the magnitude of the road safety issue in its report (March 2015), which stated, “Road safety remains a major social and public health issue in Albania”. Annual fatalities of 84.6 per 100,000 vehicles in 2012 compare unfavourably with comparable countries in the region (e.g., Montenegro 41.3, Greece 13.8, Serbia 32.9), and are more than 10 times higher than some western European countries (e.g., Germany 7, France 8.5, United Kingdom 6.2). The Government of Albania has increased its attention to road-safety reforms, including the adoption of a Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan in 2011, and the adoption of a mandatory road safety audit for all new roads. The World Bank’s Results-based Road Maintenance and Safety Project (RRMSP) will address some of the remaining road safety issues by strengthening the capacity of Albania’s Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Council (IMRSC), introducing road safety audit training accreditation courses, supporting mass media campaigns, and enhancing the Accident Information Database. As remarked by Tahseen Sayed, the World Bank Country Manager in Albania at a Road Safety Conference on 6 July 2016, “A Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) carried out by the World Bank assesses the impacts of road fatalities and crashes on the poor. It concluded that, in Albania, the highest burden of injuries and fatalities is borne disproportionately by the poor, either as pedestrians, passengers of buses or minibuses, or cyclists.”

The Government has recognized the urgency of addressing these issues and is currently focusing on asset maintenance management and road safety. The reform of the Road Traffic Police has also positively influenced the situation.

Road safety management and key stakeholders

The Government of Albania bears overall responsibility for road safety, in conjunction with local administrations. Two key ministries are responsible for road safety in the country: the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the Ministry of Interior. The Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Council is chaired by the Prime Minister, and includes top-level representatives of the transport, interior, finance, education, and health ministries. It approves the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan and other strategic documents. Funding is provided by central and local governments. The Traffic and Road Safety Department and the Road Traffic Police Directorate of the two lead ministries (Infrastructure and Energy, and Interior, respectively) form the Council’s technical secretariat, which prepares draft documents and coordinates the work between sessions.

The Traffic and Road Safety Department of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy:

- Proposes legislative changes in compliance with the European Union’s road safety strategy;
- Issues by-laws and regulations;
- Develops a national programme;
- Collects and analyses road-crash data;
- Plans and monitors the activities of three subordinate agencies: the Albanian Road Authority (responsible for building and administration of state roads), the Transportation Agency (responsible for registration and driving license procedures) and the Commission of Vehicle Inspection (a private organization contracted for 10 years until 2019).

Most of the road safety paperwork and coordination is undertaken by the Traffic and Road Safety Department, and apparently it is insufficiently staffed to address and follow-up all road safety related issues properly, according to its lead specialist. In addition, due to a lack of authority and funding, it cannot ensure proper coordination of road safety-related activities with the other members of the Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Council. In particular, the monitoring and coordination of NGO involvement in road-safety programmes and

campaigns lack proper attention. It is not known if the other primary coordinating agency, the Ministry of the Interior, or the other stakeholders, are also understaffed.

The Road Traffic Police Directorate (under the Ministry of the Interior’s Directorate of State Police) ensures road safety law enforcement, collects and compiles road crash and enforcement data, and participates in road safety education programmes in schools, in support of the Ministry of Education and Sport.

At the local level, the country is divided into 12 prefectures, which are further subdivided into counties and municipalities. Prefectures bear responsibility for local infrastructure development, public transport and road safety initiatives in their respective regions.

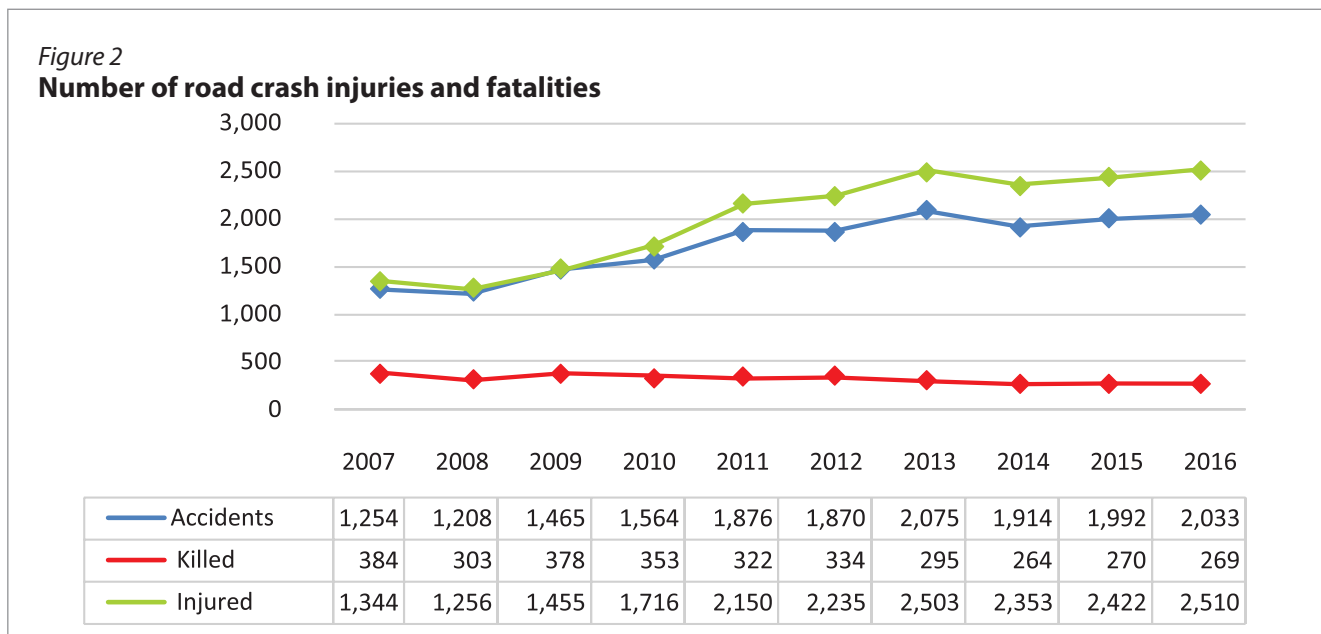
Other stakeholders at the government level are the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Sport. Non-governmental public organizations include the Albanian Institute of Public Health, the Albanian Red Cross Society, and the Automobile Club Albania.

Among the key international organizations present in Albania and engaged in road-safety issues are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the European Union (EU).

The latest international conference on road safety, “Benchmarking Albania – Toward EU Road Safety”, was held in July 2016 in Tirana. “Besides road standards, which are essential, we should focus on human behaviour as well. More education and awareness are needed for drivers as well as for pedestrians, passengers, and children,” said one of the key speakers. The conference served as a meeting and discussion platform for state institutions, local and international experts, and private enterprises interested in improving the current road safety situation in Albania.

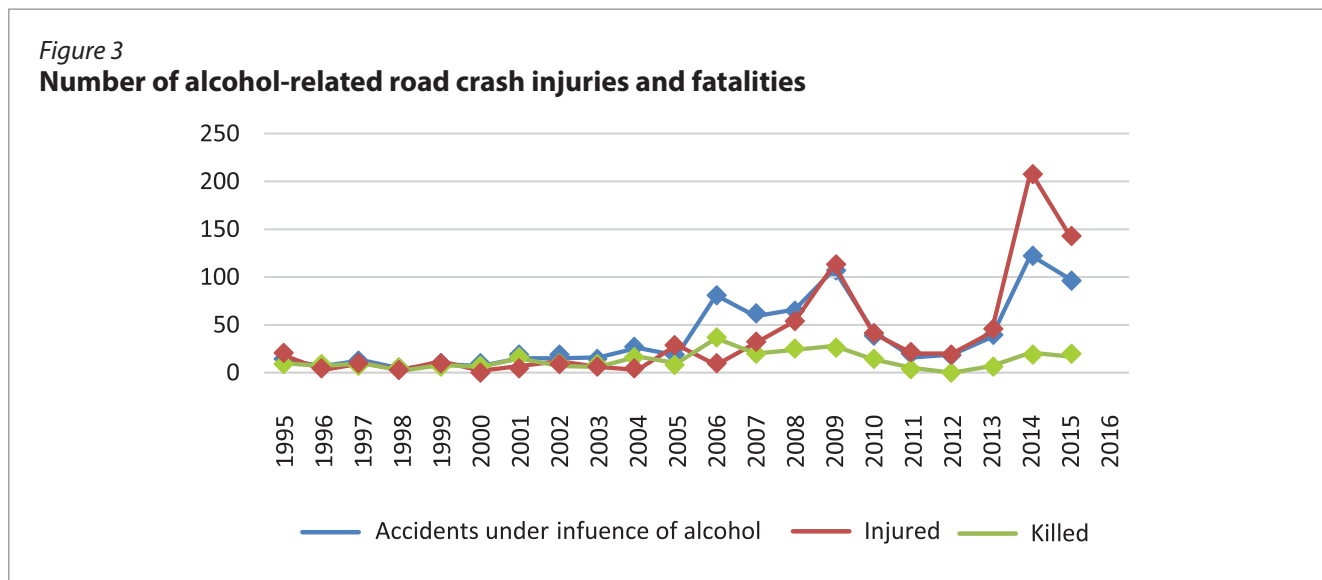
Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan

The National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 is in line with the Regional Road Safety Strategy developed by the South East Europe Transport Observatory, which aims to improve road safety in Albania to the levels of the best-performing EU countries. The government target is to reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries by 50 per cent by 2020, compared with the 2009 baseline (that is, to a rate of five fatalities per 10,000 vehicles). The Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan, which is approved and revised by the Inter-Ministerial Road Safety Council. The plan includes tasks for various institutions and organizations. Figure 2 shows the figures for crashes and fatalities for the past 10 years.



Source: INSTAT Albania, 2016.

Original information on road crashes and casualties can be found on the Road Traffic Police website (only in Albanian), or from the lead Albanian statistics agency, INSTAT, in English (www.instat.gov.al). Road-safety information is presented on the site on a monthly and yearly basis. The source of the INSTAT data is the Ministry of the Interior/State Police Directorate. Information is presented in tables that reflect the number of crashes, casualties and fatalities since 1995 by district, by day of the week, and by location (province or municipality), including alcohol-related crashes (see figure 3 below). General information on drinking and driving has been accumulated for the past 10 years.



Source: INSTAT Albania, 2016.

Although figure 2 shows a gradual rise in the number of crashes over the past several years, figure 3 shows both recent spikes and decreases in the number of those crashes involving drink driving (with peaks in 2009 and 2014). However, although figure 2 shows a gradual decrease in the number of fatalities from crashes, figure 3 shows that fatalities related to drink driving crashes have increased overall since the early 2000s. In addition, although injuries have been increasing overall, the rate at which injuries have occurred from drink driving crashes is greater than for crashes as a whole.

INSTAT provides definitions related to road crash data:⁷⁴

- Accidents: Road crashes occurring to one or more persons who are hit by vehicles;
- Person killed: Any person killed immediately or dying within 30 days because of a road crash;
- Person injured: Any person not killed, but who sustained an injury because of a road crash, typically needing medical treatment.

The Albanian Road Code was adopted in 2011. In the past few years, it has undergone changes concerning the:

- Creation of a new system of driving license categories, according to EU directives;
- Simplification of administrative procedures for issuing and registering driving licenses;
- Introduction of a demerit point system.

⁷⁴ <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/Home.aspx>. According to the Road Traffic Police Director, road crash statistics are correlated with data from the health sector. However, no details were available of how this work is performed.

Besides legal provisions, there were other initiatives to improve road safety that included:

- Strengthening and monitoring of driving schools;
- Introduction of information technology into the procedures for vehicle and driving license registration;
- Strengthening road-side controls for professional transport;
- Workshops on tachograph use, digital cards, and the EU's TACHOnet access;
- Tougher measures for road sign damage, unauthorized advertising and illegal road exits;
- New regulations on establishing service zones;
- Road sign installation on national roads; and
- Improvements to more than 90 high-risk road sections.

By 2015, the Road Traffic Police had implemented over 20 action plans aimed at reducing violations of traffic rules (including drinking and driving and driving without a permit), which were combined with public awareness campaigns for road users. The Road Traffic Police also helped promote traffic rules and road-safety concepts for secondary school students.

National drink driving law and enforcement

The Albanian Road Code includes regulations on drinking and driving (pages 256-258 of the Code), including blood alcohol concentration (BAC) definitions of three levels of alcohol impairment (<0.2 non-impairment; 0.2–0.5 g/l: driving under the influence; >0.5 g/l: drunk driving). No difference is made between beginners, professionals, or other types of drivers. Depending on the level of impairment, the penalty will include a fine (500-15,000 Albanian Lek/\$ 4-120), driving license suspension, demerit points, or imprisonment. The police confiscate an offender's driving license immediately and accompany the individual to the police station, where the decision is made regarding further penalties. If a violator drives without a license, he/she may not receive his/her license back after the suspension is over.

In 2015, Albania adopted a demerit points system. A driver has 20 points upon receipt of a license. The points are subsequently reduced for any traffic rule violations. For drinking and driving, up to 10 points can be lost. If all points are lost, the driver will have to attend courses, and to pass a written exam.

Road Traffic Police officers are equipped with up-to-date and certified breathalyzers. In case of road crashes with casualties, blood tests are conducted by medical professionals. The courts require police evidence, data and measurements during trials, as well as blood test results; courts make decisions based on evidence received from the police. The Laboratory of Forensic Toxicology in the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tirana is the only authorized institution to perform the toxicological investigations of road crashes that occur in Albania (2012).⁷⁵

Since the Road Code was adopted in 2011, some rules have changed to make penalties tougher. Once legislation is changed or amended, the relevant information is broadcast to road users through mass media and official websites, including that of the Road Traffic Police. Normally, journalists follow potential changes in traffic-related rules and regulations, starting with the draft proposals and discussions.

When an accident occurs, it usually gets widespread coverage in the Albanian media. The courts are normally open for both journalists and general public. There have been cases in which amnesty has been granted, such as a recent case in which a woman who killed two children while driving drunk was released early from jail, resulting in loud social protests.

⁷⁵ "Alcohol in Drivers Fatally Injured in Road Crash Accidents in Albania During the Years 2010-2012," *European Scientific Journal*, June 2013, edition vol.9, no.18.

Although there are no special traffic police monitoring units to detect drunk drivers, in the past two years the Road Traffic Police have intensified their enforcement work through increased (twice weekly) road checks. The results of the increased checks are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1
Traffic road check results, 2014-2016

Activity	2014	2015	2016
Number of breath tests per year	16,800	17,800	20,200
Number of drink-driving fines issued	4,609	5,687	3,809
Number of driving licenses revoked due to drink-driving	1,892	1,009	1,150

Source: Executive Director, Traffic Police Directorate, State Police, 2016.

Police enforcement actions are announced at the beginning of the week, as are reports on violations and road crashes from the previous week. The Road Traffic Police are aware of high-risk areas, and they organize special checkpoints at the most at-risk times. In the past few years, the Road Traffic Police have installed additional video cameras and conducted additional training with officers in the use of the equipment.

The Road Traffic Police do not conduct night-time or other driver survey activities related to drinking and driving, nor any special research among road users or at-risk groups. Such research is also not conducted by the Institute of Transport. At the time of the preparation of this report, police started reporting on the number of drivers tested on the roads, and the number who were found to be impaired, even if there was no associated road crash to register. These data were not available for this review.

People can report drunk and impaired drivers by calling 112 (the number for all emergencies) or 129 (police); however, this is not a widespread practice among the general public.

A top-level police officer at the Police Academy (until recently the Executive Director of the Road Traffic Police Directorate at the Ministry of the Interior) said, "Drinking and driving is a problem for road safety in Albania. Out of 2,000 checks for alcohol, eight to nine per cent of drivers are driving under impairment (i.e., 0.1-0.5 g/l). Drinking and driving road-crashes represent four or five per cent." He believes that the Road Traffic Police should focus more on enforcement and traffic regulations. Today, out of 820 Road Traffic Police officers in Albania, 200 (or nearly one-quarter) are engaged in administrative work. This is a far greater ratio than that found among EU police forces.

The Police Academy named four main reasons for road crashes in Albania in 2015:

- Improper overtaking (24.8 per cent);
- Driving without a license (17 per cent);
- Speeding (11.2 per cent); and
- Drinking and driving (4.9 per cent).

At the Police Academy, along with academic work, police collect and analyse more detailed information based on their "Traffic Accident Summary Form." The form is used only when a road crash results in human injuries or other serious damage. The form includes information such as crash type, road conditions, urban/rural, weather, speed limit, and light and vehicle conditions.

Albanians can get their first driving license at the age of 18. In addition, Albanian law allows drinking of alcohol at the age of 18. Alcoholic drinks can be sold at any time during a shop's working hours. The law does not allow the sale of alcohol to under-aged buyers; however this rule is not strictly observed. Health institutions are typically in charge of overseeing these regulations, but there is no special training for alcohol sellers or servers. Health institutions do organize public awareness activities for the general public.

Driving schools

Driving schools in Albania are under the supervision of the Directorate of Road Transport Services, an agency within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. The Directorate deals with licensing and monitoring of driving schools across the country. There are 300 driving schools in Albania, of which 95 are in Tirana.

In 2016, Albanian legislation related to driving schools and licensing was upgraded in accordance with Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament, and of the Council of 20 December 2006, on driving licenses.⁷⁶ The new curriculum for categories A and B of the directive now includes 25 topics, one of which is related to drinking and driving:

15. Affects judgement and decision making, especially reaction time, as well as changes in driving behaviour under the influence of alcohol, drugs and medicines, mental state and fatigue.

Like other topics, this is obligatory for the candidate's course, and is included in the list of exam questions (two questions on each topic of the programme). However, in many cases these studies are limited to the requirements of the Road Code.

The individual awareness of personal responsibility in drinking and driving, and the fear of getting caught and penalized, is growing. However, there are not many official and known alternatives (such as designated drivers, or sober driver programmes from taxi stands). Alcolocks⁷⁷ are not yet used in Albania. Addressing drinking and driving seriously is something new to the Albanian people.

Public awareness campaigns and initiatives

There is no single governmental agency responsible for the design and implementation of road-safety campaigns, and thus no specific "champion" to combat drink driving in Albania. The department for road safety at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy has limited human and financial resources for such activities, so many actions are not consistent, monitored, or registered. The Road Traffic Police operate under the auspices of the "Mendohu Mire" campaign mentioned below. Some organizations assist the authorities by conducting road safety campaigns, in which messages on drinking and driving are occasionally included. There have been World Bank and United Nations initiatives, as well as police (the EU-assisted PAMECA project) and other activities. These interventions are often spontaneous and are held sporadically.

The Institute of Public Health (IPH) in Albania,⁷⁸ responsible for public health promotion, is probably the most active entity in this field, organizing conferences and public information campaigns (no special campaign was mentioned during interviews, but it was mentioned that IPH is active in this field). The Red Cross has an agreement with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy to conduct first aid courses for driving schools. However, due to administrative complications, this is not done on a regular basis. Along with the Institute of Public Health, the Albanian Red Cross could be a good partner in public activities addressing drink driving, as they have a broad network of branches and volunteers across the country.



In 2010, ten national and international organizations got together to create the Albanian Coalition for Road Safety, with the aim of increasing public awareness, educating the Albanian public on road safety measures, and advocating for responsible driving. The campaign targeted four key areas: speeding, drink driving, the use of safety belts, and traffic rules. The 10 participating organizations were: Albanian State Police; Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication; World Vision; PAMECA EC; World Bank; Ora News; Eagle Mobile; American Embassy in Tirana; Albanian Red

⁷⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3A124141>.

⁷⁷ Breath test devices that prevent a motor vehicle from starting when a driver's BAC is elevated.

⁷⁸ Albania's Institute of Public Health was founded in 1935. Its mission is to prevent and control disease, injury, disability, and health-damaging environmental factors in Albania. IPH, in close cooperation with other organizations, is also responsible for the development of health promotion and education programmes.

Cross; SweRoad; and the Automobile Club Albania (ACA). The campaign, called “Mendohu Mire” (Think Better), was planned to include television and radio spots, talks shows, public information materials, SMS text messages, special feature news reports, and educational activities in schools. The campaign’s logo is seen above. No additional information on this initiative was found for this review.

It is notable that, in 2015, the ACA received the European Road Safety Charter’s Excellence in Road Safety Award for best practices (for an educational programme for children).

The Road Traffic Police have agreements with muslim, catholic and orthodox houses of worship in Albania to include road safety issues when they are addressing their respective congregations.

Research and surveys

The Albanian Road Traffic Police have not themselves conducted any assessments of the societal costs of drink driving crashes. Nonetheless, two studies were found with relevance for this review. Findings from the first study, “Alcohol in Drivers Fatally Injured in Road Accidents in Albania during the Years 2010-2012,” by the University of Medicine of Tirana (2013), can be used for background in developing drinking and driving prevention measures. For example, among different countries, the legal alcohol limits for driving range from 0.2 g/l to 0.8 g/l. In Albania, the BAC legal limit set by the Government is 0.5 g/l. When compared with data from other nations with the same limit, the total number of drink drivers in Albania (45.5 per cent of drivers in all crashes) from this study was high; for example, the percentage of all crashes in Italy that involved drink drivers was 18.1 per cent.

The study included 365 persons involved in fatal traffic accidents in Albania from January 2010 through December 2012. Of the 229 fatalities in these crashes, 41.9 per cent were car drivers, another 41.9 per cent were pedestrians, followed by motorcyclists (7.4 per cent), passengers (7 per cent) and bicyclists (1.9 per cent).

Of the subjects (both dead and alive) tested for BAC levels, 45 per cent (165) exceeded the legal limit of 0.5 g/l. Of those tested, 57.9 per cent were drivers and 29.1 per cent were pedestrians. Persons in the study whose BACs were between 0.5 and 1.0 g/l were 2.2 times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than those whose BAC was below 0.2 g/l.

Study subjects with positive BACs were almost always men (98.8 per cent); only two females had BACs exceeding 0.5 g/l. Males are the predominant violators largely because they are the majority of drivers. This is also understandable when considering local social norms involving alcohol-related social activities, where men drink more, and women drink less often and in smaller amounts.

Studies in many countries show that driving after alcohol consumption is primarily a night time and weekend phenomenon; however, no data relevant to this were available for this investigation. The authors of the research point out that blood sampling was, in some cases, not performed if the police thought that there was a low probability of finding alcohol. Long distances to testing facilities may also have contributed to the low frequency of toxicological testing.

The study’s authors concluded that there is a high probability that many alcohol-related accidents would not have occurred had drivers not reached the level of impairment (i.e., been drunk).

The second study, “Factors Associated with Fatal Traffic Accidents in Tirana, Albania: Cross-sectional Study 2000-2005,” states that, although there is no systematic evidence about the exact magnitude and determinants of road traffic injuries in Albania, the mortality rates from road traffic accidents have exceeded the overall rates in the European Union since 1992, with relatively high fatality rates (0.68 deaths per accident) primarily due to poor roads and irresponsible driving. The authors conclude that youth, excessive speed and alcohol consumption are predictors of fatal road traffic accidents in the Tirana district. These findings can help guide health care professionals and policymakers in creating preventive measures for traffic accidents.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19090597>.

Conclusions and recommendations

On its way to joining the European Union, Albania is rapidly developing, introducing, and learning the EU's social and political standards and requirements. Albanians have made many leaps forward in key spheres of life, including road infrastructure, traffic organization and safety. Most attention to date has been paid to roads, infrastructure, restructuring, re-educating the traffic police, and changing relevant legislation.

This is an appropriate time to address human behaviour and road culture issues in Albania. Albania and Albanians, at the government, professional, and non-professional levels, are open to new approaches and are eager to share and to learn more. Safe driving habits are a definite and expressed concern within the country, as the major roads continue to improve.

Although legislation and law enforcement have been the focus of attention for better road safety in the past decade, it is also important to pay attention to preventative, informational and educational work with drivers and other road users. In this report drinking and driving is emphasized as a key behavioural risk factor.

From that perspective, and to build on the successes and achievements made to date in Albanian road safety in general and drink driving in particular, this review suggests the following:

Drink driving

- Focus interventions on human behaviour through education and awareness campaigns.
- Focus on drinking and driving as a key risk factor of road user behaviour.
- Develop a detailed and reliable database related to drinking and driving. For data collection, collaborate with the Road Traffic Police, Police Academy, INSTAT, the Institute of Public Health, the Ministry of Health, the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tirana, the University of Medicine in Tirana, and the "Mother Teresa" University Hospital Centre in Tirana.
- Work with DD-related data: systematize, accumulate, and analyse DD-related statistics, from both the Road Traffic Police and the health sector. Use the data to develop interventions. Be proactive in making the data, analysis results, and interventions more accessible to the general public.
- Focus DD prevention programmes on men, while also spreading information to reduce the tolerance of drinking and driving among all road users.
- Incorporate DD prevention information into social activities, to increase the attention to and responsibility for drinking and driving to not only drivers, but to passengers and pedestrians.
- Generate data, conduct individual and group interviews, and focus groups with target populations and communities (politicians, road safety experts, driving instructors, road police, health workers, driving candidates and drivers). Use the existing research material mentioned in this review as a starting point.
- Identify key focus group respondents and areas for focused DD prevention interventions (target ages and gender, with places, times and key messages).
- Identify gaps in national legislation and start advocacy work with politicians and law makers, and in communities.
- Focus new interventions on drinking and driving as a risk, as highlighted by the road safety community (to date, this risk factor has received some attention from researchers and police, but no consistent, preventive measures have been articulated and implemented).
- Engage volunteers in DD prevention-related interventions.

- Approach driving schools as a source of and instrument for the promotion of drinking and driving prevention programmes. Identify their capacities and cooperation with other stakeholders and involve local partners in choosing the best schools to participate in a drink driving prevention project. Driving schools are a very relevant place to start the building of a road safety culture, not only for driving candidates but for the wider population.
- Utilize the full potential of the Police Academy for both training purposes and for the spread of a “no drinking and driving” ideology, because they have:
 - a. the proper resources in terms of experienced teachers who understand road safety beyond simply the traffic rules.
 - b. access to statistics and analysis.
 - c. their own driving school, which may open soon to the public.
 - d. the desire and human resources to contribute meaningfully to a road safety project.
- Identify the capacities of the existing Albanian NGOs working on road-safety issues, and partner with them in drinking and driving prevention projects.
- Use the current potential of international organizations in Albania in DD prevention programmes.
- Utilize the capacity of international private entities in Albania connected with road construction, logistics, and maintenance in DD prevention programmes.
- Together with driving school teachers, study the current road safety programmes in schools that are being provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport, with the purpose of expanding the knowledge of driving candidates of alcohol-related driving risks.
- Study media publications on DD related road crashes. Work with local journalists on what and how to write about road safety and drinking and driving prevention. This should be more than news on road crashes; engage journalists in DD project development efforts and increase their writing capacity and knowledge through special workshops.
- Media campaigns addressing drinking and driving, as with any risk factors, should have common images and messages broadcast across the country, which are known to and promoted by all stakeholders.

General

- Work more closely with road police on defining sites for mass and night time traffic checks.
- Partnering agencies and the Government should work together to create a strong road safety agency or lead organization for the country, which will have more authority than is currently available (decision making, financial management) in inter-ministerial coordination.
- Much more concerted effort is required in terms of allocating financial and capable human resources to actively mobilize, monitor, and motivate relevant institutions (other than transport and police) to jointly implement the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Annex 2 List of interviewees

Organization	Department	Name, Position
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	Standards and Monitoring Directorate of Deregulation, Licensing and Monitoring Sector of Policy and Development Strategy	Mr. Arben Dhima, Director
		Mr. Roland Shesha, Chief of Road Transport Monitoring Sector
		Mr. Flamur Mullisi, Specialist
		Mr. Edlir Solis, Specialist
		Mr. Arjan Korpa, General Director
		Mr. Nikolin Berxhiku, Road Safety Specialist
Ministry of Internal Affairs	State Police, Traffic Police Directorate	Mr. Mithat Tola, Executive Director
		Mr. Qamil Sadiku, Chief of Sector
		Mr. Altin Qato, Director of the Department for Public Safety
		Mr. Skender Ismailaj, Chief of Road Safety Sector
		Mr. Ali Yzeiri, Accident Data Analyst
		Mr. Simon Mice, Specialist
		Mr. Agron Mema, Specialist
	Security Academy	Mr. Leonard Harizi, Head Teacher
Albanian Road Authority	Traffic and Signs Department Road Infrastructure	Mr. Astrit Zenelaj, Chief of Department
		Mr. Dashamir Xhika, General Director
		Mr. Spartak Tarka, Director of Standards and Maintenance
		Ms. Albara Amzaj, Specialist
		Ms. Ariana Hasani, Specialist on Maintenance and Tunnel Safety
		Ms. Dhurata Laze, Road Safety Specialist
		Institute of Transport
Mr. Shkelqim Gjevori, Chief of Projects of Studies Sector		
Mr. Ilir Sako, Transport Planning Specialist		
Ms. Lindita Cama, Transport Data Specialist		
Polytechnic University of Tirana	Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	Prof. Dr. Andonaq Londo Lamani, Dean
University Marin Barleti		Mr. Erion Kristo, Road Safety Expert
National Consultant		Mr. Edmond Alite
		Mr. Fadil Borishi
		Ms. Irma Tanku
Consultant		Mr. Marenglen Poreci, Consultant on Dangerous Goods

General Directorate of Road Transport Services		Mr. Gani Cupi, Vice General Director
		Mr. Rakip Duka, Economic Director
		Mr. Siri Rama, Director of Professional Qualifications
		Ms. Vilma Cekani, Chief of Licensing and Certification Sector
	Directorate of Professional Qualifications	Mr. Andis Tirana, Chief of sector
		Mr. Skerdi Vaso, Specialist
	Department of vehicle registrations	Mr. Gjon Kola, Test Specialist
National Centre of Medical Emergencies		Mr. Astrit Nasufi
National Centre of Medical Emergencies		Dr. Skender Brataj, General Director
The Prefecture of Dibra Region		Mr. Ardit Kaja, Prefect
UNDP Albania		Mr. Brian Williams, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative
		Ms. Fioralba Shkodra, Team Leader, UN Coordination Specialist
Automobile Club Albania		Mr. Niko Leka, President
		Mr. Eno Zeneli, General Secretary
		Mr. Eridon Lameborshi, Secretary-General
Institute of Accident Studies		Mr. Fatmir Hasho, Road Safety Expert
Engineering Bureau of Road Safety		Mr. Mimir Hodo, Representative
Association of Health Protection from Road Accidents		Mr. Demir Osmani, Representative
Albanian Red Cross		Luljeta Hidi, First Aid Program Coordinator
Institute of Public Health		Mrs. Genta Qirjako, Head of the Health Promotion and Education Department

Road Safety Performance Review

Albania

Road safety is an important sustainable development goal, yet relatively underappreciated and greatly underfunded. Every year, more than 1.2 million people die and another 50 million are injured in road traffic accidents around the world. Approximately 90% of all road accidents occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Recognizing the need to support member States in urgently and effectively addressing road safety challenges, three of the United Nations regional commissions initiated the project *Strengthening the National Road Safety Management Capacities of Selected Developing Countries and Countries with Economies in Transition*. The project, which focused on assisting four countries to enhance their national road safety management capacities and to effectively address and improve national road safety, was implemented in Albania, Dominican Republic, Georgia and Viet Nam.

The Road Safety Performance Reviews were conducted to assess the current road safety situation, to help the beneficiary countries to identify the most critical road safety issues and to recommend actions to be taken. Based on the critical issues identified, capacity-building workshops for national road safety stakeholders were organized. The project raised public awareness on road safety issues and sensitized national experts and the non-government sector to the need to set ambitious road safety targets and take specific measures to improve road safety.

The project was funded by the United Nations Development Account.

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