

Final Conference:
**Striving for Safer Infrastructure
 for All Road Users in Danube Area**
 September 23, 2021 / 8:30 CEST



RADAR PROJECT'S FINAL CONFERENCE IS AN ACCOMPANYING EVENT OF SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU.

Last 'drive' of project RADAR: Inspiring more than 160 people at the final conference

On September 23, 2021, the Risk Assessment on Danube Area Roads (RADAR) project consortium implemented the Final Conference that aimed at 'Striving for Safer Infrastructure for All Road Users in Danube Area'. The conference was a hybrid event, where an in-person version of the conference took place in Bled, Slovenia.

"Safe road infrastructure plays a crucial role in ensuring traffic flow and safety on the roads. Being properly planned, built, maintained, and equipped it must provide the best conditions for all road users. The participation of countries or partners in projects such as RADAR has shown the importance of exchanging approaches, good practices, and experiences to ensure even better connectivity and to achieve the goals of the new UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030," Minister of Infrastructure in Slovenia, **Jernej Vrtovec**, opened the final conference of the RADAR project with a video message.

More than 160 road safety experts and representatives of road infrastructure safety sector from Danube area and transport stakeholders from all over world registered to the RADAR project's final conference organised under the aegis of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU and in cooperation with the European Union Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) – PA1b: To improve mobility and multimodality – Road, Rail, and Air Links.

The conference was an opportunity for road safety organisations and experts to discuss and chart the future strategic directions focusing on the improvement of the road infrastructure safety in the Danube area for all road users.

Large parts of the Danube road network rate poorly for safety and death rates in many countries are higher than the EU average. Many countries lack professional capacity and approaches to the problem vary. **Franc Zepic**, coordinator at European Union Strategy for Danube Region emphasised that *"in Danube area there a number of challenges – from different driving culture, quality of roads infrastructure to vehicle safety.*

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And we need to address that to narrow the road safety gap. We need to cooperate, coordinate, promote successful activities, exchange best practices and join efforts to receive additional financing."

"Improving road infrastructure is the cornerstone of road safety"

The conference brought together 20 global road safety stakeholders to highlight RADAR project's results and demonstrate the benefits of systematic approach to safer road infrastructure. It has contributed to the debate of prioritisation of road safety investments and network wide road safety assessments under revised RISM directive and broader. In addition, the conference underlined the need to work towards the implementation of both the United Nations and European Commission goals on road safety.

"Improving road infrastructure is the cornerstone of road safety and it will be critical to achieve the new goals of the Second decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030) proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly in September 2020," underlined **Liljana Cela** from Transport Community Secretariat. **Malaya Zumel** from European Investment Bank agreed and continued that the road ahead will focus on contributing to the New Decade of Action: *"Now I guess it is up to us all, notably the project owners, to ensure the findings are used to make positive changes on the ground. If we miss the chance to get our projects done right, now, unsafe roads will be out there for the next 20+ years."*

Investing in safer road infrastructure pays back?

At this high-profile event, governments official, European Commission representatives and a range of road safety advocates announced strong plans to address the need to improve road infrastructure safety for all road users not only in Danube area but around the world.

"The tragedy in terms of road fatality is very clear. But it is just a tip of the iceberg. What is happening beneath that is an incredible burden on our health system, insurance, families, economies, and our development.

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The opportunity that you have had at RADAR project within the Danube Transnational Programme project was to work together to tackle this problem. iRAP is doing just that – but at the global level,” emphasised **Rob McInerney**, Chief Executive Officer from International Road Assessment.

“The outcome of the RADAR project will encourage all to take action because that is what it is all about. We can do investigation as long as we want to, but at the end of the day it is important to improve the quality of road infrastructure as well as improve the quality of our mobility system. It is a very good investment. Investing in safer road infrastructure does pay back,” Chairman of European Institute for Road Assessment – EuroRAP, **Ferry Smith**, appealed to road safety stakeholders.

Safe System approach at RADAR project’s heart

The conference outlined the project’s final results and showcased the Road Infrastructure Safety Improvement Strategy plans. Now more than ever is important to understand the efficient and effective transport system, as well as fast and overall safe movement of people and goods.

Marko Ševrovič from European Institute for Road Assessment – EuroRAP added that *“safe system needs to be integrated not only within the road infrastructure but within the whole road safety management.”* RADAR project is about doing just that. It has a safe system approach at its heart. Through six thematic areas RADAR is working cohesively and in parallel with the revised Directive 2019/136 Ševrovič explained *“3200 people died on Danube area roads in 2019. The roads connect people, but they are also killing them. Therefore, improving road infrastructure safety was the main focus of the RADAR project.”* The need to improve road safety infrastructure was aimed within six areas: Safer Roads Investment Plans, Provisions for Vulnerable Road Users, Smart Speed Management, Road Safety Near Schools, COVID-19, and Transport Safety and finally within Infrastructure Safety Management Directive (RISM) in Danube Area.

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With these thematic areas reports and recommendations for its implementation, the RADAR Danube Infrastructure RS Improvement Strategy will become the most comprehensive Strategy in Europe at this moment that will serve to EU countries even outside the Danube area and support improvement of road infrastructure safety in the region for multiple road users, on the Danube major, secondary and tertiary road network.

The final conference addressed partners countries' national public authorities and projects' Associated Strategic Partners. The altogether 160 registered from 47 countries across the world were the representatives from non-governmental organisations, universities and national public authorities including representatives from relevant Ministries and Road Authorities from partners' countries.

**Safe journeys. Srečno pot. Sretan put. Бон Вояж. Štastnou cestu. Gute reise. Jó utat.
Drum bunradar.**

More about RADAR: www.interreg-danube.eu/RADAR

More about the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2021:

<https://slovenian-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/>

More about EUSDR: <https://danube-region.eu/>

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Speakers at the RADAR project's final conference Striving for Safer Infrastructure for All Road Users in Danube Area:

- **Olivera Rozi** from the European Institute for Road Assessment – EuroRAP
- **Jernej Vrtovec** from Ministry of Infrastructure in Slovenia
- **Franc Zepic** from the European Union Strategy for Danube Region
- **Ferdinand Smith** from the European Road Assessment Programme
- **Stephen Jonathan Halligan** from the Danube Transnational Programme
- **Petros Petrou** from European Commission, Department of Mobility and Transport
- **Malaya Zumel** from European Investment Bank
- **Rob McInerney** from International Road Assessment
- **Liljana Cela** from Transport Community Secretariat
- **Jure Kostanjsek** from the Automobile Association of Slovenia
- **George Yannis** from National University of Athens
- **Marko Sevrovic** from the European Institute for Road Assessment – EuroRAP
- **Uros Brumec** from Ministry of Infrastructure, Slovenian Infrastructure Agency
- **Gabor Pauer** from the KTI Institute for Transport Sciences Nonprofit Ltd
- **Slavisa Babic** from Croatian Roads Ltd
- **Stelios Efstathiadis** from the Transportation Solutions
- **Klaus Machata** from the Austrian Road Safety Board
- **Bojan Jovanović** from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences