

## FINAL DECLARATION

### of the Participants at the 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE “SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE” ON THE TOPIC “VISION ZERO – ZERO ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT”

We, the representatives and leaders from state administration, delegates, experts, and scientific specialists from Bulgaria and Europe, road safety auditors, and representatives of non-governmental organizations, gathered in Plovdiv at the Grand Hotel Plovdiv on September 19-20, 2024, for the 10th Annual "Safe Infrastructure" Conference on the topic "Vision Zero – Zero Road Traffic Accident," declare the following:

**We recognize and commend** the efforts of the Bulgarian Road Safety Industry Association for initiating, preparing, and organizing this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual conference on "Safe Infrastructure" under the theme "Vision Zero – Zero Road Traffic Accident." This event has become a traditional platform for the exchange of experience and a source of ideas and solutions in the field of road safety.

**We welcome** the involvement of over 350 delegates who are dedicated to addressing the challenges of road safety.

**We extend our congratulations** to Ms. Violeta Koritarova, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, Mr. Lubomir Yosifov, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Engineer Tosho Pashov, Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv, Associate Professor Dr. Architect Gichka Kutova-Kamenova, Rector of the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Geodesy, and Engineer Zhivko Nedev, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of the Bulgarian Construction Chamber, **for their welcoming addresses to the conference participants.**

**We congratulate** the established specialists in the field of traffic safety, who delivered 13 presentations, sharing a significant body of positive experience, scientific research results, and practical solutions to improve the quality of individual elements of the road transport system and their interactions. Special attention was given to driver psychology, training, and judicial practices in the investigation of road accidents.

**We acknowledge** the excellent opportunity provided by the conference materials to enhance participants' knowledge and skills, as well as to formulate proposals to the relevant institutions and organizations.

**We welcome** the discussions, which addressed issues that, if resolved, would lead to continuous improvement of road infrastructure safety. Special attention was paid to: driver's eye-tracking research to assess the perception of road infrastructure elements; application of innovative solutions in analyzing the visibility distance on existing roads; corporate responsibility for road safety; specific challenges regarding rockfall hazards on roads; urban safety, particularly focusing on vulnerable road users, and more.

**Reaffirming** the statements made in the final declarations of previous annual conferences on "Safe Road Infrastructure";

**Recognizing the right of every individual to benefit from the highest attainable standard of health;**

**Based on the organization established for the conference, the questions raised in the reports and during the discussions, reaffirming our strong commitment to achieving our high goals, and emphasizing our shared responsibility, we, the participants in the conference, hereby unite and declare:**

1. State institutions responsible for road traffic safety should continue their efforts and, in the shortest possible time, integrate the principles of the "Safe System" approach into their work. This approach was adopted in 2019 by a decision of the Council of Ministers as a national policy for achieving a high level of road safety in the Republic of Bulgaria.
2. State institutions responsible for road traffic safety should continue their efforts to enhance communication, taking into account all its aspects, in order to achieve a high level of cooperation and coordination among themselves, as well as to build public trust in their work.
3. We support the information campaign of the State Agency for Road Safety, focused on the safety of children as participants in traffic. The role of parents and families is crucial both in fostering a culture of safe and socially responsible behavior on the road, and in the personal responsibility each of us bears for the safety of children.
4. We support the actions of the Road Infrastructure Agency regarding the development of the road network and the activities that ensure its safety, as presented at the conference.
5. We support the actions of the Road Infrastructure Agency in the construction of high-speed roads (new or reconstructed) with two lanes in each direction and safety barriers between them, aiming to reduce head-on collisions.
6. With the implementation of plans to expand the Kapitan Andreevo border checkpoint, traffic to and from the Republic of Turkey will significantly increase. This necessitates the establishment of an alternative high-speed connection between the two points—Kapitan Andreevo and Lesovo. This connection will ensure the ability to redirect part of the traffic in the event of technical problems, road accidents, congestion, or other obstacles to the free movement of vehicles.
7. We call on academia and state institutions to implement innovative solutions in their work to elevate the knowledge and competencies of road safety experts, which in turn is essential for achieving safer roads.
8. Road authorities should require designers to conduct visibility studies as a function of the allowable speed when constructing new and assessing existing pedestrian crossings. The placement of pedestrian crossings immediately after horizontal curves and within vertical curves is not recommended.
9. We recommend that designers and municipal administrations require road signs to be placed at a height of 2.25 meters in urban areas to ensure better visual perception.
10. It is necessary to create a document that establishes a methodology for assessing the societal costs of road traffic accidents, which would provide a real evaluation of the financial resources lost by our society due to road incidents. This methodology would allow for an accurate assessment of the financial benefits of infrastructure measures related to road safety.
11. The data presented by the Ministry of the Interior regarding head-on collisions and accidents in roadside areas on the roads in the Republic of Bulgaria indicate that it is crucial for efforts to prioritize measures concerning road infrastructure safety to be directed toward eliminating the possibilities of such incidents occurring and mitigating the consequences of road traffic accidents, particularly those involving head-on collisions and incidents in roadside areas. We propose the establishment of an organization to mark the locations where citizens have lost their lives due to head-on collisions. This marking should be designed to create an analogy in the driver's mind of a portal to the afterlife.
12. Urban planning should be oriented toward ensuring the safety of road users. This can be achieved by promoting pedestrian and bicycle movement, providing convenient and regular public transportation, reducing traffic speeds, and limiting parking in favor of pedestrian spaces, among other measures.

13. Actions should be taken by the responsible institutions to reduce the likelihood of traffic accidents at locations where rail and road infrastructure intersect at the same level or are in close proximity to one another. To this end, we propose updating the applicable secondary regulations and seeking comprehensive technical solutions when constructing new crossings or renovating existing rail and road infrastructure, ensuring that crossings occur at different levels.
14. We consider it necessary to conduct an assessment of the impact of road infrastructure in every serious traffic accident. This action will provide essential information for implementing infrastructure solutions that can reduce the likelihood of similar events occurring.
15. We entrust the Management Board of the Bulgarian Road Safety Industry Association with the task of sending the Final Declaration to all relevant institutions and organizations, along with specific proposals for individual and joint actions, as well as adopting a plan for the implementation of the recommendations made in the declaration.
16. In light of the high effectiveness of the conference, the intensive exchange of best practices, and the improvement of interaction and coordination among experts from various institutions, scientific organizations, private business, and non-governmental organizations, we propose that the Bulgarian Road Safety Industry Association plan and organize the 11th Annual "Safe Infrastructure" Conference in 2025`.

**From the participants of the 10th Anniversary Annual Conference "Safe Infrastructure" on the topic  
"Vision Zero – Zero Road Traffic Accident"**

**September 19-20, 2024, Grand Hotel "Plovdiv", Plovdiv**