

Safe System in Road Design

Putting forgiving, self-explaining and self-enforcing road principles into practice

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Bulgaria has already made the right policy choice

**Safe System is
already in national
policy**

**Forgiving
infrastructure is
already an
objective**

**2026 strategy
update calls for
faster
implementation**



...but meeting every standard is not the same as a Safe System

Across Europe, and especially in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, road authorities are investing heavily in new and upgraded infrastructure. European standards are increasingly embedded in national specifications and procurement.

But compliance with individual standards, taken one at a time, does not by itself deliver a Safe System. The real challenge is making these elements work together as one integrated system



Function &
geometry



Design &
operating speed



Signs &
markings



Vehicle restraint
systems



Roadside &
VRU provision



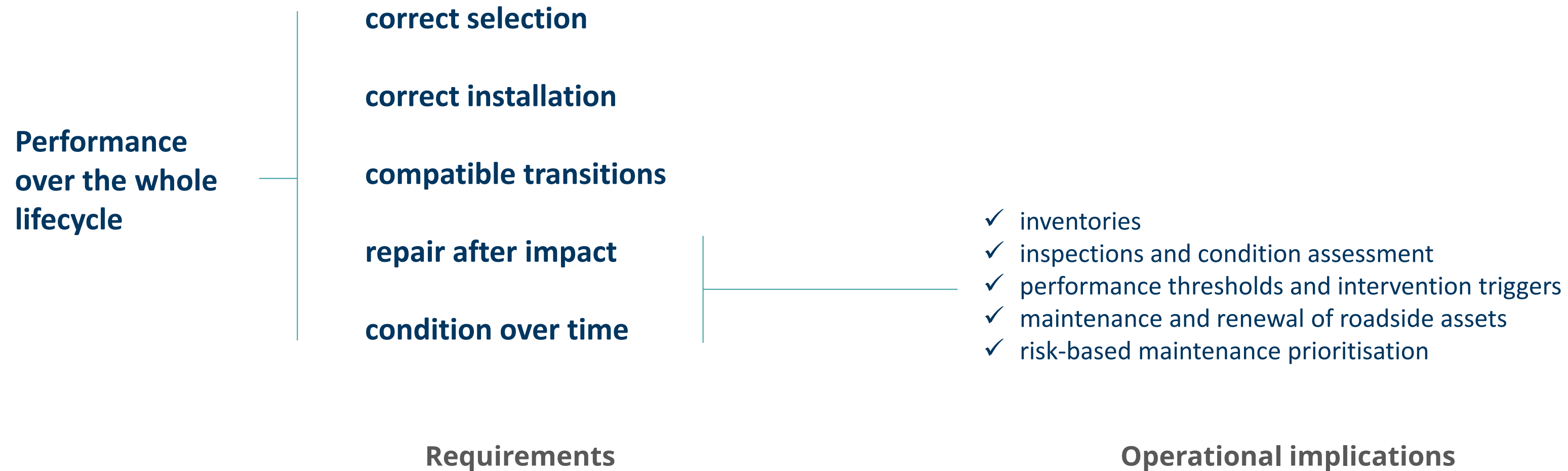
Maintenance &
asset mgmt.



Safety performance can be lost at any one of these stages

Our roadsides are a good illustration

The European road community spend enormous effort on tested performance and EN 1317. But the crash test is only the beginning of the story. **A certified system is not automatically a performing system**



A new EU mandate is landing this autumn



The mandate

Directive 2019/1936 (Art. 6) requires the European Commission to issue guidance on **forgiving roadsides, self-explaining & self-enforcing roads**, and infrastructure quality for vulnerable road users.



The gap

“For most audited projects, no road safety design criteria were stipulated.”
European Court of Auditors, Reaching EU Road Safety Objectives, 2024.



The response

DG MOVE has prepared the most technically detailed guidance yet produced at EU level (due for release in October)

The opportunity: a practitioner workshop



Format

Two days
Designed for managers & practitioners
Technology-neutral
Delivered with IRF Members



Hosting

Organised with the host road
authority and other stakeholders



Objective

Help authorities apply the EU
regulatory, standards and guidance
framework in practice



Area focus

Central, Eastern & South-Eastern
Europe and the Western Balkans —
open to others on request

Will Bulgaria be our first mover?

IRF would welcome the opportunity to develop a 2027 practitioner workshop with the Bulgarian road safety community

Thank you

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