



Report 2013

of the

EFPA Standing Committee Traffic Psychology

By Jens Schade (Convenor)

EFPA General Assembly in Stockholm on
July 13-14, 2013

1. Executive summary :

- Period of Standing Committee: 2011-2013
- As formulated at a meeting in Prague 2006 the general scope and main tasks of the Standing Committee on Traffic Psychology are
 - To formulate common guidelines for the practice of Traffic Psychology (TP) in Europe.
 - Harmonise proposals for a curriculum for education in TP and what counts as equivalent qualifications across Europe.
 - Clarify and improve the structure and delivery of TP across Europe.
 - Act as a voice to promote TP in Europe.
- Recommendations: To acknowledge traffic psychology as an important field of professional psychology
- This Task Force/Standing Committee reported was accepted as the position of EFPA at the GA date and place.

2. Standing Committee Traffic Psychology

The EFPA Standing Committee, Traffic Psychology was founded in 2005 in Granada, Spain and was promoted from being a Task Force in summer 2006. The Task Force was founded in 1993 in Tampere, Finland and the Task Force has been active since that time, except for a period between 1997 and 1999, until it was turned into a Standing committee. Its history has been reported by Risser (2003).

The present report is focused on the SC activities in the time after the 2011 EFPA GA meeting.

2.1 The strategic aims of the Standing Committee Traffic Psychology

The strategic aims of the SC were formulated in Prague, October 2006, and have not been changed since then. However, it is intended to update and to adjust the aims with regard to the planned changes in the strategy and organization of EFPA bodies.

- **Formulate common guidelines for the practice of Traffic Psychologists in Europe.** This could take the form of statements prepared for individual topics, where the guideline is illustrated by a current newsworthy event or situation. These documents could form a series.
- **Harmonise proposals for a curriculum for education of Traffic Psychologists** and what counts as equivalent qualifications across Europe.
- **Clarify and improve the structure and delivery of Traffic Psychologists across Europe.** This would also involve networking with other psychologists beyond EFPA and where appropriate with medical colleagues who are central to the efficient delivery of Traffic Psychology.
- **Act as a voice to promote Traffic Psychologists in Europe.** As well as networking where the opportunity allows, we can attempt to develop a website; clarify the channel of communication within and via EFPA; and lobby our national representative of the Council when relevant issues and Directives emerge. We can also publicise the SC via presentations about it at conferences.

2.2 Activity Report of the Standing Committee, 2011-2013

In the period there have been three Standing Committee meetings (in Vienna, March, 21th 2012, Groningen, August, 29th 2012, and London, March, 23th 2013). The minutes from the meetings are enclosed in Appendix I and Appendix II. Among the various activities of the committee two major activities will be mentioned here: Country-report series and train driver directive.

Country Reports:

We invented a series of ‘*country reports*’. Aim of the country reports is to provide a state of the art of traffic psychology in EFPA member states. To review the historic development of TP, its professional and academic origins, available methods, major research issues and political challenges as well as its current developments and future prospects.

In Vienna the Czech Representative Martin Koran presented “*The History and Current Activity of Czech Traffic Psychology*”. He presented an overview about the Czech accident rate and consequences since 2000 followed by a review of the the History of Traffic Psychology in Chech Republic. The origins can be dated back until 1920 with the foundation of the Psychotechnical Institute in the Masaryk’s Academy of Work. The beginning of the psychotechnical examination of drivers can be dated back already to 1922. New conception of driver assessment has been conducted in the Czech Republic since the middle of the last century. After WW II. it was recognised that industrial work and driving are both physical and mental processes since personality variables, traits and behavioural preconditions have an impact on driving behaviour. Tests are now centred on perceptual skills, attention and concentration, sensorimotor skills , intellectual capacity and qualitative criteria of personality. Major recent developments in Chech Traffic Psychology compromise:

- Assessment of psychological fitting to drive (obligatory for „professionals“, voluntary for „amateurs“)
- Not only the selection, but also the suitable training and rehabilitation of drivers
- Solutions and recommendations concerning dangerous points (frequent accidents and serious injuries - locations measured by GPS)
- Authorized experts activities concerning of accidents investigation

In June 1990 the Association of Traffic Psychologist of Czechoslovak Republic (ADP) has been founded. Recent activities of the ADP are among others, the preparation of new legislation on human factor in road transport and the psychological capability for driving motor vehicles; the enforcement of the so called “demerit point system”; the enforcement of modern traffic safety elements, participation in the preparation of the amendment of traffic law, especially concerning psychological examination of professional drivers by accredited traffic psychologists. The report gave a brief overview about recent policy developments relevant for TP, e.g. the new amendment of the Czech Road Traffic Act (No. 133/2011) which stated that only registered traffic psychologists can assess the drivers (accredited by Ministry of Transport). Accrediting is understood as a continuous auditing process on the basis of an extensive list of requirements (postgraduate training in traffic psychology, 3 years of practice in the field of traffic psychology and specific equipment and test devices). The report ends with a valuable outlook for Czech TP with e.g.,

- The cooperation on the preparation of the proposals of new laws concerning of the psychological problems of driving.
- The Assessment and the Rehabilitation of drivers – cooperation with EFPA Standing Committee Traffic Psychology.
- The improvement of the psychological selection of drivers and other traffic workers.
- Participation in the implement of the safety regulations in the traffic.

- Teaching new traffic psychologist – to organise of the postgraduate study of the traffic psychology, to use experience from the European Union (Europsy).
- Participation in the subsequent monitoring of the “Demerit point system” law. Preparation of the special rehabilitation programs or certain types of psychotherapy designed to modify deviant behaviour of drivers convicted and reconvicted of violations of the traffic code or regulations.
- Co-operation on the PASS (Psychological and Medical Assistance for Safe Mobility) – an interdisciplinary model to promote and secure mobility competence in Europe
- Preparation for the future boom in older drivers which could prove to be a serious problem in the next few years
- Participation in the preparation of the amendment of traffic law, especially concerning psychological examination of professional drivers by accredited traffic psychologists
- Psychological care of victims of traffic accidents

The Spanish Representative Hector Monterde-i-Bort and his colleague Fermina Sánchez presented a report about "Traffic Psychology in Spain: the Medico-Psychological Check-Up of Drivers" which was accompanied by a paper. In Spain, people have to submit to an obligatory medical and psychological check-up (or exam) whenever they want to get a new driving licence (obtainment) or renew an expired driving licence (renewal). Because the authors were so kind to provide a written paper it has been attached to this report in the Annex.

In London a brief report about the current situation in Denmark has been presented by Danish member Annette Meng. She shows that TP is almost not existent in Denmark but she makes several suggestions where traffic psychology could expand and contribute in Denmark. Finally, Slovakian member Karol Kleinmann and his son Karol Kleinmann presented “Tradition and development of Transport Psychology in Slovakia”. The presentation is attached in the annex.

The country reports series will be taken up at the next meeting and material has been uploaded on the committee’s website. We think it is an useful resource also for the interested public.

Train driver directive*

(* This section is based on a draft note written by Robert Roe)

On 29-04-2013 a meeting happened in Brussels at EFPA HQ on the Train drivers directive (2007/59/EC) where Jens Schade and Hector Monterde-i-Bort (ST-TP), Erik Leclerq (CER Psychologists Expert Committee) & Robert Roe (EFPA) participated.

The issue and its background

According to Art. 33 of the Directive, the European Railway Agency (ERA) shall conduct an evaluation of the transposition. It has sent a questionnaire to railway operators and other parties (safety agencies, trade unions etc.), including CER (Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies). CER has asked the PEC for input, it will likely propose some changes but not all in agreement with those favoured by psychologists.

To give more voice to the psychologists' point of view, CER-PEC has contacted the SC Traffic Psychology at some earlier point. This meeting is a late outcome of the contact; its aim is to clarify the current state of affairs, to identify the need for change in the EU legislation, and to determine possibilities for joint action.

It is recalled that the EU consultation in 2005, in which several amendments to clarify the nature of psychological examinations of train drivers and to strengthen the position of psychologists, has been unproductive, resulting in a Directive that shows several inadequacies from a psychologist's point of view.

There seems to be a window of opportunity for corrective action in the context of the current ERA evaluation.

As for the position of other stakeholders, it is noted that:

- employers support initial psychological examinations but not recurrent ones (connected to renewal of the license, after 10 years); they are hindered by an inadequate view of what a psychological examination actually is;
- for unions the same applies; they see recurrent examinations as a threat;
- medical experts seem to see little need for psychological examinations, and to believe that they can do these themselves.

Perhaps there are other stakeholders, like German TUVs, who are active in car driver examinations (psychological, medical) and seem interested in the domain of rail transport as well.

The nearest possibility for action is soon, i.e. the end of May 2013. It could entail issuing a statement vis-à-vis ERA regarding psychological examinations and the recognition the role and responsibility of psychologists.

State of affairs regarding the transposition of the Directive

The ERA will make a complete assessment of the transposition in the EU countries. Both the CER-PEC and SC TP have made preliminary assessments with a focus on psychological examinations. The impression of CER-PEC is that there is general agreement in the criteria and procedures for initial psychological examinations, but there are major differences regarding recurrent examinations in national regulations – in content as well as time periods. The overview by Hector (SC TF) is still incomplete, but shows a great variety in terminology, descriptions of psychological requirements, responsibilities, conditions for certification etc. The overview is to be completed, and can serve as a basis for making proposals to standardize terminology and requirements.

The overall conclusion is that there is a lack of precision an agreement in the demarcation of psychological criteria (which leaves considerable room for subjectivity) as well as the roles and responsibilities of medical and psychological experts. Also, there is overlap between psychological and medical requirements.

It seems that medical experts are sometimes given a greater scope for action than psychologists. Separating the two sets of roles and responsibilities would lead to a sharper

distinction between the two types of examinations, but could have practical disadvantages (two examinations instead of one, with higher cost). Some degree of overlap need not be a problem, provided that the examiners are properly trained or supervised by those with greater expertise in psychological diagnostics and psychometrics.

Why the Directive needs to be changed

The situation on the ground does not seem to be a source of great problems, but there are some fundamental issues that need to be addressed.

- a. Differences in national legislation regarding (particularly recurrent) examinations may negatively impact the mobility of train drivers in Europe and can indirectly have a similar impact on the mobility of psychologists (issues that are partly related to the EU Qualifications Directive).
- b. They also imply a potential for disturbing competition between rail operators, using different examination schemes.
- c. There is real risk that medical personnel could be held accountable for examinations in which it lacks expertise (e.g. regarding administration and interpretation of instruments, knowledge of psychological diagnostics and psychometrics).
- d. There is lack of objectivity in the examination criteria which obscures the relationship with psychology's scientific knowledge base; this harbors elevated accident risks and possible discrimination of train drivers.
- e. It seems that several countries, in accordance with national legislation regarding the protection of the psychological profession, deviate from the Directive in reserving the role and responsibility for psychological examinations to psychologists – which should be a reminder that the Directive does not reflect the current state of affairs in the psychological and medical professions.
- f. The Directive misclassifies psychological criteria as medical, in deviation from the TSI OPE which correctly classifies them separately.

How the Directive should be changed

Future revisions of the Directive could profit from:

- a. Improved description of psychological requirements that train drivers should meet. Ideally these should be drafted with reference to guiding principles of EU legislation (e.g. mobility, safety) and similar requirements in other domains of transportation, i.e. road and aviation.
- b. Standards for the assessment of psychological requirements. These should preferably refer to EFPA Standards for Psychological Assessment.
- c. Qualification requirements for persons conducting psychological assessment, preferably referring to EuroPsy.

These are issues to work on in the years to come. It would be desirable for the SC TP with CER-PEC, which has already worked certain aspects; see, e.g., the Guidelines for the Psychological Assessment of Train Drivers and other safety related personnel (2009).

For the short term, a revision of certain parts of the Directive's Annex, describing the psychological requirements in initial and recurrent examinations, is most realistic.

Steps to change the Directive

Participants will exchange information (slides presented, documents) with the purpose of preparing a written response by EFPA (in support of amendments of the Annex) by the end of May 2013.

Other issues

A future strategy should aim at professional development in this domain, including the points mentioned above (improved description of psychological requirements, standards for the assessment, and qualification requirements), while seeking good collaboration with medical colleagues.

2.3 Ongoing actions suggested for the future of Traffic Psychologists in Europe

2.3.1 Better representation of National psychological associations in the Task Force Traffic Psychology

This goal is still an activity and so far the number of members has increased to eighteen (now with a Dutch representative).

2.3.2 Train Driver Directive

This directive is very important for traffic psychology in rail. We will submit a letter to European Rail Agency and then, depending on the response, we will decide how to proceed.

2.3.3 SC traffic psychology WEB-site

This website has been considerably extended and is still going on and contacts with the HEAD office have been taken to integrate the website into the general EFPA website like the website of SC Crises and Disaster. Now there is a website (<http://traffic.efpa.eu>) which will be further extended and updated.

2.3.4 Further future activities

There are several issues to be taken up though the SC agrees to not uptake too many new tasks before this task is in an advanced stage.

The issue of training of Traffic Psychologists has been raised in the last periods though we were not able to cover this due to time constraints and other immediate issues. What do we know about the existence of the discipline of TP? And what do we know about the training? What and how does the 'Bologna process' relate to this? It is will discussed at the next term how the SC should take up all these issues (together with on-going activities reported above). Further items suggested to be possible issues for the SC: time duration of DI courses, determinants of DI courses success, evaluation of DI courses.

Literature

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3. Methodological aspects

n/a

4. Summary data

Not investigated

5. Analysis and synopsis where appropriate

n/a

6. Proposal for a common EFPA position

n/a

7. Implications for EFPA Member Associations

n/a

8. Future tasks of EFPA

To promote the role of Traffic Psychology to ensure safe and sustainable transport in Europe and the role of psychological knowledge for individual assessment, counselling and rehabilitation.

9. Conclusion

The Standing Committee Traffic Psychology has an important role in promoting Traffic Psychology as an important field of professional psychology

- **Annex**

Membership of Task Force/Standing Committee

Country	Name	Email
EC Liaison	Robert Roe	robert.roe@efpa.eu
Austria	Ralf Risser	ralf.risser@factum.at
Belgium	Mark Tant	mark.tant@bivv.be
Croatia	Vladimir Kolesaric	vkolesar@ffzg.hr
Cyprus	<i>Kalogirou Panayiotis</i>	panayiotis.kalogirou@gmail.com
Czech Republic	Martin Koran	martin.koran@homolka.cz
Denmark	Annette Meng	anm@transport.dtu.dk
Finland	<i>Mika Hatakka</i>	mika.hatakka@pp3.inet.fi
Germany	Jens Schade ©	schade@verkehrspsychologie-dresden.de
Italy	Giovanbattista Tiengo	giovanbattistatiengo@libero.it
Luxembourg	François D'Onghia	f.donghia@cpats.lu
The Netherlands	Wiebo Brouwer	w.h.brouwer@rug.nl
Slovakia	Karol Kleinman	dr.kleinmann@gmail.com
Spain	Hector Monterde i Bort	hector.monterde@uv.es
Sweden	Henriette Wallén Warner	hww@du.se
Switzerland	Markus Hubacher	m.hubacher@bfu.ch
United Kingdom	Andrew Tolmie	a.tolmie@ioe.ac.uk
EFPSA	Beata Bogdanska	b_bogdanska@wp.pl
© = convenor		
<i>Italic = Corresponding member</i>		
TOTAL	17	
TOTAL Active	15	
Total Corresponding	2	