The current situation in Belarus is described by a very high (up to 9% per year) rate of automobilization growth. This high level caused by inflow of “second hand” automobiles from Western Europe. Both the existing infrastructure and road users and planners minds hardly manage to adapt to such fast changes.

The level of fatalities after its top in 1991 has decreased a little, but it is still unacceptably high, and within last four years the tendency if its constant growth is observed.

The number of fatalities by official statistics in 2003 was more than 1700, injured - more than 7000.

Figure 1. Index of killed and injured people, car fleet (1985 = 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>2332</td>
<td>2151</td>
<td>1759</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td>1781</td>
<td>1730</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>1764</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>1728</td>
<td>1764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured</td>
<td>9182</td>
<td>8687</td>
<td>7334</td>
<td>7296</td>
<td>7457</td>
<td>7492</td>
<td>7120</td>
<td>6899</td>
<td>6690</td>
<td>6494</td>
<td>6401</td>
<td>7472</td>
<td>7361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed per 10000 inhab.</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed per 1000 cars</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the international context road safety parameters of Belarus are typical for the Eastern European countries. The fatality rate exceeds the figures among the most advanced countries 3-5 times. The need to decrease of fatality rate disturbs us most of all. For all European countries typical decrease of fatalities consists approximately 4% per year. This parameter in Belarus is much lower (about 2%), and for the last few years the tendency has changed for the worse. During the last 4 years the number of road victims in Belarus has been increasing by 4% per year.
Road safety problem is difficult and easy for us at the same time because we have good examples.

For development of the Program it is necessary for us to integrate the European experience. Experience of our neighbours (e.g. Estonian experience, Poland experience in development and realization of GAMBIT program) is the most interesting for us because of similar conditions, time closeness and high efficiency.

The most of the fatalities occurs at the rural areas, primarily on the national roads. However, if compared with Sweden, the share of the urban fatalities is higher.

We see as the main problem in our country the protection vulnerable road users.

Therefore for a start we want to focus mainly on pedestrians and cyclists safety issues; it is the urban areas that have the highest potential for the road safety improvements.

We have been pleasantly surprised during our night trip through Estonia to see most of the pedestrians and bicyclists wearing light reflectors. That is one of the very good practices, both cheap and effective, which we willingly would like to realise in Belarus.

There is a great wish to change a situation in our country. The State Automobile Inspection of the Ministry of Internal Affairs – the body responsible for the state control in RTS sphere, The Ministry of Transport and Communications, municipalities and other involved bodies realized a number of successful projects:

1999 - Creation of compulsory third part liability motor insurance
2000 - 30 days count of fatalities
2001 - Passing of Road Traffic Act
2002 - New editions of Traffic Rules and standards in traffic sphere
2003 - Road Traffic Safety Conference
2003 - Modernization of the vehicle inspection system
2003 - some successful projects in RTS (improvement of arterial and ring roads in Minsk, urban traffic control and monitoring system, etc.)

2004 - The state report on children safety

WHAT RESTRAINS US?

Absence of a formulated strategy
Rather limited resources
Lack of international experience
Coordination, administrative and institutional problems
Lack of proper road safety information collection and analysis
In 2004 is a starting point for the National Road Traffic Safety Improvement Program.

OUR PRIMARY TASKS

To define our vision - real guidelines and directions “modus operandi” for real road safety improvement
To establish prioritised targets and effective estimation criteria
To organize a system of road safety independent objective monitoring
To create a co-ordination and advisory body - National Road Safety Council
To prepare highly competent experts in various aspects RTS
To organize international co-operation projects, e.g GRSP membership, international training and research programs, etc.
To organize a number of successful projects, which would initiate an additional interest from the society and authorities

In October 2004, for the first time in the country, a workgroup has made an attempt to establish the targets for the national RTS development. However, this process turned out to be challenging. The target setting process was highly influenced by the feeling of the future responsibility for the targets attaining, as well as the absence of good practice in RTS planning.

The result was the preliminary targets are much weaker then, for example, in GAMBIT or White Paper programs, and will be reached, probably, just by statistical manipulations.

However, the first year of the program will be devoted to development of the methodological base for the RTS planning and an opportunity to correct the preliminary targets will be given.
We are very much aware of the extensive work waiting for us. And we would very much appreciate the assistance from other countries which have such a valuable for us experience in the Road Safety management.

**VISIBLE SAFETY (SAFETYMETER)**

At the moment we are work on a number of projects in RTS sphere. These projects are focused on:

Accident forecasting based on the traffic flows interaction analysis

Integration of the safety parameters in urban traffic control systems

Development of the information system which includes the safety information

Since the last year we have been providing the expertise support to the National Road Safety Improvement program.

Our experience (first of all from Chernobyl) has brought us to a simple idea: it is easier to struggle what you can see:

- Danger should be seen.
- Danger should be seen for politicians at decision-making,
- Danger should be seen for operators and designers
- Danger should be seen for road users on the road.

Visible Safety is important reveal the risk thus to reduce the number of mistakes done by the road users and designers.

The solution for this problem is an information system which analyses a great volume of data on all the basic aspects of traffic safety, estimates the safety level and then delivers the information in a standardised format.
It is a very challenging work. The problem is not only in software development, but much more in the reliability of the risk forecasting methods, introduction and unification of the safety visualization tools.

The first steps are to organise and store the traffic accidents location by means of GIS and coordinate this data with the transport conflicts observation. Some part of the initial work has already been done.