Independent and Transparent
Accident Investigation Recommendations
A point of view from the industry

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Countries with in-depth accident investigations teams
A lot of crash databases: different objectives, methods, property rights, …
What are the needs?

• A diagnosis of the road safety issues

• From the diagnosis to the identification of the most promising safety actions

• Evaluation of the real world safety benefits of these prevention strategies
What are the Promises?

• Accident data that are relevant, pertinent, representative, clear, accurate, understandable, and usable …for analysis

• Accident data that are considered of high quality by the scientific community and the stakeholders and not only by the data owners

• Accident data that are addressing the good issues (avoid the data cemetery)
What does *Investigation* mean? (Restricted definition)

- Technical crash investigations and not police or forensic investigations
- In-depth investigations and not police reports examination or international national or local crash census
- Any kind of in-depth investigations including prospective and retrospective studies
Injury accidents census


International Databases
(GIDAS- CCIS – IRTAD – EACS)

In-depth crash investigations oriented towards secondary safety

In-depth crash investigations oriented towards primary safety
What do we do at LAB?

Accident Mechanisms

Injury Mechanisms

Evaluation of the effectiveness of technologies

The same crash 20 years later ….
A few results

Frontal airbags reduce severe head injuries by 90%

Load limitor reduce the torso severe injuries by 80 %

Double pretension reduce severe abdomen injuries by 70 %

Car structure: reduction by 50 % of fatality rate

ESC: -15 % injury accidents

Brake assist: -11 % injury accidents
Well, we do not have a clue about the effectiveness of this airbag
The *Independence* issue

- What is independence? Do we implicitly question transparency, honesty and credibility?

- Pure independence is ‘fiction’

- Is independence really necessary?

- Could independent investigations cover all issues and all needs?

- Is independence compatible with Respect of private life?

- Is it cost-efficient?
The Manufacturer issue

Objective: Conceive, Product and sell vehicles
• The car industry invests money in the crash investigations…

• … to identify promising safety solutions,

• … to prepare and comply with regulations,

• … and to help determining relevant car safety test procedures and ratings
The Manufacturer issue

- Holding crash data is a competitive advantage
- Partnership is also an advantage (CCIS, GIDAS and French exemples / European Projects)
- Closeness to the product (Vehicle)
- Need for a balance between economics and citizenship (a safe car becomes safe when it is sold and driven on the road)
Can we work together?

• Can we think we couldn’t?

• We are already working together even though the objectives are different

• One principle: those who are investing in research should first get the fruits of the investment

• … On the other hand, safety is like justice, for all…
• Common investigations are already currently conducted (GIDAS, CCIS, SIRA, PENDANT, SAFETYNET)

• Recommended Common tools are already availabe, to some extent (ISO, SC12 – WG 7 Accidentology, OECD)

• Objectives of such investigations are not necessarily similar for all and claim for several types of investigations

• Consequently, I wonder whether a common body in charge of accident investigations is the unique efficient way

• Moreover, there are a lot of bodies willing to monitor their own investigations.
• Crash investigations are very costly and must be optimised to get European, National and Local insights into traffic safety issues. This claims for a complex quasi experimental design for investigations.

• Independence is not the crucial issue by now. Non relevant, inaccurate, incomplete, missing data, and other data than accident ones is the main issue.

• Crash data is not the only kind of data for which the independency is an issue

• Next issue is the independence of the analysis made upon the independent data
Thank you all for your attention