



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE

Executive summary of the People's Advocate special report on the accident occurred in the national road Vlorë - Himarë and the role of state structures in dealing with the situation

April 2013

-Non official translation-

People's Advocate Office

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Information on the accident

On 21st May 2012 at the national road Vlore - Himara, in a place called Qafa e Vishës, a bus produced in 1988 drove off road and fell from an altitude of 60 meters causing the death of 13 persons and injuring 25 others. Two of the injured were hospitalized in Austria. The students involved in the accident were all travelling to different cities of the country during a study trip, according to the study plan of “Aleksander Xhuvani” University in Elbasan.

According to the information given by the director of Traffic Police, during the meeting organized by the People’s Advocate experts, who were investigating on this accident, the state police was informed on the accident only after being notified by a citizen of Vlora, around 16:00.

On 18.05.2012, The People’s Advocate organized a work group composed by various experts of the institution, on the monitoring and management of the situation in order to find ways to create specialized modern structures, which will handle similar situations in the future.

With regard to the above mentioned accident, based on controls and meetings carried out by the People’s Advocate work group at the State Police, the Ministry of Health and the University “Aleksander Xhuvani” in Elbasan and on the information received from external experts in the field of road transport, we will describe below all encountered problems and measures that should be taken into consideration by state structures in the future.

Recommendations based on the problems encountered during the accident of Himara

- The establishment of a unique structure which will be focused only on emergencies, composed by physicians, nurses, fire workers and experts specialized on adequate devices for handling accidents. Preparation of protocols on the responsibilities of regional and central level experts;
- Ministry of Health shall be provided with professional helicopters- “Medical Helicopters”, which on the other hand shall be equipped with all necessary devices for an operating room in order to enable immediate medical interventions;
- Establishment of a suitable Heliport at the Military Hospital of Tirana and major regional hospitals for large size helicopters, since military helicopters unable to land on the existing Heliport of the Military Hospital of Tirana have landed to the Rinas Airport;
- The report prepared by traffic police structures over the causes of the accident, which analyzes and takes into consideration the responsibility of state government structures - positive obligations of state authorities to prevent the loss of human lives - the investigation procedures concerning this accident shall be carried out by independent experts;
- Reassessment of physical control procedures of vehicles, in order to increase the effectiveness and quality of such controls, especially for those vehicles that are used for public transport;
- Installation of a reliable traffic signal system and other road safety elements according to the provisions of the Road Code of the Republic of Albania;

- Preparation of safety standard regulations by the Ministry of Education on study trips for students and pupils.

General recommendations on the prevention of accidents

- Drafting of programs (awareness campaigns, leaflets, training) for increasing the awareness among the population, especially young people on road safety;
- Involvement of local communities in the development of road safety projects;
- All roads which have been recently constructed, shall be handed over to the competent authorities, after the delivery of a supervisor's safety report. Supervisors should not be representative of the road constructor in order to avoid conflict of interest;
- Training and control of police officers work performance for the implementation and enforcement of the relevant road safety legislation;
- Reassessment of all procedures on obtaining a driving license, and its renewal;
- Elimination of side roads that intersect into inter-urban roads. Elimination of all billboards established without respecting the relevant criteria, prohibition of construction works situated along the roads without a valid permit. Construction of appropriate railway crossings;
- Establishment of a traffic center for the creation of an information system on road traffic in order to increase road safety, improve traffic management. Introduction of integrated traffic management systems;
- Private sector and non-profit organizations, should be encouraged and supported to be active in road safety issues;
- Strengthening intersectional collaboration, such as collaboration between central authority institutions with local level authorities;
- Establishing cooperation between Medical Emergencies - State Police - Fire Departments and a unique phone number for emergencies.