



Lilliane Ploumen, Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

SWOV participates in governmental visit to Turkey

Early November, SWOV participated in the Dutch Prime Minister Rutte's economic mission to Turkey. The visit took place to commemorate 400 years of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. Representatives of different organizations, companies and sectors, among which road safety, took part in the visit. Marjan Hagenzieker, scientific advisor at SWOV and also employed by Delft University of Technology, and SWOV researcher Maura Houtenbos accompanied Prime Minister Rutte on his visit to Turkey.

Road Safety in Turkey

The Netherlands have been among the world leaders in the area of road safety for years. To compare: per 100.000 inhabitants, a factor three more people die in crashes in Turkey than do in the Netherlands. Plenty of room for improvement, as Prime Minister Erdoğan also stressed at the launch of the Turkish Road Safety Strategy in July, earlier this year.

Road safety seminars led by SWOV

As part of the visit, SWOV led two seminars about strategies for road safety improvement. In these seminars, which were held in Ankara and Istanbul, experiences were shared, in addition to Turkish contributions about the local state of affairs. In addition to SWOV – with contributions about road safety in the Netherlands and the role of Sustainable Safety– several other Dutch companies (Gatso, Goudappel

Coffeng and Philips Lighting) shared their experiences.

Much interest

In the seminars it became clear that the road safety topic is high on the political agenda in Turkey. For example, the seminars were opened by high-ranking representatives of Turkish governments and universities. In Ankara as well as in Istanbul, about seventy representatives of national and local governments, the academic environment, and trade and industry participated. In Istanbul, the recently appointed Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lilliane Ploumen, held an opening speech.

From knowledge to implementation

During the visit it became apparent that Turkey is quite knowledgeable about road safety and

developments worldwide in relation with road safety improvement. The essence of the Turkish problem appears to lie in applying this knowledge to the Turkish situation, gaining support, and the implementation of the strategies. At the round table meeting in Ankara which was organized for twenty experts from government, science, and business, much attention was therefore given to creating a certain degree of awareness and support. Turkish road users often do not consider a road crash to be avoidable, but rather as something determined by fate. Sustainable Safety, on the other hand, sees a road traffic crash as an occurrence that can be prevented at several moments in time.

Results visit

SWOV's participation in the visit has resulted in many contacts with relevant Turkish ministries, local governments, universities and companies. From its position as expert in the area of road safety, SWOV is looking forward to fruitful cooperation and knowledge exchange.