

For a world  
in motion



# DRIVING ROAD SAFETY INNOVATION

**IRU SURVEY OF MOBILITY AND  
LOGISTICS OPERATORS**  
in Europe and the Commonwealth  
of Independent States





# Driving road safety innovation

IRU survey of mobility and logistics operators  
in Europe and the Commonwealth of  
Independent States

February 2020

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# 01.

## Foreword

Operating at the heart of global road transport, as the voice of over 3.5 million road mobility and logistics operators, IRU is uniquely placed to provide a holistic perspective on the current state and future direction of the industry.

As an organisation, our ambition remains the same as it did when IRU was established over seventy years ago: connecting societies with efficient, sustainable and safe road transport. While transport and trade systems may have evolved almost beyond recognition over those decades, safety remains our biggest priority.

Despite advances in technology, standards, training and awareness in many countries, more than 3,500 people die on the world's roads every day. There is still a lot of progress that needs to be made, with all private and public sector stakeholders.

Commercial vehicles are involved in less than 3% of road accidents, of which 85% are caused by human error (25% due to the professional driver, 75% due to the other road user). Commercial operators and their professional drivers are

nevertheless visible role models on our roads, and take their safety responsibilities seriously.

This report focuses on how and why commercial road transport operators invest in safety innovation.

For many years, road transport operators, large and small, have made safety culture a priority, investing in safety improvements in their own companies and staff that also benefit all road users. This report shows that this is still the case, and that logistics and mobility operators continue to invest in safety as their first priority.

But these companies also face obstacles that prevent them from investing as much as they could on safety, including financial, regulatory, human and cultural factors.

This report will help to shape future action to encourage investment and lessen innovation barriers within commercial road transport companies, as well as encouraging innovation beyond logistics and mobility operators, helping to make our roads safer for all.

**Umberto de Pretto**  
*IRU Secretary General*

**26**  
Countries reached

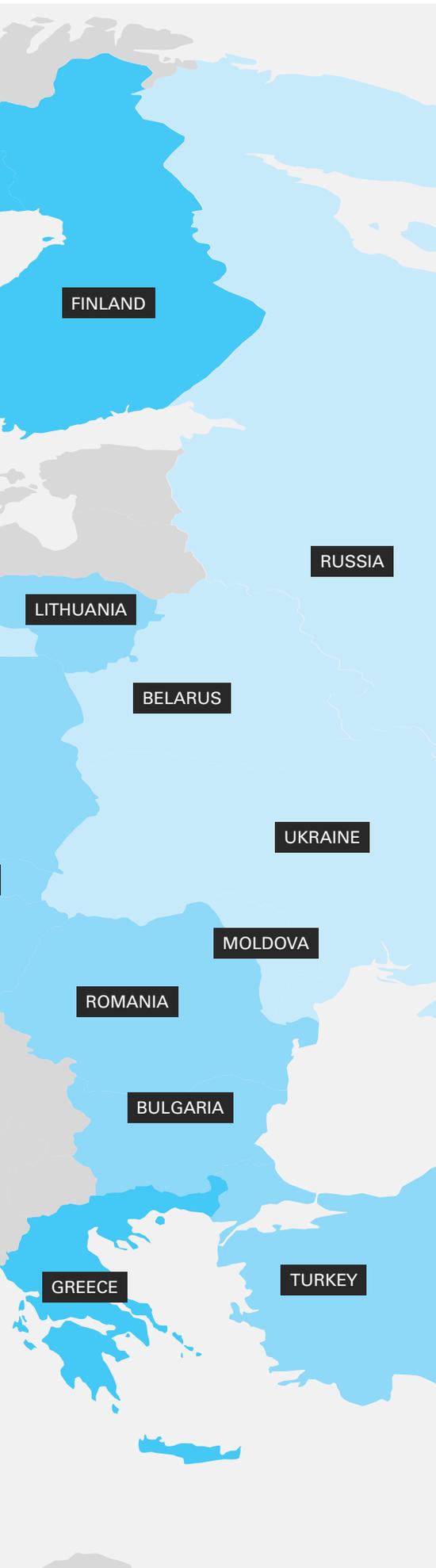
**949**  
Responses

Western Europe

Eastern Europe

CIS region





# 02.

## Methodology

Following on from IRU's industry survey in 2018, this survey aims to collect and analyse the views from companies running road transport services for goods and for passengers.

These companies, IRU's core constituency, must deal with the sector's issues first-hand, including the fundamental challenge of safety, when serving their clients, complying with regulation, and working closely with their suppliers.

In collaboration with IRU, Random SA developed a quantitative online survey focusing on a target group of transport and mobility operators. This survey was completed by a global sample of 949 respondents who work for either:

- Logistics operators and freight forwarders possessing their own fleet, or
- Mobility operators providing passenger services.

The survey was conducted in 26 preselected countries across Western and Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.

Respondent countries within these regions included:

- **Western Europe:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, UK
- **Eastern Europe:** Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey
- **CIS region:** Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

Quotas were set per country as appropriate and weighted accordingly. Additional quotas were set to reach 70% of logistics operators/freight forwarders and 30% of mobility operators, with a balance of respondents holding specific safety responsibility positions compared to general company operational or management positions. Within all sample groups, only those respondents who were involved in, or aware of, road safety issues within their respective organisations were selected to participate in the survey.

All fieldwork took place during the course of October and November 2019.

# 03.

## Executive summary

This report explores the complex issue of road safety, the most fundamental and important challenge for the road transport sector.

When it comes to improving road safety around the world – within the industry and in terms of the industry's role in helping other sectors – there are a number of challenges that

must be tackled. But there are also many opportunities arising from the continuous advancements in technology and in our understanding of human behaviour and what drives safety innovation.

Less than 3% of road accidents involve commercial vehicles. Of these, 85% are caused by human error, with 25% due to the professional driver and 75% due to the other road user.

This is a small part of the bigger road safety picture. Nevertheless, commercial road transport operators still represent an important stakeholder in the bigger picture – not only by continuing to improve their own safety performance, but also by sharing their experiences and best practices with other safety stakeholders as positive and visible role models on our roads.

The findings presented in this report result from an in-depth survey of logistics and mobility operators in 26 countries across Western and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.



### Opportunities for investment

Reassuringly, the findings in the report demonstrate that operators across Europe firmly believe in the need to invest in road safety – with 85% saying they will heavily invest in the near future. Operators recognise that they have a job to do in improving road safety and are committed to investing in safety innovation, both within their own organisations and along their supply chains.

For logistics and mobility operators alike, investment in road safety is predominantly driven by social responsibility. But operators also see a clear business benefit via the opportunity to boost productivity and increase operational efficiencies.

Today, operators are primarily focused on investments in vehicle safety technology. In fact, the findings show that, despite ranking social responsibility and driver well-being high in terms of safety investment priority, many operators feel that implementation of specific human safety elements – such as driver monitoring technology for drug thresholds or fatigue, continuous driver training systems, health and safety guidelines, and incentive systems – is not yet fully completed in their company.

This raises questions on why this might be the case, especially as the vast majority of road safety incidents are caused by human error. More needs to be done to understand and assess commercial operator needs in this area.

### Barriers to investment

Despite the clear opportunities offered by improved road safety practices, significant barriers to continued investment still exist, which must be overcome.

Logistics and mobility operators are prevented from fulfilling their full safety potential, facing barriers on vehicle renewal, driver training and operational improvements.

Overwhelmingly, for operators across Europe, financial challenges pose the biggest barrier to investment, with both a lack of sufficient financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio presenting significant obstacles.

Other barriers include technological know-how, human resource levels for implementation, and availability of practical solutions. Transport operators also feel that resistance to change from their drivers and workers to human and operational related investments, in comparison to vehicle related investment, is a particular challenge.

### Monitoring progress

In addition to the investments being made in safety procedures and technologies, there is a clear commitment from operators when it comes to measuring and analysing the progress that they are making.

However, there is still more to be done. Currently, a majority of operators systematically analyse their data, but almost two in five gather only some data and fail to obtain the complete picture. A lack of both financial and human resources are cited as the main barriers preventing better data collection.

Alongside this, there is clear demand from mobility and logistics operators for more international standards on road safety – in particular, relating to vehicle safety and human elements such as driver training and certification.



# 85%

of operators have significant safety investments planned in the near future



# 73%

of operators cite lack of knowledge as a barrier to investing in road safety innovation

## Key players

The drive to improve road safety spans a wide range of organisations, well beyond commercial road transport operators.

Commercial vehicles are involved in a small percentage of all road accidents – most studies put this figure at between 2 and 3 per cent. This survey nevertheless demonstrates a clear and strong commitment from logistics and mobility operators across Europe in terms of their wider social responsibility to help advance safety.

Making our roads a safer place is a joint responsibility, and something that all stakeholders across commercial logistics and mobility chains must come together to tackle – from users to suppliers and policymakers.

## Moving forward

While this report highlights that safety registers highly amongst the hearts and minds of commercial operators, there is still work to be done. The continuing numbers of deaths and serious injuries on our roads are unacceptable and we must take action in order to improve safety.

In the light of the report's findings, there are a number of broad recommendations for the industry and the wider safety community.

### 1. Create a stronger safety culture

Embedding a strong culture of road safety at the heart of all relevant organisations is paramount. But this responsibility cannot be shouldered by commercial operators alone. We need all stakeholders to work together, learn from experience and share best practices.

### 2. Target business incentives

Operators face financial barriers to implementing and investing in safety innovation, made more difficult given the scale of investments – especially for vehicles – in relation to their normal business margins. In addition, operators are often one of several players along a mobility or logistics chain, and as such their economic situation is highly dependent on contractors, subcontractors, forwarders, clients and their client's customers.

Better targeted incentives, for example adjusting taxes or subsidies, should factor in the wider mobility/supply chain and the societal benefits of improved safety. This would improve the cost-benefit ratio of an operator's purchase decision, making safety investments more viable for them.

### 3. Make certification mandatory

We know that humans are the biggest factor affecting safety on the roads and must, therefore, sit at the heart of change. We need to enforce training focused on cultural as well as technical factors, and ensure that reporting and certification schemes test, measure and recognise progress, and become legally mandatory where possible.

### 4. Harmonise international standards

Clear regulation and enforceable standards have always been critical to improving road safety. But operators need smarter, more harmonised standards, especially cross-border, that lower innovation investment costs, and enable easier and more streamlined reporting and measurement.

# 04.

## A universal priority

### **Safety first**

Road safety is absolutely fundamental to the road transport industry and everything it does. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the sector – from operators and manufacturers to governments and international organisations – to

work together to prioritise continual improvements in road safety.

### **Operators are at the heart of safety**

Reassuringly, this responsibility is taken seriously by the industry. Road safety is embedded in the



# 25%

of operators listed social responsibility as their primary reason for investing in safety

management of transport companies across all types and operations in mobility and logistics.

A 2018 IRU survey covering Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region and Asia, found that transport and mobility operators regarded safe driving technology as the biggest innovation opportunity – with one in three (33%) transport companies in Europe, the GCC and Asia listing it as their top priority.

IRU's new research surveys operators in Western and Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region. The survey results reinforce the view that mobility and logistics operators have a strong sense of safety, regardless of

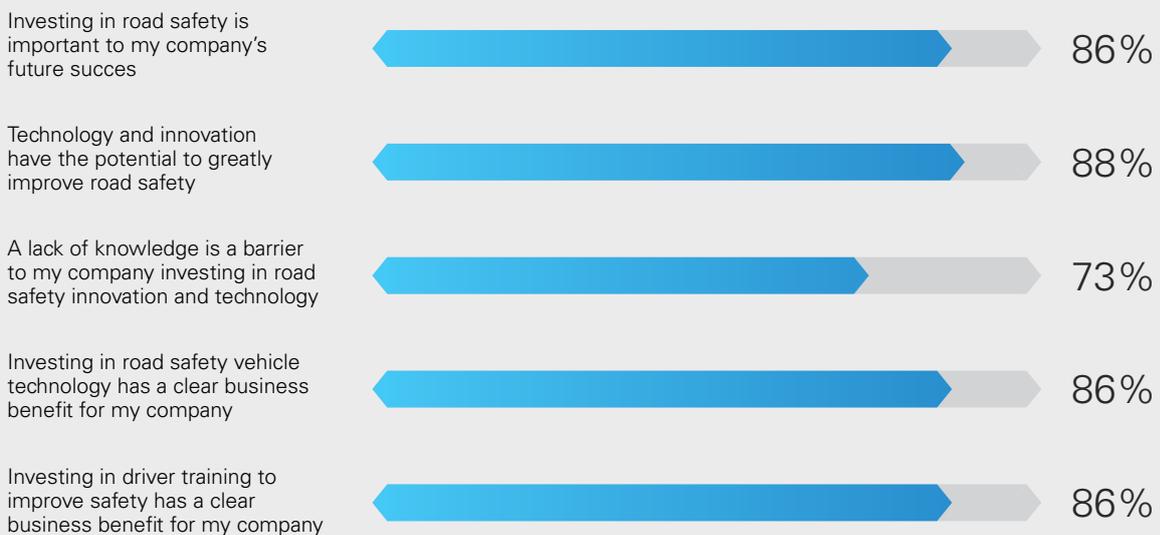
where they come from or their size. This is primarily driven by social responsibility and a commitment to improving operational efficiency, but operators also recognise other tangible business benefits to investing in safety improvements.

**Safety as a business opportunity**

Transport companies see safety as key to creating sustainable and profitable operations – boosting business performance in a tangible way.

Safety upgrades in vehicle technology and investment in general operations are seen to boost productivity and operational efficiency, helping to cut costs and stay ahead of the competition.

**Road safety is very important for transport operators**



Meanwhile, investments in human elements – such as driver training and certification, fitness to drive evaluations and driver incentives – are seen to boost staff motivation and support retention, helping operators better protect drivers, improve working conditions and bolster morale.

**Safety is a universal priority, but disparities exist**

While logistics and mobility operators regard safety as a high priority, the data highlights important differences according to region, type of operator and size of operation.

Operators within the CIS region appear to recognise the benefits of prioritising road safety more than their Western and Eastern European counterparts. The reasons for this difference in perception are unclear. It may be due to a different road safety situation in the CIS region, hence a higher perceived need for change, or that the regulatory standards or societal expectations in those countries differ from Western and Eastern European countries.

96%

of operators say investing in safety is key to their company's future success

**A holistic approach across mobility and logistics chains**

While transport operators are at the heart of driving improvements in road safety, it is a shared responsibility. Operators are harnessing new safety technology and investing in innovation. These efforts should be met by corresponding investments in road safety and awareness raising measures across mobility and supply chains and beyond.

Why is this so important? With some 85% of road accidents caused by human error, adopting a holistic approach to road safety, with training at its core, in addition to new technological innovations, is essential.



All road users should be made aware of standard road practices and common commercial vehicle movements. Understanding the ways trucks, buses and coaches behave on the road due to their length, weight and volume, and where their blind spots are, would help to prevent accidents.

Taking a holistic view of road safety requires close collaboration and cooperation. From logistics and

mobility operators, to regulators, manufacturers, suppliers and road users themselves, there needs to be a joined-up effort to improve road safety.

# 05.

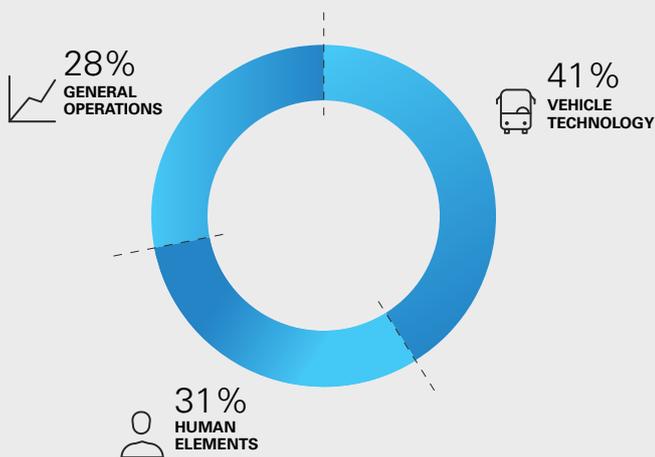
## Opportunities for investment

Operators were asked about their investments in three different areas of safety – vehicle technology, people and general operations. They were asked to rate these in order of importance, as well as to explain what they perceived as both the benefits and the barriers to investing in each.

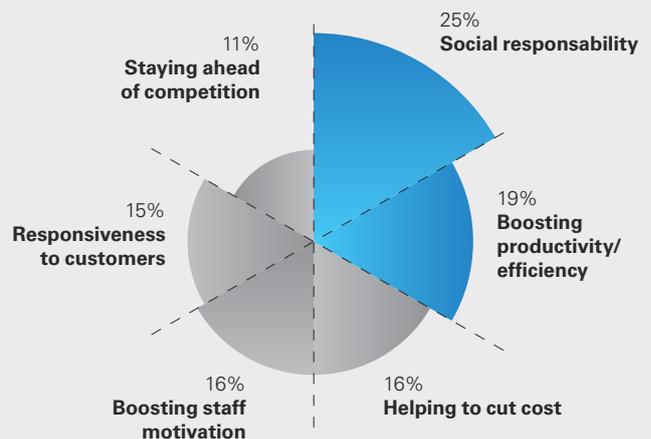
The survey findings showed that while operators of all types invest heavily in the human and operational elements of safety, vehicle technology investments are their primary priority.

The most interesting differences were observed based on geographic regions.

**Current split of investment in road safety from transport and mobility operators across Europe**



**Top key drivers to investing in road safety amongst logistics and mobility operators**





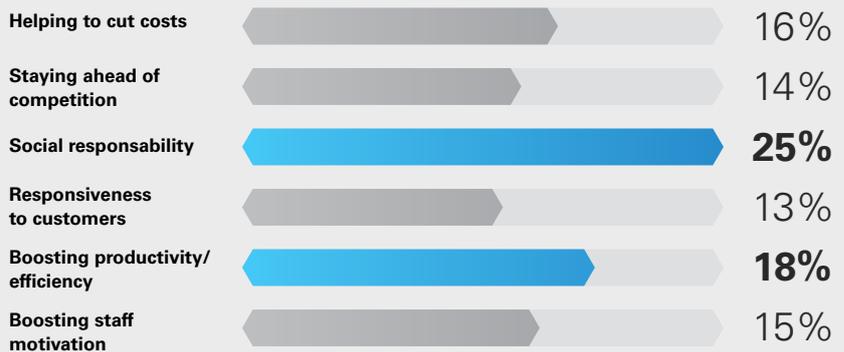
## VEHICLES

### Social responsibility is the most important driver for vehicle investment

Safety investments in vehicle technology rank as the biggest priority for both logistics and mobility operators across all regions. Examples of vehicle safety technology include technical equipment (such as blind-spot mirrors and daytime running lights) and intelligent safety systems (such as automatic braking systems, warning sensors, and lane-keeping assistance).

The research nevertheless points to important disparities between regions, operator type and company size.

#### Reasons for investing in vehicle technology amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

Across all three regions, 97% of companies surveyed are already implementing vehicle technology safety measures, but more than half (53%) have only implemented these measures in part. **The CIS region in particular is behind Western and Eastern Europe in terms of full adoption**, with a partial adoption rate of 74%. Full adoption is highest amongst operators in Eastern Europe, with 54% having already completely implemented safety measures.

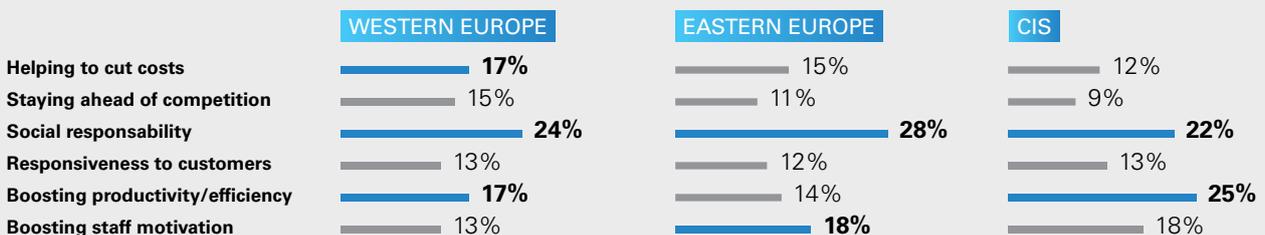
#### OPERATOR TYPE

There is a clear discrepancy in adoption between organisational types, with **mobility companies behind logistics operators**: only 37% of the former have fully implemented road safety standards, compared with 47% of the latter.

#### COMPANY SIZE

The **largest fleets lead the pack** in investments in vehicle technology, with 55% of organisations with fleets of more than 301 vehicles having fully implemented vehicle technology safety standards. Interestingly, however, the largest fleets also represent the greatest number of businesses having not implemented any vehicle safety standards (5%).

#### The main drivers for investment differ between geographic regions



### The driving forces behind investments in vehicle safety technology

The driving forces behind adoption in this category are relatively similar in both Western and Eastern European regions: both prioritise social responsibility (24% and 28%, respectively), followed by boosting productivity in Western

Europe (17%), and boosting staff motivation in Eastern Europe (18%).

In the CIS region however, boosting productivity and operational efficiency leads as the principal motivator for businesses (25%), with social responsibility in second place (18%).

### Regional differences

While vehicle technology is the priority amongst all those surveyed, just ahead of human and operational investments, regional differences raise interesting questions around differing road safety cultures, and the barriers to better adoption of safety technology that exist in each region.

Eastern European operators are more likely to cite social responsibility and protection of road users and drivers as a reason for investment, which might suggest why their investments are more long-standing.

Meanwhile, operators in the CIS region are less likely to prioritise social responsibility, and less likely to see the cost-cutting and competitive benefits of these investments compared to their Western and Eastern European counterparts. This may be one reason why their investments in vehicle technology lag behind their European counterparts.



### Moving people, moving goods

The survey shows some differences between mobility and logistics operators on how they perceive safety implementation efforts in their company.

The survey asked whether the company had fully, partially, or not yet implemented safety standards in terms of vehicles, human elements and general operations.

While the status of operational implementation was broadly similar, about 10% more logistics operators, compared to mobility operators, thought they had fully implemented standards in terms of vehicle technology and

human elements rather than only partially implemented standards.

There could be several reasons for this difference in perception, including standards (i.e. regulatory standards are higher for moving people than moving goods by road), expectations (of the mobility and logistics sectors themselves and of their clients) and culture (bus and coach safety has perhaps been more in the public eye for longer over the past century than truck safety).

These differences should be explored in the future to see how we could better help all operators – mobility and logistics – to improve implementation of standards.



## PEOPLE

### Full implementation of human elements is not consistent across Europe

Operators were asked about their investments in the human elements of road safety – specifically those that go above and beyond the commitments required by law.

Examples of human elements include fitness-to-drive evaluations (such as monitoring systems for drug thresholds and fatigue); driver

training (including online continuous education); health and safety guidelines, and incentive systems (awarding well-performing drivers).

The research findings paint a picture of an industry that is investing in the human elements of safety but also highlights inconsistencies and a lack of maturity in these investments. Full implementation of human safety norms is not fully complete in companies across all regions, and more needs to be done to prioritise this element of road safety.

#### Reasons for investing in human elements amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

Across the regions surveyed, 94% of businesses are already implementing the requisite standards, although only 45% have fully implemented them, and just under half (49%) are part way through implementation. The **CIS region lags behind in this metric**, with 68% of businesses part way through the implementation process and only 27% having fully implemented the required standards.

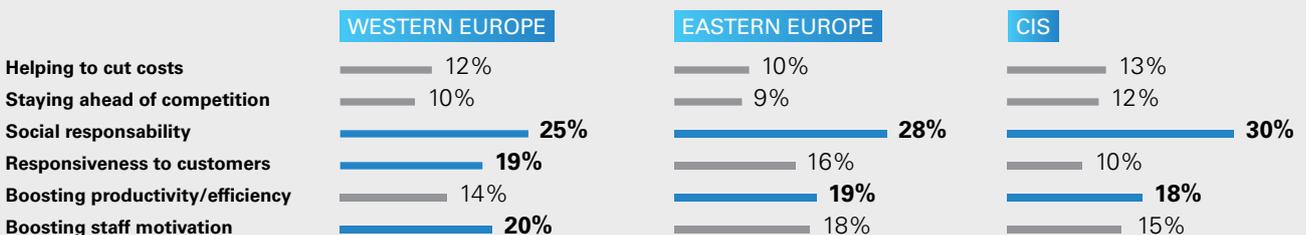
#### OPERATOR TYPE

There is a discrepancy between the **adoption rates of logistics operators and mobility companies**: 48% of the former have completed full implementation of human-related safety practices, with only 37% of mobility companies at the same stage. A significant 56% of mobility companies have only partly implemented these practices.

#### COMPANY SIZE

**Companies with the very largest fleets (750+ vehicles) lead in the implementation of human safety practices**, with 61% of those surveyed having fully implemented these.

#### The main drivers for investment differ between geographic regions



# 19%

of operators cite staff motivation as the key driver for human-related safety investments

## The driving forces behind investments in human safety elements

Social responsibility is again the chief motivation for the adoption of human safety practices across all regions, fleet sizes and operator types.

Coming in second is a drive to boost staff motivation in Western Europe, and to boost operational efficiency in Eastern Europe and the CIS region.

For mobility companies, the secondary priority is customer demand (20%), whereas logistics operators prioritise boosting staff motivation (19%). Interestingly, cost-cutting is a less significant motivating factor where human elements are concerned.

## Tackling the driver shortage

Boosting staff motivation and working conditions and better protecting drivers is seen by operators as a clear motive for investing in the human elements of safety.

It is encouraging that operators recognise the importance of increased protection, training, and rewards in attracting, motivating and retaining their drivers – especially in the light of the chronic driver



shortage facing operators today in many parts of the world.

The driver shortage is getting worse, so transport operators must continue to prioritise and promote investments in their people as a way of tackling

negative perceptions of the industry, improving working conditions and driver safety, and opening the profession up to more people.



## OPERATIONS

### Investment in operational safety measures are seen to boost productivity and efficiency

Operators were asked to comment on their investment in general operations to improve safety – beyond what is required of them to be compliant with regulation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, investments in operational measures to improve safety were motivated by the need to boost productivity and operational efficiency.

Examples of general operations investments include fleet and route management systems (vehicle tracking, route optimisation and fuel management); artificial intelligence (digital systems to anticipate accidents/safety

issues); safety advisers; safety certifications; systematic safety reporting processes, and new insurance services linked to vehicle/driver safety performance.

#### Reasons for investing in general operations amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

Some 94% of those surveyed have implemented safety measures in the field of general operations, but only 45% have implemented these fully, with the remaining 49% part way through. **Full implementation is highest in Eastern Europe** (50%), and lowest in the CIS region (32%). Some 47% of those surveyed in Western Europe had fully implemented safety measures.

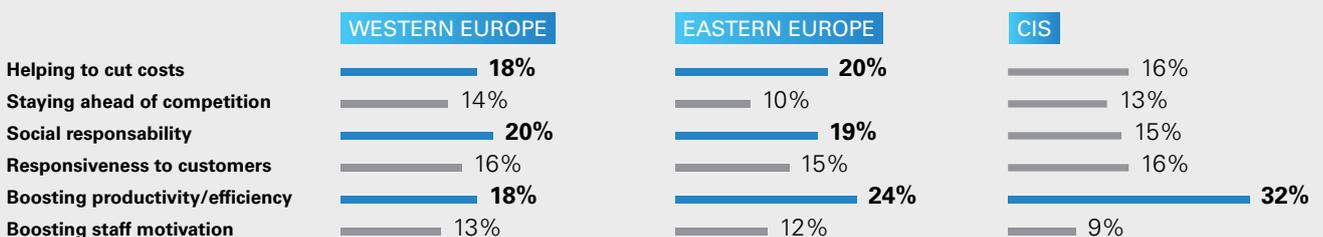
#### OPERATOR TYPE

**Mobility companies are slightly behind logistics operators** in general operations, with 43% having fully implemented measures compared with 47% of logistics operators.

#### COMPANY SIZE

Even the smallest companies show a strong commitment to investing in operations to improve safety. However, it is **those with the largest fleets who have most significantly invested in general operations**, with 59% having fully implemented measures, compared to an average of 45% amongst other company sizes.

#### The main drivers for investment differ between geographic regions



# 20%

of operators in the CIS region invest in safety operations in order to boost business productivity

### The driving forces behind investment in operations are productivity and social responsibility

In Eastern Europe and the CIS region, the greatest motivator for businesses to invest in general operational measures is to boost productivity (24% and 32%, respectively), whereas those surveyed in Western Europe prioritise social responsibility (20%).

Amongst differing organisation types, boosting productivity also tops the list of priorities – though it ranks slightly

higher for logistics operators (22%) than for mobility companies (20%).

Both the smallest and largest fleets prioritise operational efficiency and social responsibility, whilst mid-sized fleets lean more towards cost-cutting – this was the number one motivation for fleets of 301-750 vehicles and the joint first choice for fleets of 26-300 vehicles, along with operational efficiency.

### Business benefits as a driver in the East

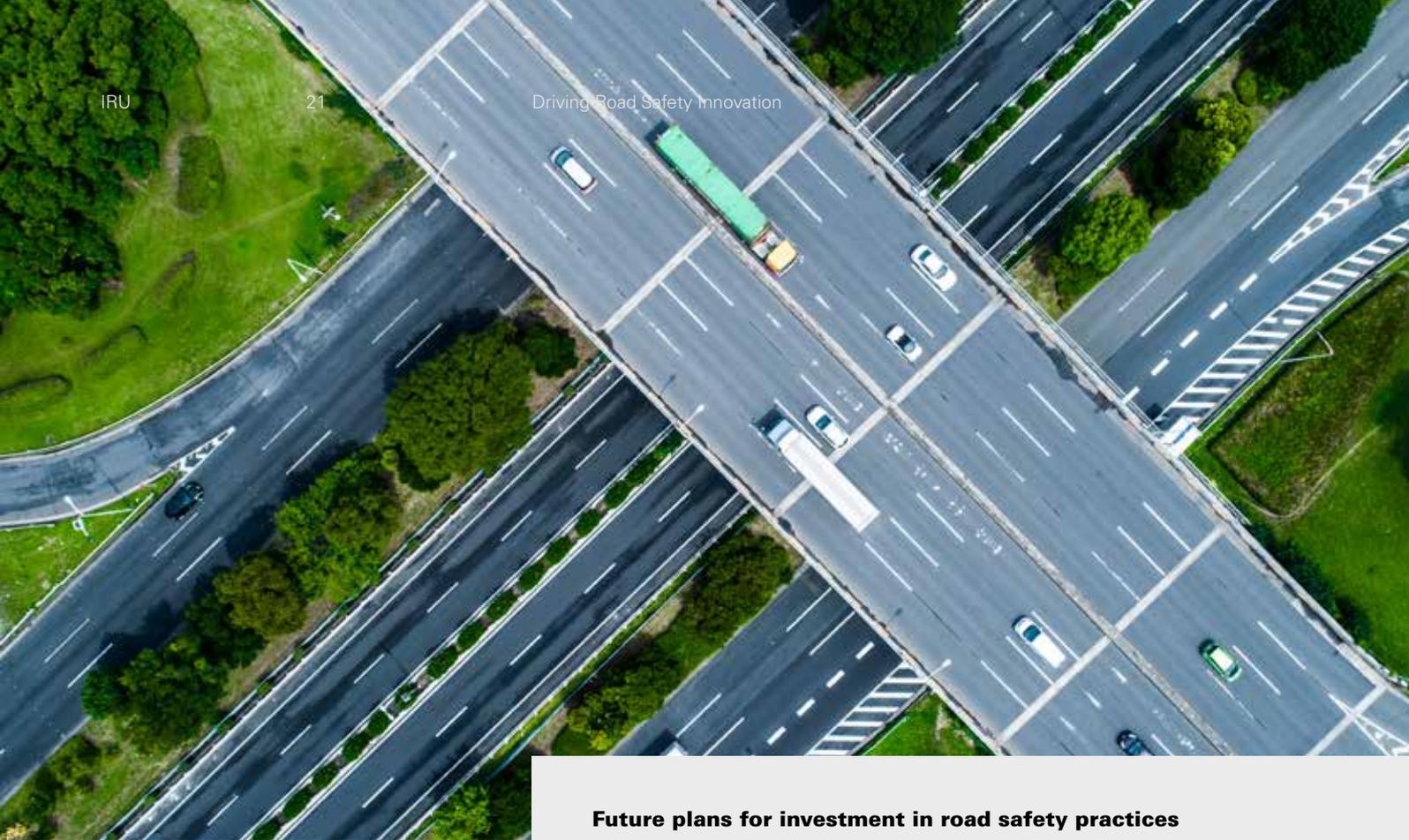
Eastern Europe is forging ahead in operational improvements to enhance safety. This momentum could be related to the perceived business benefits – both Eastern Europe and the CIS region cited a boost in productivity and efficiency as the top driver of investment in general operations. However, it could also be due to a different regulatory baseline



or current implementation status of standards in those jurisdictions.

It does, however, suggest in general terms that the more that can be done to provide concrete evidence and

showcase the business benefits of safety investments for companies, the more it will spur them on to prioritise these investments as they come to understand the positive return on their investment.



## LOOKING AHEAD

### Investments in safety are expected to increase across all markets and investment categories

Operators were asked to think about the breakdown of their planned future investments. About 80% of the companies surveyed intended to invest in safety in the future. Once again, vehicle technology to enhance safety tops the priority list for operators of all sizes, in all regions – in both mobility and logistics.

#### REGION

Operators in **Eastern Europe predict the highest levels of overall investment** of the three regions. In Eastern Europe, operators expect to increase their investment in human elements significantly more than Western Europe or the CIS region. Meanwhile, companies in Eastern Europe and the CIS region plan to increase investment for vehicle technology significantly more than in Western Europe.



#### OPERATOR TYPE

In line with today’s investment levels, **logistics operators are more likely than mobility operators to increase their safety investments** in the next five years. Vehicle technology investments are an equal priority for both, whereas investments in human elements and operations are lower down the list for mobility operators.

#### COMPANY SIZE

Companies of every size expect to increase their safety spending over the next five years, with vehicle technology the biggest priority across the board. But it is **the larger operators who will invest the most in safety overall.**



### **Prioritising the human factor**

The biggest factor affecting road safety today is people. This means people must sit right at the heart of any activity to improve road safety. So, while safety investments in vehicle technology and operations are vital, they must go hand in hand with investments in people.

We need to equip drivers with the requisite skills and training, as much as we need to educate road users globally so that they are aware of safe road usage practices.

More needs to be done to build awareness of the human factor in road safety to encourage operators to prioritise investment in this area – both today and tomorrow. There is a continuous need to provide better guidance, training and support for operators to improve the professionalism of drivers, and evidence-based standardisation and certification schemes.

# 06.

## Barriers to investment

To better understand what is holding operators back from investing in road safety, survey respondents were asked to think about the major barriers to the implementation of safety measures across the three areas of **vehicle technology, human elements, and general operations**.

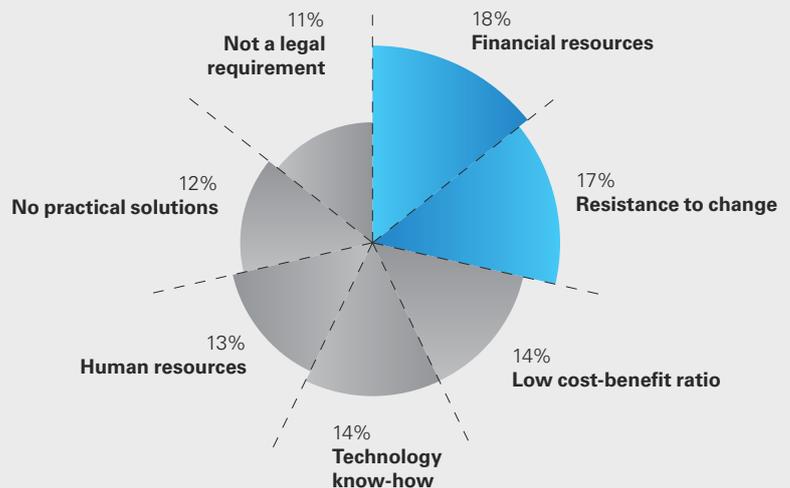
Findings demonstrated that there are some common challenges – with lack of financial resources cited as the major barrier to investing in vehicles and operations. Interestingly, for human elements,

the greatest obstacle to investment was not financial, but rather the perceived resistance to change amongst workers and drivers.

Once again, this reinforces the vital importance of embedding a stronger road safety culture across the industry – ensuring that the benefits of better road safety are understood and put into practice by everyone.

The most interesting differences were observed based on companies with different fleet sizes.

**Top barriers to investing in road safety amongst logistics and mobility operators**





## VEHICLES

### Lack of financial resources and cost-benefit ratios hold back investment in vehicle technology

The most significant reasons hampering investment in vehicle technology are a lack of financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio.

#### Barriers to investing in vehicle technology amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

Finances are a particular constraint in Eastern Europe and the CIS region, where 30% and 25% of survey respondents respectively lack the financial resources to invest in vehicle technology. For operators in Eastern Europe, a lack of human resources for implementation is felt to be a significant challenge for 21% of operators.

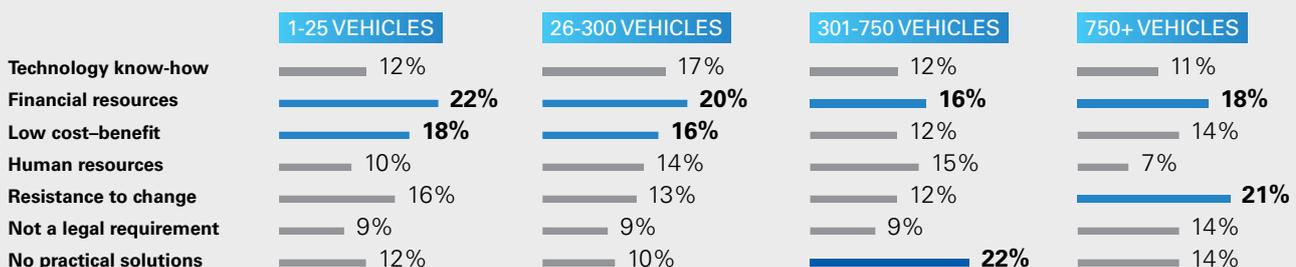
#### OPERATOR TYPE

Both logistics and mobility operators consider a lack of financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio to be the main barriers to investment. A lack of financial resources is a particular challenge for mobility operators – with 22% citing this as the primary barrier to investment in vehicle technology, compared to 19% of logistics operators.

#### COMPANY SIZE

A lack of financial resources is a concern, regardless of fleet size. Larger fleets, however, face unique issues. Fleets of 301-750 vehicles fail to see how investments offer practical solutions for their companies. Meanwhile, 21% of fleets above 750 vehicles see resistance from workers and drivers as the biggest barrier to investment in vehicle technology.

#### The main barriers for investment differ based on fleet size





## PEOPLE

### Resistance to change and financial resources are the primary barriers to increasing investment in human elements of safety

Alongside a lack of financial resources, both mobility and logistics operators see resistance to change from their staff as a significant barrier to investing in human elements related to safety, although the survey also shows consistently that safety investment drivers on social responsibility and staff welfare are high. Lack of technology know-how and a lack of human resources also represent significant obstacles to investment.

#### Barriers to investing in human elements amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

Operators in **Western and Eastern Europe** cite a **resistance to change from workers and drivers** as the most significant barrier to investment. For those in the CIS region, this came in as the second most important factor, behind a lack of financial resources.

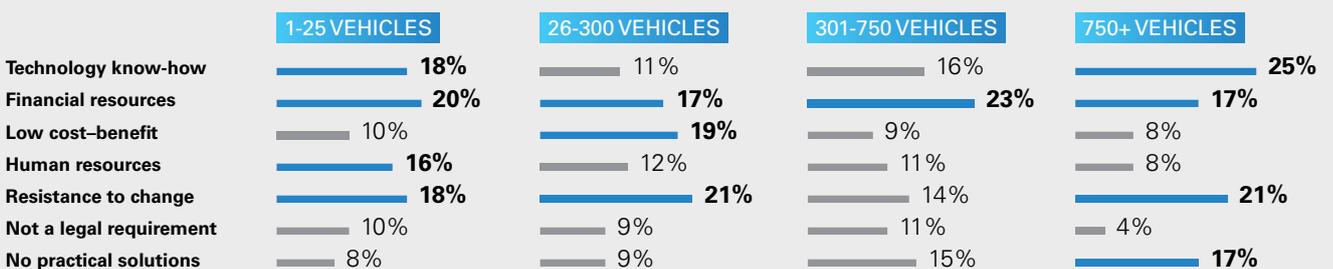
#### OPERATOR TYPE

**Mobility operators** generally report higher barriers to investment in human elements than logistics operators. Mobility companies see a lack of financial resources (18%) and a resistance to change (22%) as stymieing investment; the latter is also the most significant reason for logistics operators (18%).

#### COMPANY SIZE

**A lack of financial resources and a resistance to change are concerns shared across fleet sizes.** However, larger fleets (750+ vehicles) cite a lack of technological know-how as the biggest barrier to investing in human elements.

#### The main barriers for investment differ based on fleet size





### **Cost concerns**

Operators across the board cite investments in vehicle technology as a number one priority for safety. Yet a lack of financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio are significant barriers to making these investments. This appears to be of particular concern for mobility operators.

This suggests that the high upfront costs of vehicle technology may be deterring operators from making safety investments, and that more needs to be done by manufacturers and technology providers to offer more affordable and accessible safety solutions. Meanwhile, governments must provide more support for these investments by offering better financing options and incentives to help both logistics and mobility operators to sustainably manage the costs.

### **Bringing people on the journey**

The survey shows that resistance to change is a key factor in implementing human-related safety investments. Resistance to change is not unusual in many industries, especially in well-established industries such as road transport, with companies that have often existed for many decades.

Changing employee culture is a challenge. At a minimum, staff should be able to deal with and manage change, and ideally embrace and act as the catalyst for change.

People are the biggest factor behind road traffic incidents and the sector's workers and drivers will benefit most from improvements to safety. But how can operators communicate this more effectively to help drive cultural change within their companies?

Creating a stronger road safety culture must focus on winning hearts and minds. It must persuade the people at the core of the industry of the benefits of safer driving. And it must convince them of the role they can play in achieving this. Without upping their efforts to educate and empower their employees, operators will struggle to secure meaningful buy-in for essential safety upgrades.

But this burden should not only fall to operators – it requires industry-wide awareness-raising campaigns, underpinned by robust training and certification frameworks that recognise and reward employees for their commitment to safer practices.



## OPERATIONS

### Financial challenges still hold back investment in operations, but a more nuanced picture emerges

A lack of financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio feature as the most significant barriers across all regions. And once again, resistance to change amongst drivers and workers is also perceived by survey respondents as an obstacle.

However, there is less clarity around investments in general operations, with a range of factors coming into play, and a more nuanced picture emerging across regions and company type.

#### Barriers to investing in general operations amongst logistics and mobility operators across Europe



#### REGION

For operators in Eastern Europe, a **lack of technological know-how** (18%) and a lack of practical solutions for companies are major barriers. A lack of practical solutions for companies also feature prominently in the CIS region (15%).

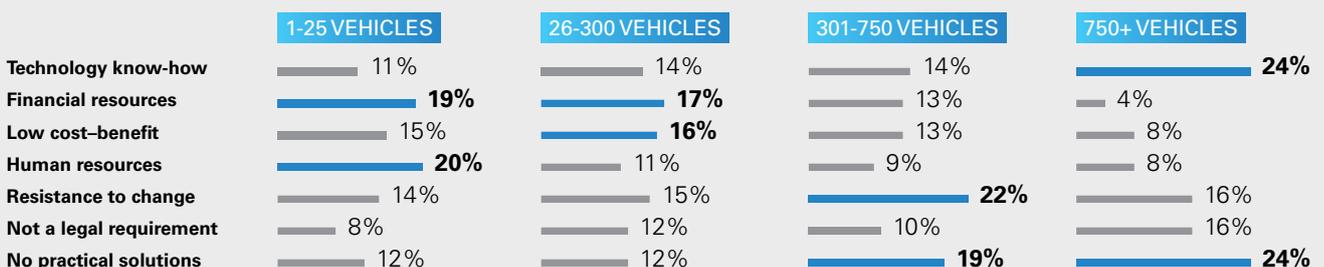
#### OPERATOR TYPE

Once again, a lack of financial resources and a perceived low cost-benefit ratio topped the list of barriers for 18% of mobility operators. Meanwhile, 19% of logistics operators cited a **resistance to change** from workers and drivers as the biggest barrier to investment.

#### COMPANY SIZE

The smallest companies struggle with a **lack of human resources** (20%), whilst medium-sized businesses struggle with resistance to change (22%). Large companies face a lack of technological know-how (24%), as well as a lack of practical solutions to meet their needs (also 24%).

#### The main barriers for investment differ based on fleet size



### **Supporting even safer mobility services**

In every category – vehicle technology, human elements and operations – a lack of financial resources is cited as the main barrier preventing mobility companies investing in safety. It is clear from the data that operators in this sector face a unique set of constraints and challenges – from high upfront investment and operational costs to low margins.

For an industry built on transporting people, there is an important need to overcome these barriers so that safety investments continue to advance.

Travelling by bus or coach is already one of the safest forms of transport, but more needs to be done to support and encourage mobility companies to continue investing in safety in a sustainable way.

This requires policy makers at the national and local levels to work with the private sector to create well-targeted incentives and an environment in which mobility operators are able to afford to make the investments needed to protect drivers, passengers and road users, now and in the future.



# 07.

## Monitoring progress

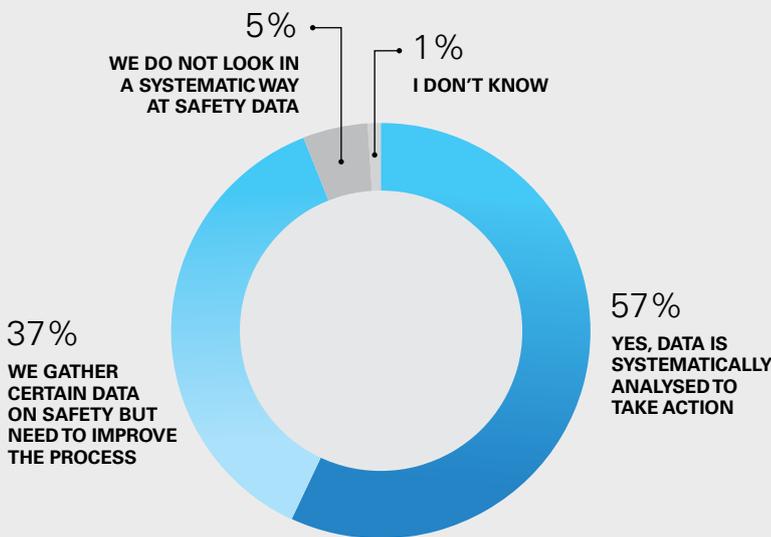
The research provides evidence of a clear commitment amongst operators to invest in all aspects of road safety. However, without effective data capture and analysis in place, it is difficult for operators to know where to prioritise their

investments and to understand the progress that they are making.

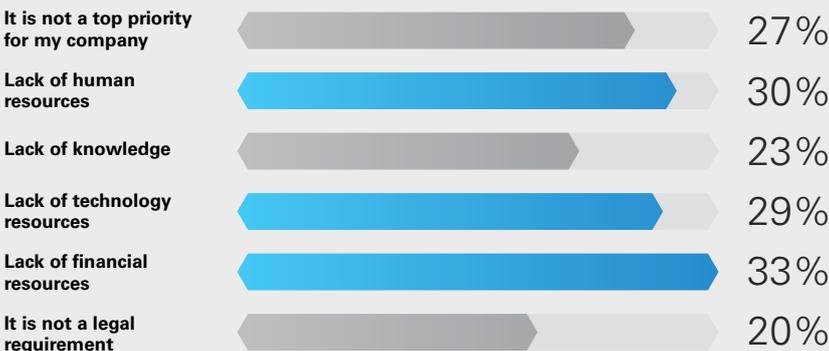
Similarly, without robust measurement and monitoring frameworks across the entire supply chain, operators can



**Maturity of measurement and safety data analysis capabilities amongst operators**



**Main barriers to accurately measuring road safety progress**



struggle to identify risk, or assess the impact of safety investments that have already been made.

Survey respondents were asked about the maturity of their processes for analysing safety data – and were asked to think about the barriers to implementing robust processes. They were also questioned on monitoring capabilities throughout their supply chains, drilling down into the mechanisms that they have in place to track the progress of subcontractors on safety.

Finally, operators were asked about their appetite for increased international safety standards in the areas of vehicle technology, human elements, and general operations. In each area, they were asked to prioritise the types of standards or certifications that they would most welcome.

**Monitoring progress through safety data analysis**

Reassuringly, the majority of operators (57%) are systemically analysing data and acting on the insights that they gain. However, over a third of operators admit that although they gather some data on safety, they need to improve the process. Only a very small minority (4%) are not looking systematically at safety data at all.

Resource issues were seen as the main obstacles to effective measurement. Lack of financial resources topped the list of barriers, followed by a lack of human resources and a lack of technology resources.

Yet the data does not paint a homogenous picture across all regions, company sizes and operator types.

### REGION

Eastern European operators lead the field in their measurement capabilities, with almost two thirds of operators (63%) saying that they systematically analyse safety data. The CIS region and Western Europe lag slightly behind. Some 6% of CIS countries say that they undertake no systematic data analysis at all.

Interestingly, although 44% of Eastern European operators cite financial resources as the major barrier to measurement, a lack of human resources is of much lower concern in this region than in the CIS region or Western Europe.

With Eastern European operators currently ahead of their counterparts, this suggests that having the right skills in the workforce might be more of a factor than pure financial resources when it comes to the effective analysis of safety data.

This hypothesis is reinforced by the situation in the CIS region, which lags behind the other regions, and where

a greater number of operators flag a lack of human resources, a lack of knowledge and a lack of technology resources as major challenges.

### OPERATOR TYPE

The measurement capabilities of logistics operators appear more sophisticated than mobility operators – with 60% systematically analysing data compared to 52% in the mobility sector. Both types of companies agree that a lack of financial resources is the biggest obstacle, followed by a lack of human and technology resources.

### COMPANY SIZE

Larger companies have more robust measurement frameworks in place – 64% of companies with more than 300 vehicles systematically analyse data, compared to just 51% of companies with fewer than 25 vehicles.

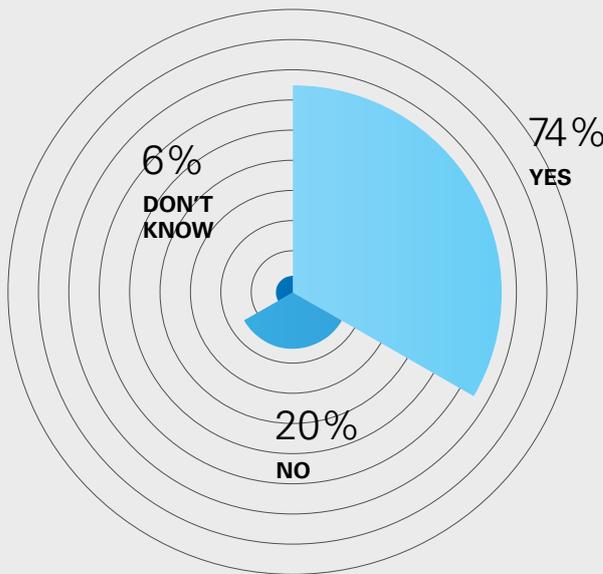
Perhaps unsurprisingly, smaller companies are much more likely to cite financial resources as an obstacle to accurately measuring safety – 35% of companies with fewer than 25 vehicles cite this as the primary barrier, compared to just 22% of the largest companies with over 300 vehicles.

# 74%

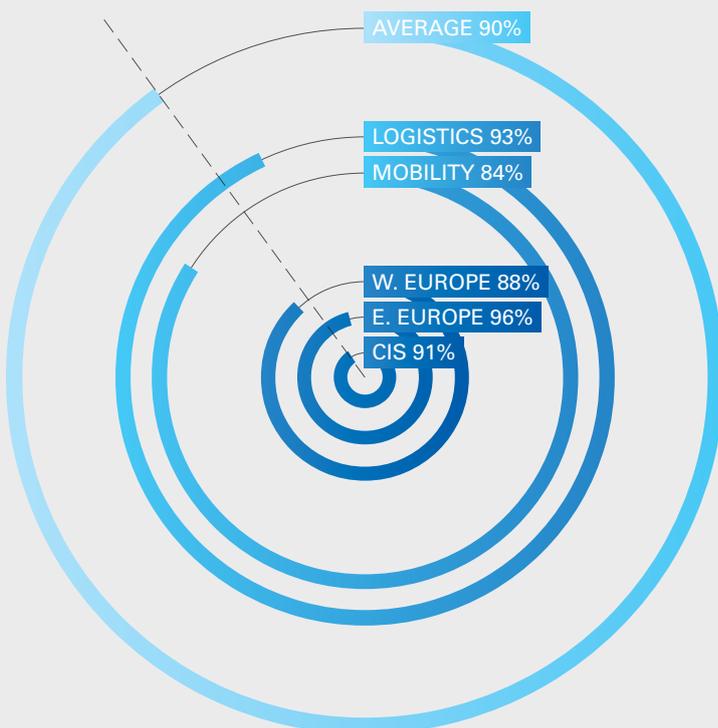
of operators measure safety performance in their subcontractors



**Measuring progress across the mobility and supply chains**



**Appetite for increased safety standards by region and operator type**



**Tracking and reporting across the supply chain**

Three quarters of operators (74%) claim to be regularly measuring the road safety progress of subcontractors within their supply chain – with this proportion remaining consistent across region and operator type.

While 79% of larger companies report that they regularly monitor their subcontractors, the smallest companies are not lagging far behind the average at 70%.

Methods used to track safety include regular reporting and monitoring, as well as creating a contractual requirement to adhere to road safety standards.

**Transport operators welcome the introduction of international safety standards**

The desire – and expectation – for future investment is matched by an increasing demand for more harmonised international road safety standards. This demand was particularly strong in Eastern Europe – with 96% of operators believing that more road safety standards should be set internationally. Appetite in the CIS region and Western European remains strong but is lower than in Eastern Europe – at 91% and 88%, respectively.

Logistics operators were significantly more likely to support more international safety standards than their mobility counterparts – with 93% of logistics operators voting for more standards, compared to 84% of mobility operators. Larger companies were more likely than smaller ones to advocate for more safety standards across all three areas.

**VEHICLES**

Increased vehicle safety standards are important for 90% of operators, with standards around technical equipment ranking as the top priority. Appetite is again highest amongst Eastern European operators, with Western Europe showing the lowest level of demand for increased standards. Differentiating by size, in general, the larger the company, the more pronounced the demand for the introduction of more international standards.

**PEOPLE**

Demand for an increase in driver safety standards is high – with almost 90% of survey respondents citing this as a major priority. Driver training is key, with fitness-to-drive evaluations representing the most popular measure (89%). The CIS and Eastern European regions view all safety standards in this field as significantly more important than operators in Western Europe, who again show the lowest level of support for additional international standards.

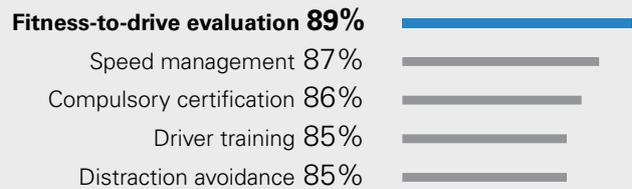
**OPERATIONS**

Some 80% of companies want to see increased operational safety standards, with compulsory reporting topping the list – especially amongst survey respondents in Eastern Europe, 91% of whom supported this. In the CIS region however, globally harmonised safety standards and safety certification rank most highly (88%).

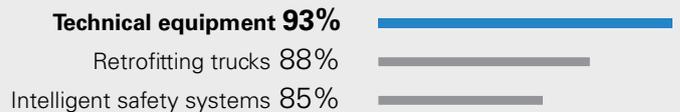
Mobility companies view globally harmonised safety standards as less important than logistics operators, who valued these more highly (77% to 87%, respectively). The very largest companies consider international standards in general operations to be more important than smaller organisations.

**Top priorities for increased international safety standards**

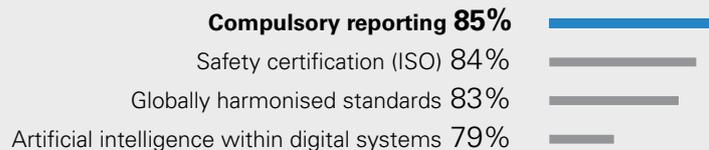
**DRIVERS**



**VEHICLES**



**GENERAL OPERATIONS**



**Harmonising international standards and certification**

While robust data analysis capabilities are key to effective measurement, it is difficult for operators to benchmark and track their progress, and that of their subcontractors, without the adoption of better independent safety standards and the use of certification schemes.

This points to a lack of harmonisation of international safety standards, and inconsistent access to training and certification options. As such, there is a real need for clearer standards to be implemented at an international level, and training and certification to be made more affordable and accessible for all companies and their drivers – regardless of size or location.

# 08.

## A collective effort

Making our roads safer requires the collective effort of all road transport stakeholders, including commercial logistics and mobility chains, as well as key players in private vehicle transport, soft mobility (cycling and walking), infrastructure and other aspects of public policy at the local and national levels.

Accidents are caused by many factors, primarily human behaviour – private and commercial drivers and other road users such as pedestrians and cyclists – as well as vehicle standards and technology, infrastructure and road traffic systems, road rules and their enforcement, and emergency service response.

Commercial operators of heavy vehicles play a key role in making our roads safer. They are professional and highly visible road users, and have invested in safety innovation for many years. Their expertise, experience and visibility means they are positive role models for all road safety stakeholders in making our roads safer.

This survey clearly shows that commercial operators feel a very strong responsibility to keep helping make our roads safer, and a sense of pride that they have driven improvements in safety for many





years, especially in terms of driver training but also by investing in safer vehicles and safer operations.

Yet operators continue to experience challenges in their drive for even safer roads.

And it is important to note, however, that commercial operators' actions alone are only one piece of the puzzle. They are only one of several other important groups that also need to play their part in investing in road safety.

The answer to making our roads safer lies in concerted efforts that address human and other factors with a broad range of road users, driven by a wide coalition of stakeholders, representing regulators and authorities, suppliers and all road users, as well as commercial operators.

93%

of operators want increased international standards on technical vehicle safety equipment

# 09.

## Going forward

Given the continuing and unacceptably high levels of fatalities and injuries on our roads, and the mixed results of public policy campaigns such as the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, we all need to step up our actions on road safety.

The survey found a large majority of commercial logistics and mobility operators see road safety at the heart of their business. They have a strong sense of social responsibility, and a comprehensive understanding of business drivers that keep them investing in safety with regard to human elements, vehicles and operations, and push them to better monitor and report on their progress in doing so.

However operators still face significant barriers to achieving these objectives. To make further progress, they need better targeted financial incentives; better training and certification opportunities; more harmonised regulation and standards, especially across borders; and a greater commitment by all players to raise awareness and build a stronger global road safety culture.

Further research and analysis on the barriers to safety investment at the operator level are needed for these companies to keep playing their crucial role in improving safety and our road safety culture globally.



Four key broad actions need to be considered.

### 1. Awareness and culture

Commercial operators are clearly committed to making our roads safer – within their own companies and within the wider society, on a practical level and on advancing and embedding a stronger safety culture in and around their operations and business partners.

However, the responsibility to drive a strong road safety culture should not only fall to commercial operators.

All safety stakeholders, especially governments and authorities, need to do more in terms of promoting safety awareness, and the private sector, including the operator community, will continue to play its part.

Learning from experiences and sharing best practices between logistics and mobility operators and the wider industry and other safety stakeholders is important, especially between different countries and regions, between different sizes of operators, between passenger and goods transport, and between the private and public sectors.

### 2. Financial and business incentives

The most significant barrier hindering commercial operators' investment in safety is a lack of finances. In the regions surveyed, this applies across all types of safety-related investments: vehicle, human and operational.

It is also exacerbated by the business basis of most commercial logistics and mobility operators: they have high upfront investment costs,

particularly in relation to vehicle and operational investments, and at the same time face low margins or increasing pressure on margins from clients and their place in the mobility or supply chain.

In particular, on the largest single investment of a typical operator, vehicle fleet renewal, there is a perceived low cost-benefit ratio for vehicle-related safety investments. Further research is needed to assess whether this is actually a real financial barrier, or one of perception and awareness.

Nevertheless, better targeted business incentives, for example adjusting taxes or subsidies, or modifying preferential or restricted geographic access for certified operators, could factor in wider mobility or supply chain benefits, or indeed the wider societal benefits that result from an operator's investment in safety. This would improve the cost-benefit ratio of an operator's purchase decision, making safety investments more viable for them.

### 3. Training and certification

The human factor in improving road safety is well recognised, yet more needs to be done to tackle this element with operators, and with other road stakeholders. The survey found that a significant barrier in terms of human factors is resistance to change. Changing the culture of road safety means changing these perceptions and "breaking down" this resistance.

The commercial road transport industry is already a pioneer in training. Training schemes, standards and regulations are established in many legal jurisdictions, especially



88%

of operators think that technology and innovation will greatly improve road safety



# 36%

of operators have difficulty justifying vehicle safety investments on financial and cost-benefit grounds

in developed economies. Training regimes need to be expanded in many developing countries, and training across the board, including at the operator level, should focus on cultural as well as technical factors.

There may be other factors preventing operators from fully complying with human-related safety requirements, and these elements need to be explored further.

Operators are also very aware of the need to measure and report on progress in terms of safety standards, yet they need more assistance and support in doing so. Certification requirements are important in monitoring, measuring, testing and recognising excellence in safety-related areas. In general terms, certification schemes should be stricter and made mandatory.

Staff motivation and retention is a clear driver of safety investment for operators. Reporting should measure and track changes in culture, and certification schemes should recognise improvements in culture as well as technical skills to reinforce progress in this direction.

Certification schemes, whether voluntary or mandatory, should encourage and recognise staff motivation drivers and not just place additional administrative burdens on operating companies.

#### **4. Harmonised standards and regulation**

Clear and enforceable standards that advance safety have always been critical. Commercial mobility and logistics operators are clear in their desire for smarter regulation and more harmonised standards, especially across borders.

Harmonised standards in and between global regions can ease investment and implementation costs for operators through lower costs of safety products and innovations over the long term.

Operators, and the wider private sector community in road transport including manufacturers and suppliers, must work with and support regulators in an open and pragmatic spirit to help governments and authorities develop smart regulation.

Harmonised standards are particularly important for operators who drive safety improvements through their supply chains with their subcontractors and clients. Again, supply chains by their very nature often cross borders, so harmonised regulations on an international basis will advance and further embed a stronger safety culture amongst road users.

This should also make it easier for all types of operators to implement consistent reporting and certification standards.

### **The road ahead**

Much progress has already been made in the area of safety innovation over recent decades. Yet there remains a very long way to go. More than 1.3 million people die on our roads globally each year.

Every death, and every injury, that takes place on our roads is one too many. It is essential that we step up and take significant measures to combat this issue.

It is essential that we step up and take significant measures to combat this issue. We need to embed a culture of road safety worldwide, in order to ensure that roads become safer for all who use them.

The insights in this report will help all players in the industry – the operators providing commercial services, as well as governments and regulators, manufacturers and suppliers, and other safety stakeholder groups – to understand the opportunities and the challenges ahead.

IRU, as the global voice for commercial road transport operators, remains fully committed to making our roads safer, and will continue to play a role in advancing safety, and taking the issues and actions identified in this survey forward.



# 60%

**of operators want new awareness campaigns to focus on drivers**

**“We need governments to help create a better framework within which operators themselves can better invest in vehicle, people and operational innovation to improve road safety, for the benefit of everyone.”**

**– Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General, IRU**



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