1 INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, traffic accident is one of the biggest problems. For decreasing traffic accidents, public agencies using a slogan which is “Don’t be a traffic monster” to invite the drivers fitting to rules.

In 1998, 440149 traffic accidents occurred in Turkey. According to official records, 4935 people died 114552 people injured and approximately 350 million USD crash cost arose. However, unfortunately real fatality number is bigger than official number. Because statistics prepared by traffic accident reports, which are prepared by traffic policemen and so this number shows only accident place fatalities. Statistics doesn’t include fatalities, which are occurred in hospital or in transport for hospital. Also sometimes, in sake of bureaucracy, some policemen prefer the reports fatalities as injuries and sending bodies to hospital.

A survey which is applied to 175 traffic policemen in Eskisehir Traffic Policemen Scholl which is only Traffic Policemen Scholl of Turkey showed that Traffic Policemen doesn’t trust to statistics.

2 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OF TURKEY

Highways used in Turkey for approximately 95 % of freight and passenger transportation. There are many organizations related with highways. The General Directorate of Highways, having an organization all over Turkey, constructs motorways, state roads and provincial roads in accordance with the standards to meet the increasing transport needs and to provide safety and comfort on highway transport. The highway network length under the responsibility of General Directorate of Highways is approximately 62672 km and consists of three categories; Motorways, State Highways and Provincial Highways.

Other roads under the responsibility of different organizations are Village Roads, Tourist Roads, Forest Roads and Urban Roads. Tourist roads are constructed and maintained by the General Directorate of Highways with the finance by the Ministry of Tourism. Village roads
are constructed by the General Directorate of Village Affairs. In addition, the responsibility for forest roads lies with the Ministry of Forests. Urban roads are constructed by Municipalities.

Turkey has two organizations for traffic control on these roads: traffic policemen and gendarme. In rural area gendarme have responsibility and in urban area traffic policemen have responsibility.

According to data of 1998, there are 4452160 automobiles and total 8359636 motorized vehicle and 12277101 driving license owner in Turkey. However, there are only 17121 traffic policemen. Number of traffic accidents and injures increases steady, but changes in number of fatalities is untidy. Figure 1 shows changes in numbers of traffic accidents, fatalities and injures between 1956 and 1998.

![Figure 1. Changes in numbers of traffic accidents, fatalities and injures between 1956 and 1998.](image)

**Note:** Use the right axis for number of fatalities, and the left axis for others.

### 3 ACCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM OF TURKEY

In Turkey, traffic policemen and gendarme have responsibility for traffic accident reports. After accident in urban area traffic policemen and in rural area gendarme goes to accident place and controls the situation. If there are only material damage or injuries in accident, they report it. However, statistics doesn’t include fatalities, which are occurred in hospital or in transport for hospital. If there are fatalities, they must to call attorney general for report and none of cars, which related with accident drawn before the attorney general's arrival. So in many times traffic is stopping and waiting for attorney general. Sometimes it can be very
difficult to reach attorney general and arriving of attorney general to accident place especially in rural area accidents. Waiting for attorney general causes many delays for traffic. Therefore, in sake of bureaucracy, some traffic policemen or gendarme prefers the report fatalities as injuries and sending bodies to hospital. Because of bureaucracy, many of hospital don't send total traffic accident related fatalities to police statistic department. About this subject, a survey made in Eskisehir Traffic Policemen Scholl, which is only Traffic Policemen Scholl of Turkey. In this school, traffic policemen are educating for 2 months. Many of them have several year experiences in their job. In the policemen survey, asked “According to your experience, what is your prediction about the real number of fatalities for 1998?” According to answers 1 of them said “lesser”, 16 of them said “statistics are true” and 130 of them said “more”. Table 1 shows the result of answers.

Table 1. Predictions of traffic policemen for fatalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of answer owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesser</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics are true</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey showed that Traffic Policemen doesn’t trust to statistics.

4 STUDIES OF IRTAD

International comparisons of road safety are becoming more and more important. To assess national developments in the area of traffic safety more accurately, it is necessary to view them in an international context. Since 1990 a traffic accident database IRTAD (International Road Traffic and Accident Database) is operated within the framework of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Road Transport Research Programme and includes data from all OECD countries. IRTAD offers the framework required for differentiating international evaluations of accident data:

- Up-to-date information accessible worldwide
- Detailed and comprehensive data
- International comparability
- Consistent time series
- Computer-assisted updating and processing of data
IRTAD represents an indispensable tool for all of national road administrations, road safety research institutes, automobile clubs, and insurers. IRTAD, 30% increasing Turkey’s official fatality numbers to reach real number. However, it is only a rude estimation. Average of the policemen survey answers is 9500. Table 2 shows the fatalities according to different resources.

Table 2. Fatalities according to different resources in 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official number</td>
<td>4935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRTAD</td>
<td>6416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Policemen survey</td>
<td>9500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 CONCLUSIONS

Statistics are very important to see the problems. Therefore, right statistics are very important. Because of bureaucratic difficulties, accident statistics are incorrect in Turkey. To solve this problem, firstly bureaucracy should lessen. Then a system should form to collect right information from hospitals.

REFERENCES

The General Directorate of Highways Maintenance Department (1999), Summary of Traffic Accidents, Ankara

