

The 2024 ETSC Road Safety Performance Index Conference - Norway House, Brussels – 19 June 2024

## Panel discussion – Safety of rural roads

*Reducing speeds on rural roads (from 90km/h to 70 km/h in Flanders, Belgium)*



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**Flanders**  
State of the Art

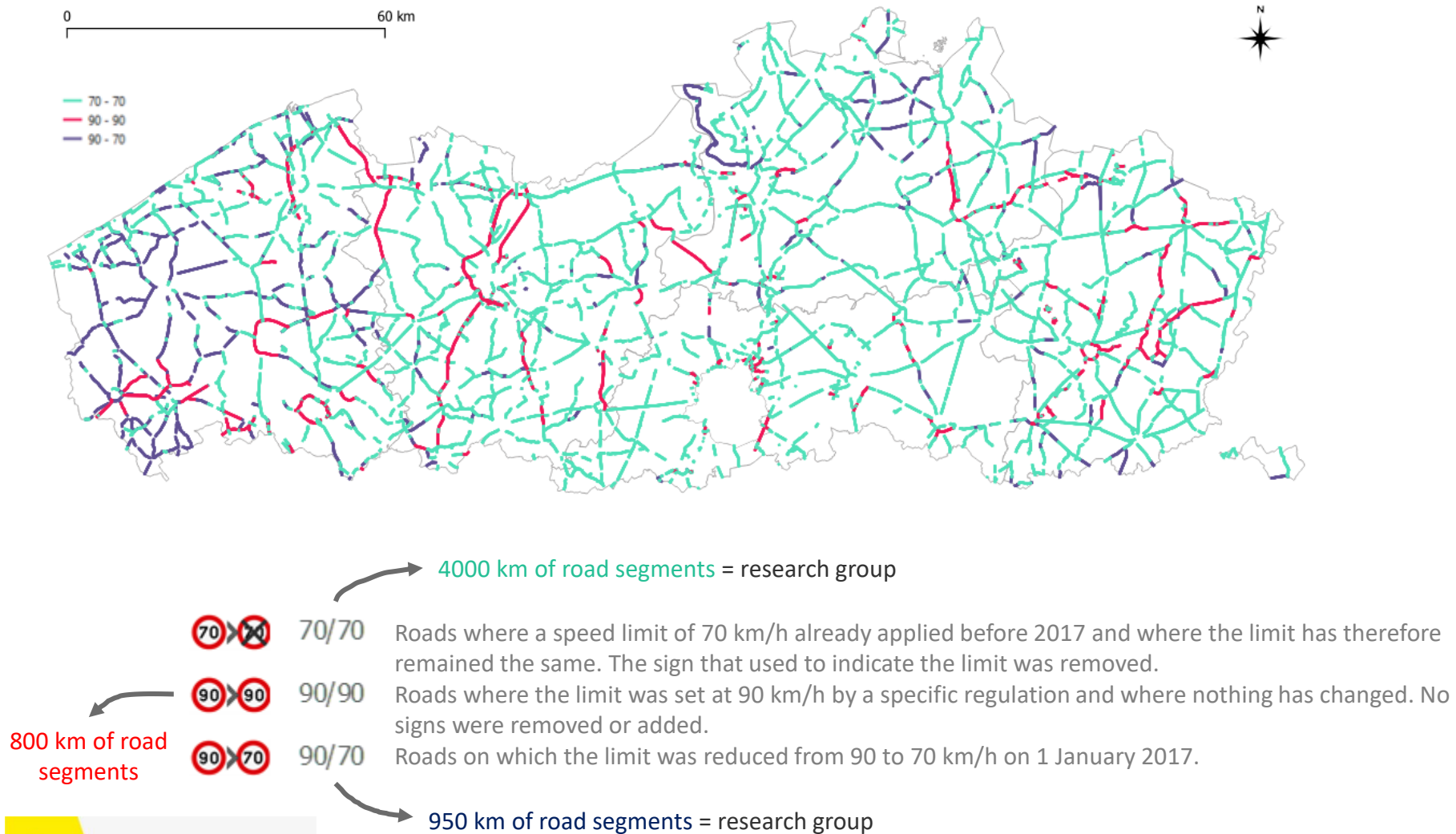
# Research question

What has been the effect of lowering the speed limit (90-70 km/h) on Flemish regional roads on road safety?

- ▶ January 2017: rural roads 90 → 70 km/h
- ▶ What effect has lowering the speed limit on these road sections had on the speed driven?
- ▶ What effect has lowering the speed limit on these road sections had on the number and severity of accidents?



# Methodology – speed regimes






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# What effect has lowering the speed limit (90-70 km/h) on Flemish regional roads had on the speed driven?

► Absolute change =  $[V85_{R,after} - V85_{R,before}]$

► R = Research group

	ST (2016-2017)	LT (2016-2019)
	-2,84 km/h 	-8,39 km/h 
Speed in 2016 = 88,1 km/h	New speed = 85,3 km/h	New speed = 79,7 km/h

# What effect has the lowering of the speed limit (90-70 km/h) on Flemish regional roads had on the number and severity of accidents?

- ▶ Number of accidents: -5,5%
- ▶ Number of casualties: -10,6% (-22,7% for seriously injured and deaths)

	Estimated change (in percent)	Lower limit 95% CI	Upper limit 95% CI
Accidents	-5,5%	0,893	1,000
Casualties	-10,6%	0,853	0,937
Slightly injured	-8,5%	0,870	0,962
Seriously injured/deaths	-22,7%	0,679	0,880



# What effect has the lowering of the speed limit (90-70 km/h) on Flemish regional roads had on the number and severity of accidents?




## by subgroup

- ▶ Decrease in crashes both near intersections with traffic lights (-6,5%) and on other segments (-7,3%)
  - ▶ Decrease in crashes with serious injuries and fatalities, especially in the other segments (-14,4%)
- ▶ Decrease in both single-vehicle crashes (-8,5%) and crashes between drivers (-3,8%)
- ▶ Decrease for both vulnerable (-7,6%) and motorized road users (-11%)
  - ▶ No decrease for vulnerable road users at intersections with traffic lights (+3.9%; but not statistically significant)



# What effect has the removal of the "70 km/h" traffic sign on Flemish regional roads had on the speed driven and accidents?

- ▶ Removing signs has not led to an increase in the V85!

	ST (2016-2017)	LT (2016-2019)
	0,54 km/h 	-0,66 km/h 

- ▶ Decrease in number of accidents and casualties

# Discussion

- ▶ Speed on 90/70 roads has not dropped by 20 km/h
  - ▶ Complementary measures:
    - ▶ awareness-raising,
    - ▶ speed checks,
    - ▶ infrastructure modifications (a 'credible' limit).



Rapport nr. 2022-8-17-AL  
Evaluatie wijziging algemene snelheidsbeperking  
van 90 km/u naar 70 km/u buiten de bebouwde  
kom  
Eindrapport

 Vlaanderen  
in beweging &  
openbare werken