



Title: The Swiss Society of Traffic Psychology: What we are and where we come from

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Abstract: The Swiss society of Traffic Psychology was founded more than 30 years ago. But traffic psychologists have been working in Switzerland for much longer than this. On the one hand, there were traffic psychologists who assessed traffic offenders like drivers under the influence of alcohol or drivers who seemed to be unfit because of aggressive behavior or overly risky driving. In addition, people who failed their driving license tests three times were assessed psychologically. Apart from psychologists doing assessments, there were also traffic psychological researchers at universities (Zurich, Berne, Basel, Fribourg) and semi-private institutions (bfu – Swiss Council for Accident Prevention). These two strains of traffic psychologists were united in the Swiss Society of Traffic Psychology (in short VfV or SPC, depending on the language) in the late 1980's under the leadership of Raphael Denis Huguenin, the former vice-director of bfu.

As a consequence of the diagnostic process in an assessment, traffic delinquents may be advised to participate in rehabilitation programs (individual or group) to reduce the probability of relapses. Although the road traffic licensing departments (SVA) do not have to share the assessment's recommendations, they usually do so. Over time, the branch of therapeutical interventions for different kinds of delinquent drivers became more and more important for VfV and increased the number of members substantially.

Traffic psychologists, and therefore VfV are well integrated in road safety issues in Switzerland. Traffic psychological assessment is compulsory according to law (VZV, Ordinanza sull'ammissione alla circolazione di persone e veicoli, Art. 28). Traffic psychologists are also involved in several research projects, being it as researchers themselves or participating in advisory committees.

Important future topics will be the development of autonomous driving, even if – in the final stage – drivers will not be needed any more. Another important issue of the VfV is quality assurance in driver assessment and driver rehabilitation to maintain the good reputation of the work of our members.

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