Editorial Special Issue

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Nowadays, more and more frequently the demand for sustainability is expressed in connection with human mobility. One of the ways in this direction is to replace short car trips by walking and cycling wherever and whenever possible. But then those walks and cycle trips should cause no safety problems. Moreover, apart from those who actively decide to replace car trips of sustainability reasons, there are citizens who hardly have any choice than to walk or being transported by others or to use public transport, which usually requires a certain amount of walking. For these people, as well, the provision of a safe environment is vital. However, not so many studies have been carried out, so far, that analyse preconditions for both walking and cycling empirically. In this special issue of the TOTS journal, we present five papers that deal with this topic. (As will be realised and commented further below, the sixth paper is an outsider and treats a different topic). All the papers deal with studies presented at the ICTCT (International Co-operation on Theories and Concepts in Traffic Safety - www.ictct.org) workshops in Lund (Sweden) 2016 and Olomouc (Czech Republic) 2017.

Matin S. Nabavi Niaki et al. look at cycling facility discontinuities thereby making use of video data. They looked at cyclists’ motion patterns and their manoeuvre strategies at points of discontinuity. The results show that cyclists undertake a large number of manoeuvres at points of discontinuity compared to control sites, and that both their speeds and accelerations vary more strongly compared to larger and more stable speeds at control sites. Quality of trips – efficiency in the sense of a smooth flow – is obviously disturbed considerably by discontinuities.

In the paper to follow, Victoria Gitelman and colleagues deal with typical behaviours and risk factors of young e-cyclists in Israeli cities in the frame of field observations. As growing use of e-bicycles by youngsters below 18 is observed in Israel, accompanied by a substantial increase in the number of related injuries, this is a matter of concern. In the frame of an observational survey of young e-cyclists during their trips to and from school and during leisure hours (2000 video-films were collected) they found that most teenager e-cyclists were males, demonstrating a wide range of risky manoeuvres. The authors end their paper with suggestions of measures to overcome the problem, both concerning education and infrastructure improvements.

The following papers have their focus on pedestrians of different types. The first one, by Rasmus Øhlenenschläger and others, dealing with “ordinary” pedestrians, looks at red-light crossing, crossing time and attitudes to crossing with intelligent green light for pedestrians. They found that the implementation of such an intelligent green light made pedestrians reduce their crossing at red light and reduced their waiting times at the tested intersections.

In their synthesis of best practice concerning the design of crosswalks, Lars Leden and colleagues take a special look at the appropriateness of crosswalks for children. Not surprisingly, they find that children are especially endangered at crosswalks, not least due to inappropriate speeds and overtaking manoeuvres in the crosswalk areas. The authors conclude that vehicle speeds should be below 20 km/h where children are crossing a street and that all kinds of dangerous manoeuvres of car drivers should be ruled out. The authors recommend to enforce appropriate behaviour with the help of both infrastructure measures and cameras.

Another special group of pedestrians – or rather a group of people who will have to walk to a certain degree if they want to be autonomously mobile – are persons with dementia. Daniel Bell et al. try to identify the requirements that people with dementia have in order to be able to maintain their own autonomous physical mobility. In their analysis the authors also include the views of caregivers and other relevant stakeholders.

The last paper in this special issue is not really related to the topic Unprotected road users more than in the sense that additional blue lights of rescue vehicles could help reduce accidents where, among others, unprotected road users are involved. Andreas Leich et al. studied the traffic safety impact of additional blue lights for ambulance vehicles. To this end, they observed the exit of a red cross station and ad-
jacent road segments with the help of video cameras and compared unequipped and equipped ambulance vehicles concerning their (interaction) behaviour at those sites. The results showed that the equipment of ambulance vehicles with an additional blue light made other road users behave more cautiously.

To sum up, the papers in this issue demonstrate how relevant it is to deal empirically with the preconditions that vulnerable road users meet in the public space. Certain concrete problems are dealt with in these papers, but when reading them it becomes obvious that many more issues have to be taken up and dealt with, not least when thinking of the change in preconditions that is to be expected in connection with increasing automation of motor vehicles.