

DON'T PLAY WITH LIFE

MAN Bus participates in the “Verona Strada Sicura” conference, the second seminar on safe passenger transport. Too many irregularities were found on buses

Held in the Gran Guardia Palace, overlooking the Verona Arena, at the end of March, the seminar wanted to emphasize the problem of passenger safety, whether they are summer vacation students, public transport commuters or tourists. Local heads of traffic police, fire brigade, public and hospital bodies were involved in the conference and MAN Truck & Bus Italia gave his technical contribution.

Everything starts from the initiative of Massimiliano Maculan, president of Verona Sicura, who launched a series of activities in 2003 in the Venetian high schools and a memorandum of understanding signed between the police and the ministry of education to increase bus passenger safety. From February 16th 2016 to February 28th 2018 thousands of roadside checks have been carried out on Italian roads. In fact, 36,649 buses were checked along the Peninsula and 5,368 vehicles were irregular. Evidently too many. Among the violations, 1,531 were due to altered or non-functioning equipment such as smooth tyres, broken mirrors or non-working safety belts; 798 due to failure to respect driving and rest times; 605 for speeding and 74 vehicles were without revision.

Strong points to travel safely are not many: companies must be enrolled in the register of the Ministry of Transport with drivers up to date with regular licenses, checked vehicles with inspection and equipped with the tachograph to calculate driving times. Roadside checks are useful,

but prevention must be improved. In this regard was useful the speech of Alessandro Smania, Marketing Director of MAN Truck and Bus Italia, who not only has taken stock of the safety systems on board the industrial vehicles, but also has emphasised the issue of national vehicle fleet, since always one of the most ‘old-fashioned’ in Europe. “The circulating fleet has an average age of 12.5 years, almost double compared to the rest of the European Union, and 60% of vehicle’s emission standards are before Euro IV”. Driver training is also crucial to ensure that they are able to use properly the safety systems their vehicles are equipped with. “The importance of the human element always remains at the core of safety issues”, continued Smania. “Since the role of the driver is crucial in any emergency situation, and the effectiveness of its action cannot be excluded from the training, the state of health of the vehicle and its ergonomics and functionality”. The continuous interaction between safety systems allows the driver to focus on the road and on the critical situations that he has to face while driving. The analysis of Smania then concluded with some other considerations: “the bus is the safest road

vehicle in the victims/kilometers traveled rate: in 2015, less than 2% of the vehicles involved in accidents were buses and less than 1% of dead and injured from 1980 to 2015 are due to accidents involving buses “. Technological innovations have contributed fundamentally to these results: the introduction of the ESP has reduced by 44% crashes due to the loss of control of the vehicle, the ACC (Adaptive Cruise Control) has reduced by 71% the accidents for rear-end collision, the LGS (Line Guard System) has reduced by 49% crashes due to skid. The EBA (Emergency Braking Assistance system) and LGS are mandatory for new registrations since 2015 and further improvements have been carried out in 2018. Other systems such as multi-collision braking system, the recognition of fatigue system and perimeter view side blind spot cameras are under development. Autonomous drive is a very fascinating subject, but the role of the driver can not be ignored. His role is fundamental in assessing the situation and deciding how to intervene. “The real challenge”, concluded Smania, “is to create the best possible interface between the driver and the driving aid systems the vehicle is equipped with”. ●

