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University of Kragujevac



Ministry of Science, Technological
Development and Innovation

**11th International Congress
Motor Vehicles & Motors 2026
ECOLOGY -
VEHICLE AND ROAD SAFETY
- EFFICIENCY
Proceedings**



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FOREWORD

For 47 years, a traditional international gathering - originally known as a Symposium and, since 2006, as the "Motor Vehicles and Motors" Congress - has been held biennially at the Faculty of Engineering (formerly the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering) of the University of Kragujevac. This year, the 11th International Congress "Motor Vehicles and Motors" took place in Kragujevac on October 8th–9th, 2026, under the traditional motto: "Ecology – Vehicle and Road Safety – Efficiency".

A large number of authors from both the country and abroad responded to the organizers' invitation, resulting in numerous high-quality submissions across the event's core areas: "Power Train Technology," "Vehicle Design and Manufacturing," "Vehicle Dynamics and Intelligent Control Systems," "Driver/Vehicle Interface, Information Systems, and Assistance Systems," and "Transport Challenges in Emerging Economies." Additionally, two topics were officially introduced for the first time: "Artificial Intelligence in Automotive Technology" and "Autonomous Vehicles".

A total of 63 papers were accepted for presentation following a rigorous peer-review process. The presentations were organized into sessions, including a newly introduced poster session dedicated to students and young researchers.

The Congress organizers extend their special gratitude to the distinguished scientists in the fields of motor vehicles and transportation who agreed to deliver three inspiring introductory lectures addressing the heart of contemporary issues in the sector: prof. dr Ralph Putz (Landshut University of Applied Sciences, Germany), prof. dr Aleksandar Stevanović (University of Pittsburgh, USA), and prof. dr. Isak Karabegović (Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

We extend our sincere gratitude to the esteemed members of the Congress Scientific Committee—who also served as reviewers for the papers submitted for presentation—for their significant contribution to the overall quality of the accepted papers.

The organization of the Congress was once again supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia, the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Kragujevac, and the International journal "Mobility & Vehicle Mechanics" and we sincerely thank them for their support.

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PREDGOVOR

Već 47 godina, svake druge godine, na Fakultetu inženjerskih nauka (nekada Mašinskom fakultetu) Univerziteta u Kragujevcu održava se tradicionalan međunarodni skup, nekada nazivan Simpozijum, a od 2006. godine - Kongres „Motorna vozila i motori“. Ovogodišnji, 11. Međunarodni kongres „Motorna vozila i motori“ održan je u Kragujevcu od 8. do 9. oktobra 2026. godine, uz tradicionalni moto „Ekologija – Vozilo i bezbednost na putu – Efikasnost“.

Na poziv organizatora odazvao se veliki broj autora iz zemlje i inostranstva, što je donelo veliki broj prijavljenih kvalitetnih radova iz glavnih oblasti skupa: „Tehnologija pogonskog sistema“, „Dizajn i proizvodnja vozila“, „Dinamika vozila i inteligentni upravljački sistemi“, „Interfejs vozač/vozilo, informacioni sistemi i sistemi za pomoć“, „Transportni izazovi ekonomija u usponu“, uz prvi put zvanično promovisane teme – „Veštačka inteligencija u automobilskoj tehnologiji“ i „Autonomna vozila“.

Ukupan broj od 63 radova je prihvaćen za prezentaciju posle rigoroznog procesa recenziranja. Rad je organizovan po sekcijama, uz prvi put promovisanu poster sekciju namenjenu za studente i mlade istraživače.

Organizatori Kongresa su posebno zahvalni istaknutim naučnicima iz oblasti motornih vozila i saobraćaja koji su pristali da održe tri inspirativna uvodna predavanja koja zadiru u srž savremenih pitanja vezana za vozila i saobraćaj, a to su: prof. dr Ralph Putz (Landshut University of Applied Sciences, Nemačka), prof. dr Aleksandar Stevanović (University of Pittsburgh, SAD) i prof. dr Isak Karabegović (Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Bosna i Hercegovina).

Veliku zahvalnost dugujemo našim dragim članovima Naučnog odbora Kongresa, ujedno i recenzentima radova prijavljenih za prezentaciju na Kongresu, koji su mnogo doprineli ukupnom kvalitetu konačno prihvaćenih radova.

Organizaciju Kongresa i ovog puta su podržali: Ministarstvo nauke, tehnološkog razvoja i inovacija Republike Srbije, Fakultet inženjerskih nauka Univeziteta u Kragujevcu i Međunarodni časopis „Mobility & Vehicle Mechanics“, na čemu im se iskreno zahvaljujemo.

Naučni odbor i Organizacioni odbor Kongresa MVM2026

CONTENT

INTRODUCTORY LECTURES

MVM2026-IL1	Ralph Pütz	OPERATING COSTS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUSES WITH DIFFERENT PROPULSION SYSTEMS AND VARIOUS TYPES OF RENEWABLE ENERGY OVER TIME – WHERE IS THE JOURNEY HEADING?	3
MVM2026-IL3	Isak Karabegović	COLLABORATIVE ROBOTICS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY: SMART ASSEMBLY AND AUTOMATED QUALITY CONTROL	13

SECTION A Power Train Technology

MVM2026-003	Ivan Grujic Aleksandar Davinic Zeljko Djuric Jovan Doric Milan Eremija Attila Kiss Sunny Narayan	THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMBUSTION PROCESS OF THE BLEND OF THE CONVENTIONAL DIESEL FUEL AND BIODIESEL MADE FROM THE WASTE GRAPE SEEDS	35
MVM2026-008	Željko Đurić Ivan Grujić Nadica Stojanović Snežana Petković Jelena Adžić Milan Eremija	EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF THE COMBUSTION PROCESS AND EFFICIENCY OF A DIESEL ENGINE IN THE CASE OF BIODIESEL FUEL APPLICATION	41
MVM2026-011	Milan Eremija Ivan Grujić Danijela Miloradović Željko Đurić Svetko Milutinović Nadica Stojanović	EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS OF EXHAUST GAS TEMPERATURE DURING THE USE OF BIODIESEL FUEL	53
MVM2026-013	Krasimir Markov Hristo Stanchev	INVESTIGATION OF THE FUEL CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS OF A DIESEL ENGINE RUNNING ON DIESEL WITH AN ADDITIVE	61
MVM2026-015	Milan Eremija Zoran Ristikić Svetko Milutinović Mesud Ajanović	EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF TIRE PRESSURE ON THE ROLLING RESISTANCE COEFFICIENT OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES	67
MVM2026-025	Marko Lučić Mirjana Grdinić-Rakonjac Radoje Vujadinović Vladimir Pajković Ivan Grujić	ENERGY USE IN MONTENEGRO'S ROAD TRANSPORT SECTOR: TRENDS, FUEL STRUCTURE AND DEPENDENCE ON PETROLEUM-BASED FUELS	77

MVM2026-030	Vladimir Kočović Živana Jovanović Pešić Miloš Pešić Jelena Đusić Dragan Džunić	TRIBOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE OF BRASS SURFACES LUBRICATED WITH NEW AND USED ENGINE OILS	85
MVM2026-034	Mihailo Đuković Saša Milojević Slobodan Savić Blaža Stojanović Horia Abaitancei	APPLICATION OF A RADIAL HYDRAULIC MOTOR IN ALTERNATIVE VEHICLE DRIVE SYSTEMS	91
MVM2026-036	Marko Kitanović Slobodan Popović Nenad Miljić Predrag Mrđa	EFFECTIVE MIXTURE COMPOSITION IN THE ANGULAR DOMAIN IN SUPERCHARGED DISI ENGINE WITH MULTIPLE INJECTIONS	111
MVM2026-037	Petar Markov Radivoje Pušara Dragan Peruničić	A SINGLE-RANGE POLYNOMIAL MODEL FOR TEMPERATURE-DEPENDENT MIXTURE PROPERTIES IN COMBUSTION ENGINES WITH VARIABLE EGR RATES	125
MVM2026-038	Dragan Peruničić Petar Markov Radivoje Pušara	MODELING OF SPECIFIC HEAT RATIO FOR DISI ENGINES WITH COMPLEX MIXTURE FORMATION AND HIGH EGR RATES	139
MVM2026-041	Predrag Mrđa Slobodan Popović Nenad Miljić Marko Kitanović	EXPERIMENTAL AND CFD-BASED INVESTIGATION OF VAPOUR POCKET FORMATION IN AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE COOLING SYSTEM	155
MVM2026-042	Nenad Miljić Predrag Mrđa Slobodan J. Popović	QUANTIFYING IMEP EVALUATION ERROR INDUCED BY PIEZOELECTRIC PRESSURE SENSOR AGEING IN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE INDICATION	165
MVM2026-051	Saša Milojević Marija Rafailović Michal Loman Branislav Šarkan Ján Vrábel Slobodan Savić	SAFETY AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPOSITE HYDROGEN AND CNG STORAGE CYLINDERS IN VEHICLES	175
MVM2026-068	Mitar Mišić Stjepan Galamboš Boris Stojić Jovan Dorić Luka Sekicki	DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC MEASUREMENT SYSTEM FOR TURBOCHARGER WASTEGATE ACTUATOR RESPONSE-TIME TESTING	185
MVM2026-071	Mitar Mišić Stjepan Galamboš Jovan Dorić Boris Stojić Luka Sekicki	DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A TEST BENCH FOR EVALUATING THE DYNAMICS OF PNEUMATIC WASTEGATE ACTUATORS	193

SECTION B

Vehicle Design and Manufacturing

MVM2026-006	Gordana Bogdanović Aleksandar Radaković Dragan Čukanović Petar Knežević Aleksandar Nešović	VARIATIONAL SHEAR CONTROL IN ESL–HSDT LAMINATES FOR AUTOMOTIVE STRUCTURES	203
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MVM2026-007	Gordana Bogdanović Aleksandar Radaković Petar Knežević Dragan Čukanović Marko Milošević	FATIGUE ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR CYCLE COUNTING UNDER ARBITRARY LOAD HISTORIES	211
MVM2026-009	Julija Boskovic Ivan Grujic Stefan Djuric Nadica Stojanovic Bogdan Zivkovic Milan Ivkovic Suzana Petrovic Savic	DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL FIVE-AXIS CNC SYSTEM USING STEPPER MOTORS	219
MVM2026-012	Saša Vasiljević Jasna Glišović Slobodan Vasiljević	ANALYSIS OF EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGIES FOR TESTING INNOVATIVE BRAKE SOLUTIONS	235
MVM2026-016	Ljubica Spasojević Zorica Djordjević Sonja Kostić Saša Jovanović	MODAL ANALYSIS OF A COMPOSITE CRANKSHAFT FOR AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE (ICE)	245
MVM2026-017	Zvonko Petrović Suzana Petrović Savić Milica Tufegdžić Nikola Kostić Milena Petrović	MATHEMATICAL MODELING OF HYDRAULIC DRIVE FOR THE MITSUBISHI RV-2FRL INDUSTRIAL ROBOT: INFLUENCE OF MOMENT OF INERTIA ON SERVO VALVE RESPONSE TIME	253
MVM2026-022	Marko Delić Vesna Mandić Nada Ratković Nikola Komatina Dušan Arsić Nikola Kastratović	ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF IMPORTANT FORMING PARAMETERS IN SHEET METAL STAMPING IN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY USING FEA	267
MVM2026-024	Milan Simonović Dragan Adamović Đorđe Ivković Marko Simonović	ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PREDICTING THE TENSILE STRENGTH OF ADVANCED STRUCTURAL STEELS USED IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY USING ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS WITH DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF NEURONS IN THE HIDDEN LAYER	275
MVM2026-026	Nenad Petrović Živana Jovanović Pešić Dragan Džunić Vladimir Kočović Strahinja Milenković	CREATING CURVED MESHES BY HEAT-FORMING 3D-PRINTED PARTS	287
MVM2026-050	Danijela Tadić Jasna Glišović Nikola Komatina	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE CRITERIA WEIGHTING METHODS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE EVALUATION	293
MVM2026-052	Dragan Čukanović Gordana Bogdanović Aleksandar Radaković Petar Knežević	APPLICATION, MODELLING AND BENDING ANALYSIS OF COMPOSITE LAMINATES IN MODERN VEHICLES	303
MVM2026-053	Mihajlo Jevtić Aleksandra Obradović Bogdan Todorović Nebojša Hristov Damir Jerković	FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL SUPPORT REACTIONS IN WHEELED MOBILE PLATFORM UNDER HIGH-INTENSITY IMPULSIVE LOADING	311

MVM2026-059	Dušan Milojević Nikola Kotorčević Đorđe Damljanović Nikola Živčević Dušan Arsić Fatima Živić	EFFECTS OF UNIT CELL GEOMETRY AND STRUT THICKNESS ON THE COMPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR OF 3D-PRINTED MECHANICAL METAMATERIALS	321
MVM2026-060	Nebojša Arsić Nenad Kostić Nenad Petrović Nenad Marjanović	APPLICATION OF 3D SCANNING AND CAD DEVIATION ANALYSIS AS A BASIS FOR PRESS TOOL OPTIMISATION IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY	325
MVM2026-061	Sandra Gajević Slavica Miladinović Nikola Mitrović Zorica Djordjević Saša Milojević Blaža Stojanović	APPLICATION OF LAMINATED COMPOSITES IN THE AUTOMOTIVE, AVIATION AND MARINE INDUSTRY	333
MVM2026-067	Luka Milić Ilija Vidović Matija Simanić Momir Drakulić Aleksandar Đurić	ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING AS A FABRICATION METHOD FOR A LIGHTWEIGHT TRACKED ROBOT PLATFORM	345
MVM2026-070	Dobrivoje Čatić Vladimir Čatić	A COMBINED FTA-FMEA PROCEDURE FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	355
MVM2026-073	Milan Blagojević Milan Bojović Živče Šarkočević	REVERSE ENGINEERING OF A COMPLETE VEHICLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODULAR VEHICLE PLATFORM	363
MVM2026-076	Nenad Miloradović Rodoljub Vujanac Mirjana Piskulić	WAREHOUSE SYSTEMS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STORAGE SYSTEMS, HANDLING EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY CLEARANCE	369

SECTION C

Vehicle Dynamics and Intelligent Control Systems

MVM2026-001	Miroslav Demić Mikhail P. Malinovsky Andrija Vujičić	THEORETICAL-EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING THE HEAT DISSIPATION RATE OF MOTOR VEHICLE SHOCK ABSORBERS	379
MVM2026-002	Aleksandar Jovanović Katarina Kukić Ana Uzelac Dušan Teodorović	DEEP Q-LEARNING ALGORITHM FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL AT A DISPLACED LEFT-TURN INTERSECTION	393
MVM2026-014	Boris Stojić Nebojša Nikolić Luka Sekicki	A FLEXIBLE COMPUTATIONAL MODEL FOR FUEL CONSUMPTION ESTIMATION IN ARBITRARY VEHICLE DRIVING CYCLES	403
MVM2026-018	Dušan Opsenica Ivan Blagojević Saša Mitić	THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CONFIGURATION ON VEHICLE DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTICS	413
MVM2026-023	Snežana Petković Valentina Golubović Bugarski Jelena Adžić Milan Eremija	ANALYSIS OF PARAMETERS INFLUENCING ROAD TANKER ROLLOVER	425

MVM2026-028	Momir Drakulić Aleksandar Đurić Sreten Perić	SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF A TERRAMECHANICS MODEL OF TRACK- TERRAIN INTERACTION WITH RESPECT TO VEHICLE DESIGN PARAMETERS	435
MVM2026-031	Marko Simonović Dragan Adamović Đorđe Ivković Milan Simonović	SELECTION OF MATERIALS FOR FRICTION COMPONENTS OF THE BRAKE MECHANISM	447
MVM2026-032	Zoran Papić Nenad Saulić Milja Simeunović	PREDICTION OF EES VALUES IN VEHICLE IMPACTS USING AI	461
MVM2026-035	Marijana Jeremić Lazar Krstić Miloš Ivanović Mihailo Lazarević Milan Matijević	DIGITAL TWIN DESIGN FOR TORSIONAL STIFFNESS ESTIMATION IN MOTOR-LOAD OSCILLATORY SYSTEMS USING PHYSICS- INFORMED NEURAL NETWORKS	471
MVM2026-040	Nebojša Jovičić Angelina Cvetanović Goran Bošković	EVALUATING THE EFFICIENCY OF OPTIMIZED WASTE COLLECTION ROUTES USING DATA ENVELOPMENT ANALYSIS	485
MVM2026-046	Aikaterini Zafeiri Clio Vossou Dimitrios Koulocheris	FLUID-STRUCTURE INTERACTION IN A TANK VEHICLE TRANSPORTING LIQUID FUEL	497
MVM2026-048	Ognjen Jovanović Milan Matijević	APPLICATION OF THE TIA PORTAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SOFTWARE-IN-THE-LOOP SIMULATION OF PLC CONTROL OF A FIRST- ORDER DYNAMIC SYSTEM	507
MVM2026-058	Nikola Gunić Hana Stefanović Milan Matijević	A NEW GENERATION OF WHEEL POSITION AND SPEED INTELLIGENT SENSORS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES	523
MVM2026-065	Danijela Miloradović Jasna Glišović Jovanka Lukić Nadica Stojanović	CONDITIONAL SPECTRAL ANALYSIS OF VEHICLE VIBRATION DATA	529
MVM2026-066	Matija Simanić Ilija Vidović Luka Milić Momir Drakulić Aleksandar Đurić	SIMULATION-BASED MOTION ANALYSIS OF A LIGHTWEIGHT TRACKED ROBOT USING WEBOTS	541
MVM2026-075	Branko Miličić Nikola Frlić Sekulić Miloš Mitrović Ivan Blagojević	IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE THERMO- PNEUMATIC TIRE PARAMETERS FROM REAL- WORLD ROAD TEST DATA	553

SECTION D

Driver/Vehicle Interface, Information and Assistance Systems

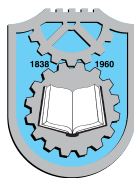
MVM2026-005	Slobodan Mišanović	THE INFLUENCE OF ENERGY DEMAND FOR PASSENGER COMPARTMENT CLIMATE CONTROL OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF ELECTRIC BUS	567
MVM2026-019	Dragan Ružić Miloš Vujković	DETERMINING THE FUEL CONSUMPTION REQUIRED FOR AIR-CONDITIONING OF A PASSENGER CAR UNDER REAL-WORLD CONDITIONS	579

MVM2026-020	Dragan Stojadinović Aleksandar Đurić Snežana Jovanović Miroslav Jovanović	THE INFLUENCE OF SEAT DESIGN AND SURFACE TYPE ON THE LEVEL OF VIBRATIONS EXPERIENCED BY A TRUCK DRIVER	589
MVM2026-063	Slavica Mačužić Saveljić Ognjen Matić Igor Saveljić	MACHINE LEARNING-BASED PREDICTION AND EXPLAINABILITY OF DRIVER DISCOMFORT AND FATIGUE: A DATA-DRIVEN EXTENSION OF A RAMSIS-BASED DIGITAL HUMAN MODEL STUDY	599
MVM2026-072	Jovanka Lukić Jasna Glišović Danijela Miloradović	COMPONENT COHERENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT OF MASKING EFFECTS IN TWO- DIRECTIONAL WHOLE-BODY VIBRATION	609
MVM2026-074	Milan Blagojević Saša Milojević Živče Šarkoćević Ivica Čamagić Dragan Lazarević	FIAT 500L REAR IMPACT PERFORMANCE IN EURO NCAP AND IIHS ASSESSMENTS	623

SECTION E

Transport Challenges in Emerging Economies

MVM2026-033	Janez Kopač Franci Pušavec	HIGHWAY ROAD TRAPS AS HIDDEN SOURCES OF CRASH RISK	633
MVM2026-044	Nadica Stojanović Ali Belhocine Ivan Grujić Željko Đurić Suzana Petrović Savić Oday I. Abdullah	THE IMPACT OF “DRUNK BUSTERS” ON THE ADEQUATE PERFORMANCE OF TASKS	645
MVM2026-055	Vladimir Vukašinović Dušan Gordić Vanja Šuštersiћ Mladen Josijević	SUSTAINABLE BIOFUELS FOR THE DECARBONISATION OF THE TRANSPORT SECTOR IN CITIES	659
MVM2026-062	Goran Bošković Nebojša Jovičić Angelina Cvetanović Saša Milojević	ASSESSMENT OF THE NUMBER OF END-OF- LIFE VEHICLES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA	669
MVM2026-064	Bojana Bošković Nadica Stojanović Saša Babić Milena Petrović Anđela Egerić	PREDICTION AND TIME-SERIES ANALYSIS OF ROAD DEATHS PER MILLION INHABITANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE PERIOD 2012 TO 2030	677
MVM2026-069	Saša Jovanović Zorica Đorđević Danijela Nikolić Lozica Ivanović Saša Milojević	A SAW-BASED DECISION SUPPORT MODEL FOR THE SELECTION OF NEW AND USED PASSENGER CARS	691



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Technical paper

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ASSESSMENT OF THE NUMBER OF END-OF-LIFE VEHICLES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

ABSTRACT: End-of-life vehicles (ELVs) represent a significant waste stream due to the large quantities of metals, plastics, glass, rubber, and hazardous materials they contain, requiring appropriate management. An efficient system for recording and tracking these vehicles provides the basis for circular economy planning and the improvement of waste management systems. This paper analyses available statistical data on the number of registered vehicles, imports of used vehicles, sales of new vehicles, and the quantities of officially recorded treated end-of-life vehicles in the Republic of Serbia. Based on the analysis, a vehicle fleet balance method was applied to estimate the number of vehicles that potentially reach the end of their service life. The results indicate a significant discrepancy between the estimated number of vehicles potentially reaching the end of their useful life and the officially reported quantities of treated ELVs, highlighting the need to improve monitoring and reporting systems.

KEYWORDS: Circular economy, End-of-life vehicles (ELV), Statistical analysis, Vehicle fleet balance, Waste management

ANALIZA I PROCENA BROJA VOZILA NA KRAJU ŽIVOTNOG VEKA U REPUBLICI SRBIJI

REZIME: Vozila na kraju životnog veka (eng. ELV - End-of-Life Vehicles) predstavljaju značajan tok otpada zbog prisustva velikih količina metala, plastike, stakla, gume i opasnih materija, što zahteva odgovarajuće upravljanje. Efikasan sistem evidencije i praćenja ovih vozila predstavlja osnovu za planiranje cirkularne ekonomije i unapređenje sistema upravljanja otpadom. U radu su analizirani raspoloživi statistički podaci o broju registrovanih vozila, uvozu upotrebljivanih vozila, prodaji novih vozila i broju zvanično tretiranih vozila u Republici Srbiji. Na osnovu sprovedene

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analize primenjena je metoda bilansa voznog parka za procenu broja vozila koja potencijalno dostižu kraj svog životnog veka. Dobijeni rezultati ukazuju na značajno odstupanje između procenjenog broja vozila koja dostižu kraj životnog veka i zvanično evidentiranih količina tretiranih otpadnih vozila, što ukazuje na potrebu za unapređenjem sistema praćenja i izveštavanja.

KLJUČNE REČI: Cirkularna ekonomija, vozila na kraju životnog veka, statistička analiza, bilans voznog parka, upravljanje otpadom

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, the number of motor vehicles in the Republic of Serbia has been continuously increasing, primarily due to the growing import of used vehicles and a gradual increase in the number of newly registered vehicles. At the same time, the expansion of the vehicle fleet has also resulted in an increasing number of vehicles reaching the end of their useful life and becoming a specific waste stream.

End-of-life vehicles represent a complex waste stream containing significant quantities of secondary raw materials, as well as hazardous components such as engine oils, coolants, batteries, and other materials that require controlled collection and treatment. Consequently, the European Union (EU) has established a system encompassing the registration, deregistration, collection, depollution, dismantling, recycling, and reporting of end-of-life vehicles.

In the Republic of Serbia, a legislative framework regulating the management of this waste category has been established. However, available statistical data indicate certain discrepancies between the number of vehicles that can be considered end-of-life vehicles and the quantities officially recorded as treated. These discrepancies may result from various factors, including incomplete coverage of all ELV waste streams, informal waste management practices, or an insufficiently developed recording and monitoring system.

The aim of this research is to estimate the number of vehicles potentially reaching the end of their useful life based on available statistical data on the number of registered vehicles, imports of used vehicles, sales of new vehicles, and data on treated end-of-life vehicles. Particular attention is given to analyzing the differences between the estimated and officially recorded quantities, as well as highlighting the need for further improvement of the monitoring and tracking system for this waste category.

Legislative Framework

In response to numerous problems and shortcomings in the existing legislation, the European Commission proposed a new Regulation, COM (2023) 451, on 13 July 2023, representing a fundamental reform of vehicle waste management. Following its adoption, Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 was published on 24 July 2026 and entered into force on 13 August 2026. It replaces Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC with a single, directly applicable legal instrument. According to Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 (2026), the new legal framework covers the entire vehicle life cycle, from vehicle design to final treatment. It applies generally from 1 September 2028, with different dates specified for certain provisions.

One of the most significant changes is the introduction of mandatory requirements for the use of recycled materials in new vehicles. The Regulation requires a minimum of 15% of plastic by weight to be recycled from post-consumer plastic waste for new vehicle types approved from 1 September 2032, increasing to 25% from 1 September 2036. At least 20% of the applicable target must be achieved using plastic recycled from ELVs or from parts and components removed from vehicles during the use phase. This represents a key change compared with the previous Directive, which merely “encouraged” such practices. By creating mandatory demand for secondary raw materials, the EU not only reduces its strategic dependence on imports of primary materials but also establishes a strong and predictable market for high-quality recycled materials. This approach stimulates innovation in the recycling industry and strengthens the economic viability of the sector. The Regulation also empowers the Commission to establish targets for other materials, such as steel, aluminium, and critical raw materials, following the required assessments (Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, 2026).

To address the lack of traceability and transparency, the Regulation establishes a Digital Circularity Vehicle Passport (CVP) from 1 September 2032. The CVP will serve as a digital record containing information relevant to vehicle circularity. This tool will enable operators throughout the value chain from manufacturers to recyclers to access key information required for dismantling, reuse, and recycling. The CVP is a key digital enabler for implementing the new regulatory framework, ensuring more efficient information exchange and improved oversight (Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, 2026).

The Regulation introduces stricter requirements for the treatment of ELVs, including the mandatory removal of certain components prior to shredding, with the aim of maximizing reuse and recycling. From 1 September 2029, shredder

fractions containing non-inert waste may not be accepted in a landfill if they exceed the prescribed limit values. In terms of scope, the Regulation provides for a gradual extension to additional vehicle categories, including M2, M3, N2, N3, O and L categories from 1 September 2031, subject to the provisions specified in the Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, 2026).

The new Regulation provides a detailed and harmonized framework for extended producer responsibility, thereby directly addressing the shortcomings of the previous Directive. The main principles are aligned with the Waste Framework Directive, meaning that producers bear full financial and organizational responsibility for managing their products at the end of their life.

Manufacturers' financial contributions will be modulated based on harmonized criteria, taking into account characteristics such as vehicle weight, type of propulsion, ease of dismantling, and the presence of hazardous substances. This mechanism creates economic incentives for manufacturers to design vehicles that are easier to recycle and contain fewer problematic materials. In addition, mechanisms for cross-border cooperation ("cross-border EPR") will be introduced to ensure that the treatment costs of a vehicle manufactured in one Member State but treated in another are appropriately covered.

The problem of missing vehicles, whereby a significant proportion of deregistered vehicles are not reported for official treatment, represents one of the major shortcomings affecting the effectiveness of the previous Directive. A key underlying cause of this problem is the economic incentive for individuals and companies to bypass official channels. The sale or illegal export of vehicles that are de facto end-of-life vehicles often generates higher returns than delivering them to an authorized treatment facility. Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 (2026) addresses this problem through vehicle-status checks, certificates of destruction, reporting and enforcement measures.

The Regulation introduces legally binding criteria for distinguishing a "used vehicle" from an ELV. This represents a key change compared with the previous non-binding guidelines, which were difficult for customs officials to apply in practice. The Regulation establishes stricter conditions for the export of used vehicles, requiring evidence that a vehicle is not an ELV and satisfies the applicable roadworthiness conditions before it may be exported from the EU. Electronic verification supports the application of these requirements at the point of export (Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, 2026).

Customs authorities will use interoperable registers and the EU Single Window Environment for Customs (which facilitates interoperability between customs and non-customs authorities through three main components: EU non-customs systems, national customs environments, and the EU customs system) to verify the validity and status of a vehicle before it leaves the EU customs territory. This measure not only helps prevent the illegal export of ELVs and the associated environmental damage in third countries but also strengthens the circular economy value chain within the EU. By reducing the number of old vehicles leaving the EU, a greater flow of raw materials and components for recycling and reuse is retained within the European market.

The Law on Waste Management (2025) regulates waste classification, waste management planning, waste management stakeholders, responsibilities and obligations in waste management, the organization of waste management, the management of special waste streams, conditions and procedures for issuing permits, transboundary movements of waste, waste reporting, financing of waste management, and supervision of waste management. Article 69 defines obligations relating to ELVs, while Article 113 provides for the continued application of by-laws adopted under the previous Act until new regulations are adopted. Under the current legislation, manufacturers/importers are required to provide information on the dismantling and appropriate treatment of vehicles that are no longer in use. The relationship between the current EU and Serbian frameworks is presented in Fig. 1.

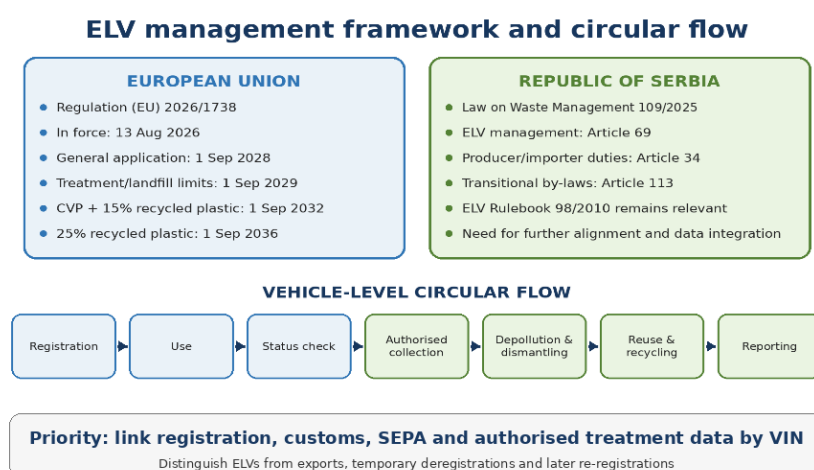


Figure 1 ELVs Management in the EU and the Republic of Serbia (From Legislation to Circular Economy)

Article 6 of the Law establishes the fundamental principles of waste management, including the principle of responsibility and the polluter pays principle. The principle of responsibility means that manufacturers, importers, distributors, and sellers of products that contribute to an increase in waste generation are responsible for the waste arising from their activities. The polluter pays principle means that the polluter bears the full costs of the consequences of its activities. Article 34 specifies responsibilities of producers and importers of products (Law on Waste Management, 2025).

Article 69 establishes provisions specifically related to the management of ELVs. Article 113 provides that, until regulations are adopted under the new Law, by-laws adopted under the previous Law on Waste Management continue to apply (Law on Waste Management, 2025).

Detailed provisions were adopted in 2010 through the Rulebook on the Method and Procedure for the Management of ELVs (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 98/2010). This Rulebook applies to vehicles and ELVs, including their components and materials, regardless of how the vehicle was serviced or repaired during its use and regardless of whether the vehicle is equipped with components supplied by the manufacturer or with other components installed as replacement parts (Rulebook on ELVs, 2010).

With regard to the management of hazardous substances, the Rulebook stipulates that, during the production of motor vehicles and spare parts or equipment for motor vehicles, measures shall be taken with the aim of:

- limiting the use of hazardous substances in vehicles and reducing their quantities as much as possible;
- designing and manufacturing new vehicles in a manner that facilitates dismantling, reuse, and treatment, particularly the recycling of ELVs, their components, and materials;
- increasing the use of recycled materials in vehicles and other products and promoting the development of markets for recycled materials.

Motor vehicles and their spare parts containing lead, mercury, cadmium, or hexavalent chromium may not be manufactured or imported, except for the materials and components listed in Annex 1 of the Rulebook.

Owner is obliged to deliver their ELV to an authorized entity engaged in the collection, transportation, storage, and/or treatment of ELVs. All such entities are required to complete the hazardous waste movement document. If the owner of an ELV is unknown, the collection and transfer of the vehicle shall be carried out by the local self-government unit. Vehicle must be accompanied by a copy of the owner's driving license, or by a report from the municipal inspection authority if the owner is unknown, or by a traffic accident report if the ELV resulted from a traffic accident.

Regarding the storage of ELVs, it is specified that dismantling may not be carried out at the storage site. Minimum technical requirements for storage facilities are prescribed. The transportation of ELVs must comply with the provisions governing the transport of hazardous waste and with the permit issued by the competent authority.

With regard to the treatment of ELVs, detailed provisions are established by the Rulebook. These include minimum requirements for treatment facilities, provisions concerning the removal of hazardous components, provisions on the separation of recyclable parts, and requirements for the removal of specific components. According to Annex 3 of the Rulebook on ELVs (2010), treatment operations must achieve the following reuse, recovery, and recycling targets:

- From 1 January 2015: reuse and recovery of at least 85% of the average mass of ELVs collected during the year, and reuse and recycling of at least 80% of their average mass.
- From 1 January 2019: reuse and recovery of at least 95% of the average mass of ELVs collected during the year, and reuse and recycling of at least 85% of their average mass.

It is also explicitly stipulated that ELVs must not be disposed of in landfills or incinerated. The obligation to pay a fee for vehicles placed on the market is prescribed by the Act on Fees for the Use of Public Goods (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 95/2018, as amended through No. 35/2026). Under this Act, the entity liable for the fee on products that become special waste streams after use including M1 and N1 category vehicles and three-wheeled motor vehicles, excluding motor tricycles (category L5 – heavy tricycles), in accordance with road traffic safety regulations is the manufacturer or importer that places such products on the market in the Republic of Serbia or uses them as the final consumer (Act on Fees for the Use of Public Goods, 2018).

The Act defines the basis for calculating the fee as the quantity of manufactured or imported vehicles, expressed in (kg), as specified in the vehicle type-approval documentation. It also defines the method for determining the fee, its amount, and the method of payment, as well as the obligation to maintain daily records on the quantity and type of manufactured and imported products and vehicles that become special waste streams after use, including ELVs. Based on these records, an annual report is prepared on the quantity and type of manufactured and imported vehicles placed on the market of the Republic of Serbia that will eventually become vehicles at the end of their useful life, and this report is submitted to the Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

Directive 2000/53/EC primarily applies to categories M1 and N1. Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 (2026) replaces that Directive from 1 September 2028 and progressively extends selected provisions to additional vehicle categories. The relevant type-approval categories are defined under Regulation (EU) 2018/858 (2018) and Regulation (EU) No. 168/2013.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is based on an analysis of available statistical data on the vehicle fleet of the Republic of Serbia, data on the import of used vehicles and sales of new vehicles, as well as data on the quantities of ELVs recorded within the waste management system. The data sources included official statistical reports issued by the relevant institutions, available vehicle registration data, as well as data on the quantities of vehicles placed on the market and the quantities of end-of-life vehicles treated.

To estimate the potential number of vehicles reaching the end of their useful life, the vehicle fleet balance method was applied. The method is based on the assumption that the number of registered vehicles in a given year is determined by the number of vehicles registered in the previous year, increased by the number of newly registered vehicles (new and imported used vehicles), and reduced by the number of vehicles that have permanently or temporarily been withdrawn from service.

The estimated number of ELVs was calculated using the following equation:

$$N_{\text{ELV}} = N_{\text{reg},t-1} + N_{\text{import}} + N_{\text{new}} - N_{\text{reg},t} \quad (1)$$

Where:

- N_{ELV} – estimated number of vehicles potentially reaching end-of-life, calculated as the residual of the vehicle fleet balance;
- $N_{\text{reg},t-1}$ – Number of Vehicles Registered in the Previous Year;
- N_{import} – Number of Imported Used Vehicles;
- N_{new} – Number of New Vehicles Placed on the Market;
- $N_{\text{reg},t}$ – Number of Vehicles Registered in the current Year.

The obtained values can be compared with the official data on the quantities of treated ELVs to assess potential discrepancies and identify possible shortcomings in the existing record-keeping system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Vehicle Fleet Trends in the Republic of Serbia

End-of-life vehicles, or vehicles that are no longer in use, are generated in virtually all economic sectors. However, the majority of ELVs originate from private households. According to SEPA (2024), the mass of vehicles (categories M1 and N1) placed on the market in 2023 amounted to 102,973.85 t. Waste management operators reported to the SEPA that they treated 5,913 t of ELVs.

End-of-life vehicles, i.e., vehicles that are no longer roadworthy, are motor vehicles or their components that have become waste and that their owner intends to discard. According to the Waste Catalogue, ELVs are classified under group 16 01. There are no precise data on the quantities of ELVs generated annually. In the Republic of Serbia, there are approximately one million vehicles with an average age of more than 10 years. The collection and management of ELVs largely depend on supply and demand. Hazardous substances and components are not removed prior to the vehicle recycling process. Parts with positive economic value are recovered in smaller quantities, depending on their age and condition. A certain number of operators registered for metal waste recycling can meet the legal requirements for ELV recycling (Rulebook on Waste Classification, 2010; SEPA, 2024).

The first steps in the ELV treatment chain are declaring the vehicle as waste, deregistering it from the vehicle registry, and issuing a certificate of destruction. Deregistration of vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life is mandatory. General indicators for declaring a vehicle as waste include its age, emissions compliance, condition, and technical roadworthiness. According to the Law on Waste Management (2025), permits for hazardous waste management are issued only by the Ministry, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, or the City of Belgrade. A local self-government unit is required to arrange for the collection and delivery of an ELV, when its owner is unknown, to an entity authorized to treat such vehicles, and is entitled to recover the associated costs if the vehicle owner is subsequently identified. Local self-government units are authorized to issue permits for the collection, transport,

storage, treatment, and disposal of inert and non-hazardous waste within their territory. In addition, the City of Belgrade may issue permits for hazardous waste, including ELVs.

Data on the number of registered vehicles indicate a continuous growth of the vehicle fleet over the 2018–2024 period, Table 1. At the same time, a significant inflow of used vehicles is evident, which in most of the observed years was several times higher than the number of new vehicles entering the market. Such a market structure contributes to an increase in the average age of the vehicle fleet and, consequently, to an increase in the number of vehicles reaching the end of their useful life (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2025).

Table 1 Trends in the Number of Registered Vehicles, Used Vehicle Imports, and New Vehicle Sales in the Republic of Serbia (2018–2024)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Imported Used Vehicles	81,796	141,918	115,000	152,803	115,347	131,905	135,000
New Vehicles Sold	30,731	34,202	26,400	30,416	22,785	25,422	27,862
Registered Vehicles	1,999,771	2,083,753	2,164,818	2,235,794	2,337,498	2,389,105	2,476,419
Estimated Potential ELVs	-	92,138	60,335	112,243	36,428	105,720	75,548

Based on the presented data, it can be observed that the number of registered vehicles increased from approximately 2 million in 2018 to nearly 2.5 million in 2024. At the same time, annual imports of used vehicles ranged from approximately 80,000 to 150,000 vehicles, while the number of new vehicles was significantly lower. These indicators confirm that the renewal of the vehicle fleet relies heavily on the import of used vehicles, contributing to an increase in the number of vehicles that reach the end of their useful life within a relatively short period.

To complement the vehicle fleet data presented in Table 1, Table 2 summarizes the officially reported quantities of vehicles placed on the market and treated ELVs in the Republic of Serbia during the period 2018–2023.

In 2023, a total of 2,389,105 vehicles were registered. During 2024, 135,000 used vehicles were imported and 27,862 new vehicles were placed on the market. If these values are added ($2,389,105 + 135,000 + 27,862 = 2,551,967$), the resulting figure should represent the total number of registered vehicles in 2024. However, a total of 2,476,419 vehicles were registered in 2024, indicating a difference of 75,548 vehicles ($2,551,967 - 2,476,419$). Vehicles that were not registered for a period of one year may be considered ELVs, as defined in some EU countries.

Table 2 Data on the Quantities of Vehicles Placed on the Market and Treated ELVs

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Quantity of Vehicles Placed on the Market, (t)	113,180	137,152	157,955	178,952	187,231	102,974
Quantity of Treated ELVs, (t)	2,548	2,109	2,391	3,280	2,212	5,913

According to SEPA (2024), a total of 102,974 t of N1 (for goods ≤ 3.5 t) and M1 (with no more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat) category vehicles were placed on the domestic market. Assuming an average vehicle weight of 1 t (which is a relatively conservative estimate), this corresponds to approximately 100,000 vehicles. On the other hand, waste recovery operators reported to the SEPA that they treated only 5,913 t of this type of waste, corresponding to fewer than 6,000 ELVs.

For comparison, in Croatia, out of 1,840,767 registered vehicles in 2022, a total of 37,957 ELVs and their components were collected and officially treated.

By comparing these data, it can be concluded that the data on vehicles placed on the market and treated ELVs are not adequately monitored. The lack of incentives for delivering ELVs to collection points/authorized treatment facilities appears to be the main reason for these “statistical gaps” and may also contribute to illegal treatment.

For example, the Government of the Republic of Serbia introduced an incentive scheme to stimulate the recycling market for specific waste streams (i.e., waste batteries and waste oils) and to encourage the replacement of old vehicles with new vehicles equipped with advanced environmental protection systems. In addition, FIAT (STELLANTIS), a domestic vehicle manufacturer, provided incentives for the proper management of ELVs for several years, although these incentives were not provided continuously.

The ELV take-back system is explicitly established as free of charge for consumers. Dismantling and shredding facilities finance their operations through revenues generated from recovered scrap metal, spare parts, and materials recovered for recycling, such as batteries and catalytic converters.

Identified Reasons for Non-Compliance with Applicable Regulations:

- Trading of used vehicles within Republic of Serbia and subsequent re-registration in the destination city.
- Cases in which a used vehicle is delivered to Serbia (possibly with the intention of the exporter that it will be repaired, sold, and re-registered), but is ultimately not re-registered at the destination and eventually becomes an ELV. For such cases, there are no provisions ensuring the exchange of data on the appropriate treatment of the vehicle between the competent authorities of the countries involved.
- Temporary deregistration/suspension of registration: loss of traceability of the vehicle owner and the absence of incentives or penalty mechanisms that would encourage the owner to comply with legal requirements. Consequently, the owner is not required to submit export documentation or a Certificate of Destruction to the relevant authorities, as doing so does not provide any tangible benefit to the owner.
- Illegal dismantling at informal “car scrapyards.” Informal dismantlers seek to maximize their revenue from ELVs, while shredding facilities are absent in many unregulated waste-management systems. Informal dismantlers apply inadequate technological and professional practices during ELV dismantling and dispose of waste in an uncontrolled manner. This creates environmental and occupational problems and reduces the overall efficiency of ELV dismantling.
- Lack of incentives to make the delivery of ELVs to collection points/authorized treatment facilities more attractive.

From our perspective, the intensive application of digital technologies makes a significant contribution to improving and organizing waste collection and recycling systems (Bošković et al. 2024).

On the other hand, the process is becoming increasingly complex due to the growing number of vehicles, the diversity of propulsion systems, such as natural gas and electric vehicles, and other requirements associated with modern smart cities (Bošković et al. 2026; Milojević et al. 2025).

Estimation of the Number of ELVs

Using the vehicle fleet balance method, the number of vehicles that ceased to be part of the vehicle registration system during 2024 was estimated. The results indicate that the number of such vehicles was approximately 75,500, representing the potential number of vehicles that reached the end of their life, Table 1.

The obtained result does not represent exclusively the number of ELVs, but rather an estimate of the number of vehicles that have exited the registration system and may represent vehicles at the end of their life. Some of these vehicles may have been exported, temporarily deregistered, or returned to service; however, the obtained value provides a useful indicator of the magnitude of this waste stream.

Generally, a comparison of the estimated quantities with the number of vehicles officially recorded within the ELV management system reveals a significant discrepancy. Although the available data indicate a substantial gap between the estimated number of potential ELVs and the officially reported quantities of treated ELVs, a direct coverage rate cannot be calculated because the datasets differ in units and reporting periods. Such a discrepancy indicates that a proportion of vehicles is not covered by the official recording system, which may be attributable to informal dismantling, the sale of individual parts, unregulated handling, or other forms of vehicle disposal that are not captured by statistical reporting.

The vehicle fleet balance provides a first-order indication of the potential magnitude of the ELV stream, although the estimate remains subject to uncertainty. Although this method does not allow for the precise identification of each individual vehicle, it represents a useful tool for estimating the magnitude of the waste stream under conditions of limited data availability.

The differences between the estimated and officially recorded quantities indicate the need to improve the system for tracking the movement of vehicles from the time of deregistration to their final treatment. Establishing an integrated information system and enhancing cooperation among relevant institutions would enable the collection of more reliable data, which is particularly important for planning the capacity of treatment facilities and achieving circular economy objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis indicates that, although the Republic of Serbia has established a legislative framework for the management of end-of-life vehicles that is broadly aligned with European legislation, discrepancies remain between

the estimated number of vehicles potentially reaching the end of their useful life and the quantities officially recorded as treated. These discrepancies highlight the need to further improve the registration, traceability, reporting, and monitoring of ELVs throughout their entire life cycle. Strengthening these mechanisms, together with the gradual harmonization of Serbian legislation with the evolving EU regulatory framework, is essential for more effective ELV management and the development of a circular economy in Serbia.

The paper presents an estimation of the quantities of ELVs in the Republic of Serbia using a vehicle fleet balance method based on available statistical data. The analysis shows that the estimated number of vehicles leaving service significantly exceeds the number of vehicles covered by the official treatment system.

The obtained results indicate discrepancies between the estimated and recorded quantities, highlighting the need for further improvements in the systems for recording, tracking, and reporting on ELVs. The proposed approach can serve as a simple indicator for estimating the quantities of ELVs and as a basis for future research and the development of more reliable estimation methods.

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