

## **WS 7: A Structured Method for Identifying Driver Impairment: Experiences from Switzerland and Germany**

Audience Knowledge: Intermediate

### **Workshop Chairs**

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### **Abstract**

Driving under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, medications, or other impairing substances remains a major challenge for road safety and law enforcement. While chemical testing methods are essential for confirming substance use, the identification of impaired drivers in roadside situations often relies on observable behavioral and physiological indicators. To support police officers in this task, a program was developed as a structured observational method for detecting potential driver impairment.

The method provides law enforcement officers with a standardized framework to systematically assess signs and symptoms associated with impairment. The method combines trained description, communication with the driver, and simple coordination and cognitive checks through passive observation. Officers evaluate a broad catalogue of indicators—including eye appearance, speech patterns, motor coordination, reaction behavior, and general demeanor—to form an evidence-based suspicion of impairment. When multiple indicators are present, the method supports the decision to initiate further investigative measures such as evidential blood sampling.

The program has been implemented and operationally tested by police forces in several German states, including Saarland and Swiss cantons, including St. Gallen. Over years of practical use, the method has contributed to improving the early detection of potentially impaired drivers, increasing the consistency of police assessments, and strengthening the documentation of observations that support subsequent forensic toxicological investigations.

This workshop presentation introduces the conceptual background of this approach, its operational structure, and the training approach used for police officers. In addition, practical experiences and evaluation results from Switzerland and Germany will be discussed, including lessons learned from field implementation. The session aims to provide an overview of how structured behavioral assessment tools can complement chemical testing in roadside enforcement and enhance the identification of impaired driving.

The workshop will also include the critical assessment of case examples by the participants and compares the outcome under the different jurisdictions.

## **Speakers**

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### Workshop Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
<b>08:00 AM - 08:15 AM</b>	Introduction of Chairs and Speakers	Beyer
<b>08:15 AM - 08:30 AM</b>	Outline of Workshop	Beyer
<b>08:30 AM - 09:00 AM</b>	Introduction of Method – Toxicological Background	Beyer, Ewald
<b>09:00 AM - 09:30 AM</b>	Introduction of Method – Police Background	Sennhauser, Frey
<b>09:30 AM - 09:45 AM</b>	Results Germany	Ewald, Frey
<b>09:45 AM - 10:00 AM</b>	Results Switzerland	Beyer, Sennhauser
<b>10:00 AM - 10:30 AM</b>	Break	All
<b>10:30 AM - 10:45 AM</b>	Introduction of Cases	Beyer, Ewald, Sennhauser, Frey
<b>10:45 AM - 11:30 AM</b>	Groupwork of Cases	Beyer, Ewald, Sennhauser, Frey
<b>11:30 AM - 12:30 AM</b>	Presentation of Groupwork and Discussion	Beyer, Ewald, Sennhauser, Frey