

# An interview with SoRSA Committee member, Mannia Georgiadou

We spoke to Mannia about her route to joining the SoRSA Committee, and the value it has brought to professional development and networks.



## Biography

Mannia is a Senior Engineer with 13 years' experience working in the Transportation and Road Safety Engineering sector. During this time, she has worked in strategic road safety and highways related fields including design and maintenance, road safety engineering, operational safety, and road safety audit. Currently she is a member of the Highways – Operational Safety team for Sweco in Scotland.

As a Road Safety auditor trained to the requirements of GG119, Mannia has undertaken Road Safety Audits in schemes including road improvements, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure improvements and streetscape projects.

## **How has joining the SoRSA Committee enhanced your career networks?**

Joining the SoRSA Committee has enhanced my professional networks. Initially, I was encouraged to join by Eric Hill, a long-time member and immediate past Chair of the Committee.

Since joining, I've had the opportunity to connect with a large number of road safety professionals beyond my local network in Edinburgh and to interact with experts from across the nation, including those who helped establish SoRSA over twenty years ago. The exposure to a vast depth of knowledge has been invaluable, especially when I joined SoRSA as a fresh auditor six years ago.

The Committee fosters an environment of knowledge sharing and professional growth, where members discuss road safety, safety audits, and share ideas. We engage in group chats to share concerns, experiences and collaborate on solutions for various challenges. Through this I have been introduced to diverse projects and learned from experiences shared by colleagues around the country that I might not have encountered otherwise. But knowledge is to be shared, and the Committee provides a platform for road safety professionals to seek advice and support through various communication methods, such as the website.

Being part of the Committee has given me a sense of contributing to the betterment of the society and the road safety auditing profession. Part of my role involves the review of the annual membership renewal process through which we ensure that high professionalism standards are maintained.

My personal background, having grown up in Greece where road safety was less emphasised a few decades ago, has driven my passion for making a difference in this field, which aligns with the wider goals of the SoRSA Committee.

## **How did you find out about the SoRSA Committee?**

After becoming an auditor I joined SoRSA, recognising the valuable role it plays in maintaining high professional standards in road safety auditing. A year later, I became a member of the SoRSA Committee.

While being a SoRSA member is not a requirement to work as an auditor, more and more local authorities do now require SoRSA membership for conducting audits, which underscores the value and professionalism associated with both the Committee and the Society. This commitment to high professional standards is something we continuously strive to achieve.



### **How did your expectations of the group align with your actual experience?**

My experience with the SoRSA Committee has aligned very well with my expectations. Having prior knowledge of the Committee's goals and objectives, I knew what to anticipate. As an engineer and road safety professional, I'm aware that the field is predominantly male, not just in the UK but globally, including Greece where I studied for my degree in Engineering.

Despite this, I've never felt that my presence on the Committee was merely to tick a diversity box. The focus is always on professionalism and adherence to high standards and ensuring that we all follow the established protocols.

The Committee has a welcoming atmosphere, and it doesn't feel exclusive or like a clique. I believe more people joining would be beneficial, enhancing our collective efforts and broadening our perspectives.

### **Do you think that people have may have misconceptions about the SoRSA Committee?**

Yes, I believe there are some misconceptions about the SoRSA Committee by some members.

Through my involvement with the annual reviews, I've encountered comments from SoRSA members who feel targeted and believe the reviewers are picking holes in their work, but that's never the case.

The reviews are conducted impartially; they are not influenced by who someone is or where they work. Our goal is to ensure adherence to standards in audits so that our members work is robust and stands up to scrutiny. In our role as road safety auditors we may be cited as a witness in court, and we do not want our professionalism questioned.

The Committee is open to all road safety professionals and does not exclude anyone, as there are no barriers to joining. This year's AGM has already brought in more new members.

Since we are all volunteers doing this in our free time, finding people with the time and the will to get involved can be challenging. This is true for any of the Institution's committees.

**What has been your best experience on the Committee?**

I enjoy everything about it, such as the quarterly meetings that we have, be that on Teams or in London, Britannia Walk. I also enjoy assisting as much as I can with organising the annual SoRSA conferences and local Scottish Workshops.

**What kind of support or resources were helpful to you as a new SoRSA Committee member?**

For me, it was all about the knowledge sharing, including the tips and information that other members shared.

**What particular areas of road safety and SoRSA Committee have you been involved with?**

Mainly the annual reviews and new membership application reviews, as well as assisting in the organisation of events, conferences and workshops.

As a Committee we're trying to offer a wide range of topics to promote learning and improve capabilities – the way we think of road safety audits and our work in general.