



Professor Ahmed Elmarakbi

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Better road safety is a step closer after professor joins Pan-European alliance

A renowned researcher at Northumbria University who is working on a €4m project to make our roads safer has been invited to become part of an important alliance aiming to futureproof industry.

[Professor Ahmed Elmarakbi](#), Professor of Automotive Composites in the Department of [Mechanical and Construction Engineering](#), initiated and developed a project called SALIENT, which will lead to the design of safer, lighter, smarter vehicle structures that can absorb more high energy impact

in a crash situation, ultimately meaning fewer serious injuries and fatalities on our roads.

Professor Elmarakbi will be acting as a scientific coordinator, technical manager and technical board chair for SALIENT, which is funded by the EU's key programme for research and innovation, [Horizon Europe](#).

Thanks to his work to bring about this important three-year study, Professor Elmarakbi has now been invited to join the [European Lightweight Cluster Alliance \(ELCA\)](#), a continent-wide initiative that uses the collaborative and combined power of top-class researchers, together with the best facilities, to address the needs and challenges of industries such as mobility, energy, healthcare, defence and construction.

Professor Elmarakbi explained: "It's fantastic to officially be part of such an important alliance, which will lead to further EU projects and funding opportunities, allowing the University to collaborate further with industry, and disseminating the findings of our research more widely to maximise its impact. Being part of ELCA will bring us closer to realising the aims of the project around better road safety for all."

He continued: "We anticipate that SALIENT, which will present novel structural and vehicle concepts that can be adapted to accommodate different crash scenarios, will significantly contribute to the evolving field of automotive safety".

"Automotive industries, which yield an average of more than €2.8 trillion a year, contribute towards almost three-and-a-half per cent of the world Gross Domestic Product, so this could also have a significant impact on socio-economic growth and development, as well as helping create next generation vehicles that are safer than any we've seen before."

Professor John Woodward, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Engineering and Environment, said: "We're honoured that the expertise and hard work of a member of our team has been recognised in this way, and congratulate Professor Elmarakbi on this invitation to contribute to such an important initiative. We look forward to supporting him and his colleagues as SALIENT develops."

ELCA Coordinator Ricardo del Valle said: “Having Professor Elmarakbi and Northumbria University on board allows us to reinforce our positioning in automotive lightweighting and connects us with one of the top institutions in the world for addressing future challenges.”

SALIENT (SAfer, Lighter, Circular and Smarter Vehicle Structure Design for Enhanced Crashworthiness and Higher Compatibility) will also have one of the biggest automotive manufacturers in the world, Stellantis (Italy), along with the Automotive Technology Centre of Galicia (Spain), The Fraunhofer Society (Germany), and European innovation and business management firm Bax & Company among its partners. Find out more about the project and its aims via the EU’s research portal [CORDIS](#).

Northumbria University is ranked highly for its engineering research power in the [Research Excellence Framework 2021](#), with 90 per cent of its studies rated as either world-leading or internationally excellent.

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