



2019 road safety statistics: what is behind the figures?

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1. Trend in fatality numbers 2010-2019

EU-wide, the number of fatalities fell by 2% in 2019

In 2019, an estimated 22 800 road traffic fatalities were recorded in the 27 EU Member States. This represents almost 7 000 fewer fatalities compared with 2010, a decrease of 23%. Compared with 2018, the number fell by 2%. While the underlying trend remains downward, progress has slowed in most countries since 2013 and the EU target of halving the number of road deaths by 2020 (relative to the 2010 baseline) will not be met (See Graph 1). 2020 still may prove to be an outlier with early indications that the number of road fatalities is likely to drop significantly in view of the measures taken to tackle coronavirus, but not by enough to meet the target.

(See attachment with Graph 1: Downward trend in the number of road traffic fatalities in the EU)

Road fatality rates are converging but significant differences between countries remain

The EU average of 51 road deaths per million inhabitants masks significant differences between Member States. While the performance gap between the Member States has narrowed significantly since the year 2000, there are still proportionally four times more road deaths in the worst than the best performing country.

Based on provisional figures for 2019, the best performing countries were Sweden (22 deaths/million) and Ireland (29/million) while Romania (96/million), Bulgaria (89/million) and Poland (77/million) reported the highest fatality rates in 2019.

Only two countries had a fatality rate higher than 80 deaths per million inhabitants, compared with seven in 2010. Indeed, half of all Member States had a rate below 50 while for 10 countries, the rate was less than 40.

In total, eight Member States recorded their lowest ever road fatality rate in 2019: Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden.

(See attachment with Graph 2: Trend in road fatality numbers per million inhabitants by country, 2010-2019)

One third of Member States have reduced road deaths by 30% or more since 2010

EU-wide, the number of road deaths fell by 2% in 2019. Sweden (-32%), Finland (-14%) and Latvia (-12%) experienced the largest year-on-year decreases. This excludes countries with fewer than 100 fatalities per year as they are more prone to large annual fluctuations. Even in countries with more than 100 fatalities, the numbers can fluctuate significantly, e.g., Sweden saw its figure rise by 28% in 2018 before falling by 31% in 2019. In contrast, there was a striking increase of 20% in Denmark, and smaller rises in Slovakia (+7%), Lithuania (+6%) and Belgium (+6%).

Looking at the trend over the longer-term 2010-2019, the number of fatalities on European roads decreased by 23% on average. The EU target for 2010-2020 is 50% fewer deaths. One third of Member States have reduced the number of road deaths by 30% or more since 2010 with Greece recording the largest fall (-45%). It is worth noting that alongside Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland (all former or current cohesion countries) and the three Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) were among those experiencing a higher-than-average drop in the number of fatalities. See Graph 2 and section 4 for data on each country.

Impact of Brexit

All EU aggregate figures now reflect the situation in the EU without the United Kingdom. While this inevitably leads to a smaller total number of fatalities in the Union, the rate per million inhabitants has increased due to the fact that the UK has a comparatively good road safety record, e.g., the EU figure of 51 deaths per million inhabitants in 2019 would be 48 if the UK were included. Similarly in 2010, the EU figure of 67 deaths per million inhabitants would be 63 including the UK.

2. Road fatality statistics in more detail

Detailed data for 2019 broken down by road type, transport mode, age and type of victim are not yet available. The following information is based on an analysis of road safety statistics up to 2018.

Almost 40% of road fatalities occur in urban areas

Overall, 53% of road traffic fatalities in 2018 occurred on rural roads, versus 38% in urban areas and 9% on motorways. EU-wide, around 20 people per 1 million inhabitants died on urban roads in 2018. The rate differs significantly from one Member State to another: it is generally below the EU average in most northern and western EU countries. In contrast, in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Romania, more people were killed in urban areas than on rural roads.

(See attachment with Graph 3: Percentage of road fatalities in the EU by type of road, 2018)

Who are the victims?

Vulnerable road-users account for 70% of road deaths in urban areas

Overall, car occupants (drivers and passengers) account for 45% of all road deaths while users of two-wheelers make up 26% and pedestrians 21% of total fatalities.

(See attachment with Graph 4: Percentage of road fatalities in the EU by transport mode, 2018)

Crashes in urban areas are different in character to crashes on rural roads and motorways. Within urban areas, pedestrians (and not car occupants) account for the largest share of victims: inside urban areas, almost 40% of the fatalities are pedestrians, 12% are cyclists and 18% are users of powered two-wheelers. This means that 70% of total fatalities in urban areas are vulnerable road-users. Outside of urban areas, this percentage is 32%.

EU-wide, men account for three out of four deaths (76%) on the roads. The pattern is homogeneous across Member States and is relatively unchanged since 2010.

(See attachment with Graph 5: Percentage of road fatalities on urban roads in the EU by transport mode, 2018)

While considerably fewer car occupants were killed in urban areas in 2018 compared with 2010, the situation for cyclists worsened

While the number of fatalities decreased across the board between 2010 and 2018 (by 21% on average), figures for car drivers and passengers improved at a comparatively faster rate (a fall of 26%). In contrast, the number of cyclist fatalities fell by only 5% over the same period.

Indeed, looking at urban areas only, the number of cyclists killed actually increased by 1% between 2010 and 2018. Pedestrian fatalities in urban areas also fell at a slower pace (down by 18%) than the decline in the overall number of road traffic victims.

For every person killed in road crashes, about five more suffer serious injuries with life-changing consequences. Serious injuries are often more costly to society because of long-time rehabilitation and healthcare needs. The majority of those injured are vulnerable road users, i.e. pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of powered two-wheelers. Vulnerable road users account for an even higher proportion of those injured in towns and cities.

The elderly account for more than a quarter of all fatalities although proportionally more young people are killed on the roads

People aged 65 and over accounted for 28% of all road deaths in 2018. This figure rises to 38% when looking at urban roads only. This age group is particularly vulnerable as pedestrians, making up 58% of all pedestrian fatalities on urban roads.

Meanwhile, 12% of those killed on EU roads are aged between 18 and 24, while only 8% of the population falls within this age group. This means that young people are disproportionately more likely to be involved in a fatal road collision. The majority (64%) of young people killed in road crashes were drivers or car passengers, while only 8% were pedestrians.

(See attachment with Graph 6: Percentage of road fatalities in the EU by age in 2018)

While the number of young victims fell sharply between 2010 and 2018, the number of elderly fatalities increased slightly

In general, the average age of road traffic victims in the EU is increasing: elderly people aged 65 and over accounted for 28% of total fatalities in 2018 compared with 22% in 2010. Indeed, over the period 2010-2018, the number of road victims aged 65 and over actually rose by 2%. In contrast, the number of fatalities among the 18-24 age-group fell by 43%.

3. What steps have been taken recently at EU and international level to create safer roads?

EU level

In May 2018, as part of the '[Europe on the Move](#)' package, the Commission published the outline of a Road safety policy framework 2021-2030 and a [Strategic action plan on road safety](#). This set out ambitious plans for road safety governance, funding support, infrastructure, vehicles, safe road use, emergency response, emerging challenges and the global dimension. In June 2019, the Commission [published details](#) as to how it intends to put its action plan into practice.

The action plan confirms the EU's long-term goal of moving close to zero fatalities and serious injuries in road transport by 2050. The new interim targets, responding to the [2017 Valletta Declaration](#) by transport ministers are to cut the number of road deaths and serious injuries by 50% between 2020 and 2030.

A number of the actions have already been carried out, including the following:

- With the [updated vehicle General Safety](#) Regulation adopted in November 2019, new safety requirements will increase the protection of road users both inside and outside the vehicle. Motor vehicles will be equipped with new, advanced vehicle systems, such as intelligent speed assistance; advanced emergency braking and lane-keeping systems; frontal protection systems; driver drowsiness and attention monitoring, and an event (accident) data recorder. Buses and lorries will also be equipped with advanced systems capable of detecting vulnerable road users. This legislation alone could save 25 000 lives within 16 years of coming into force.
- The updated EU [rules on road infrastructure safety management](#), also adopted last year, aim to reduce both the number of crashes and their severity. In the future, infrastructure safety will be assessed more systematically and more proactively for more roads in the EU, helping to target investment. Transparency and follow-up will be improved, and the same advanced safety procedures will apply on roads linking major cities and regions as on the EU's strategic road network (TEN-T). It will also pave the way for automated assistance and prepare for autonomous driving across the EU. Vulnerable road users will have to be taken into account systematically in infrastructure planning and management.
- On 28 March 2019, the Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) jointly launched the '[Safer Transport Platform](#)', a one-stop-shop providing advice and technical assistance on funding and financing options for investment in transport safety, with a particular focus on road safety.
- In order to close the 'road safety gap', which still exists between different EU Member States, the [EU Road Safety Exchange](#) was launched in 2019 as a three-year project with the financial support of the European Parliament. Austria, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden are part of the project which aims to develop partnerships between road safety professionals from different European countries and address their specific road safety problems through sustained twinning activities.

International level

At the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm (19-20 February 2020), Sweden presented the [Stockholm Declaration](#), with strong support from the European Commission. The document provides guidance for the decade ahead and paves the way for further global political commitment including a new fatality and injury reduction target for 2030. The context for this is the expiry of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.6: "By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents".

The Commission and EU Member States have a wealth of experience in road safety policy-making and engage with other world regions to promote progress.

The Commission is focussed on supporting its immediate neighbours, in particular the countries of the Western Balkans and of the Eastern Partnership. Both regions signed Road Safety Declarations ([Western Balkans](#) and [Eastern Partnership](#)) in 2018 reaffirming existing commitments and providing political support for targets, regional cooperation and exchange of best practices. The EU is supporting them in their implementation, in particular by sharing best practice and supporting capacity-building, for example in establishing regional road safety observatories for data collection and analysis.

In addition, road safety was one of the fields chosen in 2019 for intensified cooperation with the African continent in the framework of an EU-Africa Transport Taskforce, organised jointly by the European Commission and the African Union Commission. African road traffic death rates are the highest globally and more than four times higher than the European average. The Taskforce's [final report](#) contains a separate chapter on road safety, listing 13 specific recommendations to reduce road crash injuries. Some actions have already started, and follow-up will be reviewed at the regular high-

level meetings with the African Union (e.g. EU-Africa Summit in October 2020).

More information

All information, statistics and best practices as well as studies and project reports, can be found on the Commission [website](#).

4. Country specific information on the number of road fatalities

EU: On average, 51 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, representing a 2% decrease since 2018 and a 23% drop since 2010.

Austria: 46 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is below the EU average of 51. The situation is unchanged since 2018. Since 2010, the number of fatalities has fallen by 26%, faster than the EU average.

Belgium: 56 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is above the EU average. The number of fatalities increased by 6% in 2019 although over the last decade the number has fallen by 24%.

Bulgaria: 89 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is the second highest rate in the EU. The number of fatalities increased by 3% in 2019. It has decreased by 19% over the last decade at a slower pace than the EU average.

Croatia: 73 road deaths per million inhabitants estimated in 2019, which is well above the EU average. Road fatalities fell by 6% in 2019 to reach the lowest number ever recorded. Since 2010, the number has fallen by 30% at a comparatively fast pace, albeit from a very high level.

Cyprus*: 59 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is above the EU average. The number of deaths rose by 6% in 2019, although it has fallen by 13% since 2010.

Czechia: 58 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is above the EU average. Road fatalities fell by 6% in 2019 following a significant increase of 14% in 2018. Over the last decade there has been a 23% decrease.

Denmark: 35 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is well below the EU average. Road fatalities have fallen by 20% since 2010 but the figure increased by a notable 20% in 2019.

Estonia*: 39 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is significantly below the EU average. Following a sharp rise of 40% in 2018, there was a year-on-year drop of 22% in 2019. Over the last decade, the number of fatalities has fallen by 34%.

Finland: 37 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is significantly below the EU average. The number of fatalities decreased by 14% in 2019 which is now the safest year on Finland's roads since records began. Over the last decade, the number has fallen by 24%.

France: 48 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is slightly below the EU average. France registered its lowest number of road fatalities on record in 2019, although the number was only marginally smaller than for 2018. Over the past decade, the number of road deaths has fallen by 19%.

Germany: 37 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is significantly below the EU average. Provisional data show that the number of road deaths should reach a new record low in 2019, following a reduction of 7% compared with 2018. Since 2010, the number of fatalities has fallen by 16%.

Greece: 65 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is well above the EU average. However, the country has made impressive improvements in its road safety performance since 2010 with the fastest downward trend (45%) in the EU. The year-on-year change in 2019 was a drop of 1% but enough to register the lowest figure on record.

Hungary: 62 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is above the EU average. Following a 5% reduction since 2018, Hungary recorded its lowest number of road fatalities since 2013. Over the last decade, the number has fallen by 19%.

Ireland: 29 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which makes it the second best performing country. The number of road fatalities increased slightly by 1% in 2019 although over the last decade it has fallen by 33%, at a faster pace than the EU average.

Italy: 55 road deaths per million inhabitants estimated in 2019, which is slightly above the EU average. The number of fatalities dropped by 1% in 2019 while over the last decade it has fallen by 20%.

Latvia: 69 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is well above the EU average. A 12% decrease in the number of fatalities in 2019 reversed the increase of 10% observed in 2018. The 2019 figure is the lowest on record. Over the longer-term, the number has dropped by a significant 39% since 2010.

Lithuania: 66 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is well above the EU average. A 6% increase in the number of fatalities in 2019 follows a 9% reduction in 2018. Since 2010, the number has fallen by a significant 38%.

Luxembourg*: 36 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is well below the EU average. The number of fatalities, which is subject to large fluctuations, dropped by 39% in 2019 to reach its lowest figure on record. This followed a 44% rise in 2018. Over the longer-term, the number has fallen by 31% since 2010.

Malta*: 32 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which makes it the third-best performing country although the overall number is very small and therefore subject to fluctuations.

Netherlands: 34 road deaths per million inhabitants estimated for 2019, which is one of lowest rates in the EU. Road fatalities fell by 3% in 2019, although since 2010 there has been no overall improvement, with a 9% rise in the overall number of people killed on the roads in that period.

Poland: 77 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is the third-highest rate in the EU. Following good progress over the last decade, with a 26% decrease from 2010 to 2019, the number of fatalities remained virtually unchanged in the last year.

Portugal: 61 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is above the EU average. The number of fatalities fell by 8% in 2019. Over the longer-term, the situation has improved significantly with the number of fatalities decreasing by 33%, and at a faster pace than the EU average.

Romania: 96 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is the highest rate in the EU. The situation is unchanged since 2018. Over the last decade, the number of fatalities has fallen by 22%, although the lowest figure was recorded back in 2014.

Slovakia: 51 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is in line with the EU average. The number of fatalities increased by 7% in 2019 following a 6% decrease in 2018. Over the last decade, the number has fallen by 25% at the same pace as the EU average.

Slovenia*: 49 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which is just below the EU average. The number of fatalities continues to fluctuate: following a 13% decrease in 2018 (the lowest figure on record), 2019 saw a 13% increase. Since 2010 the number has fallen by 25%.

Spain: 36 road deaths per million estimated inhabitants in 2019, which is well below the EU average. This represents a 6% drop in the number of fatalities since 2018. Over the last decade there has been good progress with the number falling at a faster pace than the EU average (31%).

Sweden: 22 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019, which gives it the best road safety record in the EU. A year-on-year decrease of 32% more than reversed the sharp rise in 2018 and saw Sweden register in 2019 its lowest ever number of road deaths. Over the last decade, the number of fatalities has fallen by 17%.

* For several small Member States where the number of fatalities is fewer than or around 100, the figures tend to fluctuate from year to year meaning that the underlying trend can only be seen over a longer time period.

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Related documents

[Graph - Road Safety Statistics 2019.pdf](#)