



2016 road safety statistics: What is behind the figures?

La Valette, 28 March 2017

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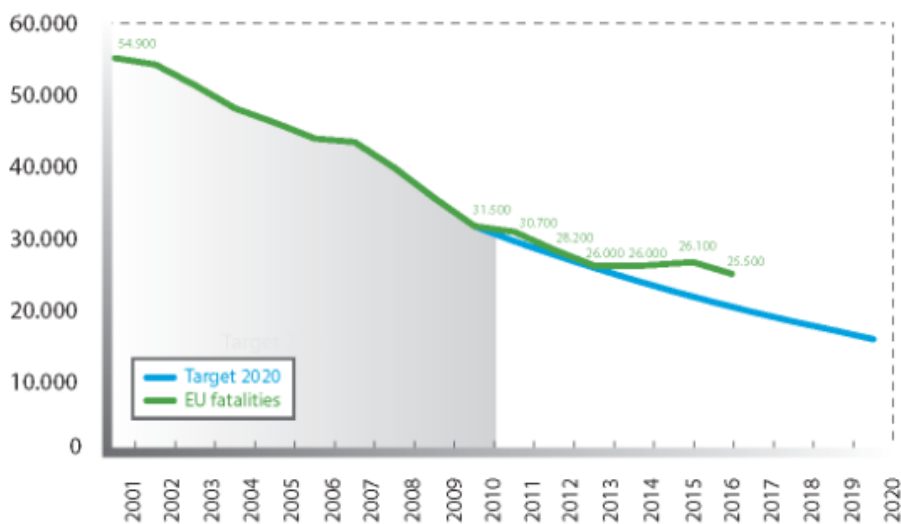
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Last year marked a turning point in reducing road fatalities: after two years of stagnation, the number of those who lost their lives on the roads was reduced by 2%. 25,500 people were killed in 2016, 600 fewer than in 2015 and 6,000 fewer than in 2010. This represents a 19% reduction over the last six years.

While reaching the strategic target of halving the number of road deaths between 2010 and 2020 is still an extreme challenge, it worth trying as every single saved life matters.

As a comparison point, fatalities were cut by 43% between 2001 and 2010.

Graph 1: EU fatalities and targets 2001-2020



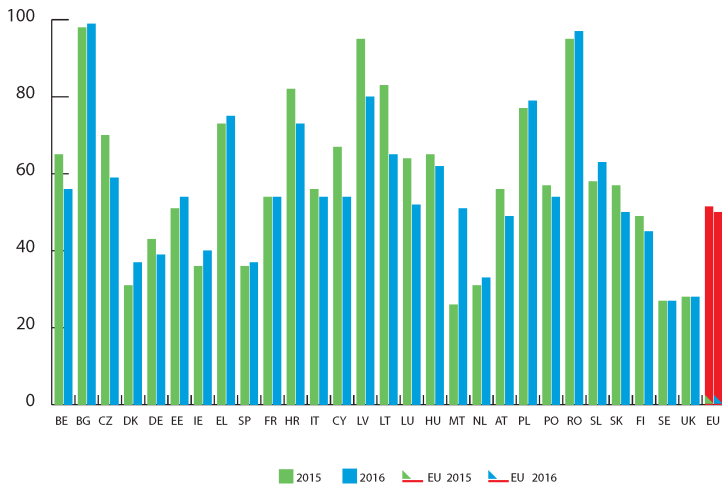
Source - CARE (EU road accidents database)

How did the different Member States perform in reducing the number of fatalities?

While most Member States have improved their road safety records since 2010, there is still a significant gap in performance across the EU. In 2016, countries with the lowest fatality rate per million inhabitants were Sweden (27), the UK (28), the Netherlands (33), Spain (37), Denmark (37), Germany (39) and Ireland (40). On the other hand, those with the weakest road safety records were Bulgaria (99), Romania (97), Latvia (80) and Poland (79). Among the countries who registered the biggest decrease in the number of road fatalities from 2015 to 2016, we find Lithuania (22%), Latvia (16%) and the Czech Republic (16%).

In 2016, for the second year in a row none of the Member States had a fatality rate above 100 deaths per million inhabitants and most EU countries recorded a fatality rate below 80 deaths per million inhabitants. Furthermore, almost half of the member States reached the best road safety records ever.

Graph 2: Fatalities per million inhabitants by country - 2015 and 2016*



* Figure for Denmark corrected on 6 April 2017; 10.50am

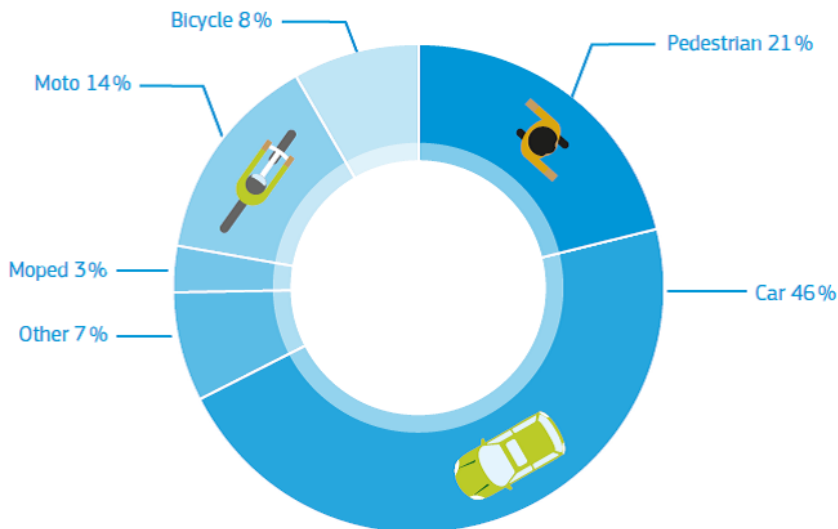
Which types of roads and which users are most affected?

Graph 3: Road fatalities in the EU by type of roads



In 2016, on average only about 8 % of road fatalities occurred on motorways; 37 % happened in urban areas; most (55 %) occurred on rural roads.

Graph 4: Road fatalities in the EU by transport mode



Car occupants account for the largest share of victims (46%). Put together, vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists account for the same proportion and are particularly exposed in urban areas.

21 % of all people killed on roads were pedestrians, and pedestrian fatalities decreased at a lower rate than other fatalities (by 11 % since 2010, compared to the total fatality decrease of 19 %). Cyclists accounted for 8 % of all road deaths in the EU. Motorcyclists, who are less protected during a crash, accounted for 14 % of road fatalities. In general, fatalities among vulnerable road users decreased much less than the among all road users.

What does the new data on serious injuries show?

For every person killed in traffic crashes, many more suffer serious injuries with life-changing consequences. Serious injuries are not only more common but are also often more costly to society because of the long-term rehabilitation and healthcare needed. Vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists or elderly road users, are especially affected.

As of 2015, Member States started to report data on serious injuries based on a new, commonly agreed definition following medical standards. The international MAIS trauma scale (maximum abbreviated injury score) has been used as the EU definition of serious road traffic injuries. The 'scale 3 and more' (MAIS3+) is the one that applies to serious injuries.

In November 2016, the Commission published injury data from sixteen Member States: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Ireland, France, Italy, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. This was a major progress in addressing effectively serious road traffic injuries. The countries for which data is available represent about 80 % of the EU's population and account for 80 % of all fatalities.

Based on the data provided, it is estimated that 135 000 people are seriously injured on EU roads. Therefore, on average there are more than five serious injuries for each road fatality in the EU. Most of those seriously injured are vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, and most are elderly, an age group that is growing in number. Their proportion is even higher in towns and cities.

A recent study^[1] carried out with the support of the European Commission analyses the most common characteristics of road traffic crashes that cause injuries of a MAIS3+ severity. The study provides an understanding of the most common factors contributing to serious road traffic injuries for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and car occupants in the EU. It collects knowledge that will enable the future identification of measures for effective prevention of serious road traffic injuries.

What is the EU doing for safer roads?

Road Safety is a shared responsibility. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, national and local authorities are responsible for most of the day to day actions, including enforcement and awareness-raising.

For its part, the EU has created a general framework for improved road safety with legislation and recommendations, for example by having introduced minimum requirements for the safety management of the Trans-European Transport Networks and technical requirements for safe transport of dangerous goods. Moreover, the [cross-border enforcement directive](#), entered into application on 6 May 2015, to tackle driving offences committed abroad, and new legislation on roadworthiness testing, adopted in April 2014, to decrease the number of traffic accidents caused by technical failures.

In 2015 another milestone for road safety was reached with the agreement on the deployment of innovative technology that can save lives. As of March 2018, all new vehicle types will have to be fitted with the [eCall system](#). eCall automatically dials Europe's single emergency number 112 in the event of a serious road accident and communicates the vehicle's location to the emergency services. eCall cuts emergency services response time by up to 50% in the countryside and 40% in urban areas. It is estimated that eCall can reduce the number of fatalities by at least 4% and the number of severe injuries by 6%.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- Review and monitoring of existing legislation:

a) A new proposal on the [training requirements for professional drivers](#) was adopted earlier this year. The objective of this proposal is to contribute to higher road safety standards and to facilitate the mobility of professional drivers. The main novelties include the modernisation of the training, highlighting for example the protection of vulnerable road users and the optimisation of fuel consumption, as well as better recognition of training undergone in another Member State. The proposal will now be examined by the European Parliament and the 28 EU Member States in accordance with the EU ordinary legislative procedure.

b) A review of the [infrastructure safety directive](#) is under way to investigate possible wider benefits of the directive, e.g. additional protection for vulnerable road users; identifying in a proactive way dangerous sections of roads; supporting the proper functioning of advanced driver assistance systems such as lane keeping assistance; and assessing how to encourage the extension of the safety principles applying to TEN-T road also to other more dangerous parts of road networks.

c) Existing legislation is regularly monitored by appropriate follow-up measures, such as transposition checks, evaluations, implementation reports and in dialogue with Member States primarily within the framework of expert groups and committees.

- Road safety is mainstreamed in the discussions on innovative technologies which have a huge road

safety potential.

a) The General Safety Regulation establishes the safety features and systems that vehicles have to fit in order to be sold in the EU market. The Commission [published](#) on 12 December a list of 19 lifesaving safety technologies that could be made mandatory on new vehicles in the next update of EU vehicle safety rules. Technologies on the list having a high potential for saving lives include, among others, Automated Emergency Braking, Intelligent Speed Assistance and Seat-belt reminders for all passenger seats.

- To pave the way towards cooperative intelligent transport systems and better management of traffic, the European Commission has adopted a [European Strategy on cooperative ITS](#), a milestone towards cooperative, connected and automated mobility. The Strategy will make it possible to deploy vehicles that can talk to each other and to the infrastructure on EU roads as of 2019.

b) This is also linked to the on-going work on automated driving, e.g. within the Commission initiative [GEAR 2030](#) which also has a strong road safety aspect.

- Studies and projects dedicated to further improving the knowledge on serious road injuries:

a) The [SafetyCube research project](#) funded under Horizon 2020 aims to support the selection and implementation of strategies and measures to reduce casualties in Europe and worldwide. The project includes a comprehensive analysis of accident risks, and it will provide guidelines for the registration and monitoring of serious road injuries.

The Commission stimulates and supports Member States in their activities to improve road safety through different knowledge sharing platforms and activities, such as the High Level Group on Road Safety, peer-reviews or the European Day Without a Road Death, a joint initiative with the European Traffic Police Network (TISPOL). These occasions bring together policy-makers, experts, NGOs and the industry. The Commission has furthermore created and runs the [European Road Safety Charter](#), a large platform, with more than 3 200 members today, that mobilises public and private entities as well as the civil society in all the 28 EU countries for voluntary commitments to road safety actions.

As part of its efforts, the Commission is holding, together with the Maltese Presidency, a Stakeholder and Ministerial Conference in Malta on 28 and 29 March 2017, bringing together road safety experts, stakeholders, and policy-makers. The objective of this conference is to launch a political debate and outline future political direction. A Declaration on Road Safety will be endorsed during the Ministerial Conference.

More information

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

Press release: [Road Safety: Encouraging results in 2016 call for continued efforts to save lives on EU roads](#)

[1] Study on serious road traffic injuries in the EU (SUSTAIN).

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