

Road safety in the European Union

*Trends, statistics
and main challenges,*

March 2015

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This report is an internal working material summarising preliminary EU road safety information for 2014 and final detailed data as submitted by the EU Member States for the years until 2013.

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<http://ec.europa.eu/roadsafety>

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Table of contents

Foreword	5
1. The EU road safety situation in 2014	6
2. Pedestrian safety	12
3. Cyclist safety	16
4. Motorcyclist safety	20
Conclusions	23



COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS:

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxemburg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom



Road safety is about people. Every day, millions of EU citizens use the roads: walking, driving or riding a bicycle.

Last year, almost 25 700 people did not make it home; more than 200 000 people came home with life-changing, serious injuries. Every fatal or serious crash on our roads is a tragedy. It is our moral obligation – our shared responsibility – to take road safety seriously.

Road safety is also one of the big European success stories. In 2014, there were 5 700 fewer deaths than in 2010. In the year 2000, very few Member States had a fatality rate lower than 80 deaths per million inhabitants. By 2014, only five Member States had a fatality rate above that. This is an amazing result, and it is the result of hard and dedicated road safety work throughout the European Union.

This does not mean we can now sit back and relax. The work we still have ahead is challenging. How can we make the most out of modern technologies for safety? What innovative ideas are there for the safety of the most vulnerable road users? And how to continue mobilising Member States and local stakeholders for the day-to-day work on the ground?

This report provides some facts and figures for a better understanding of the overall road safety situation in the European Union. I hope it will inspire you to take part and help in meeting this shared challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Violeta Bulc', written in a cursive style.

Violeta Bulc
Commissioner for Transport

1. The EU road safety situation in 2014

- In 2014, almost 25 700 road fatalities were reported in the EU.
- This is a decrease by around 1 % compared to 2013.
- For the complete strategy period 2010-2014, the annual number of road deaths decreased by 18%. This means 5 700 fewer deaths in 2014 than in 2010.
- The EU road fatality rate in 2014 was 51 dead per million inhabitants.
- Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and Malta have the lowest reported road fatality rate, below 30 dead per million inhabitants.
- The highest road fatality rates are reported from Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland with more than 80 dead per million inhabitants.



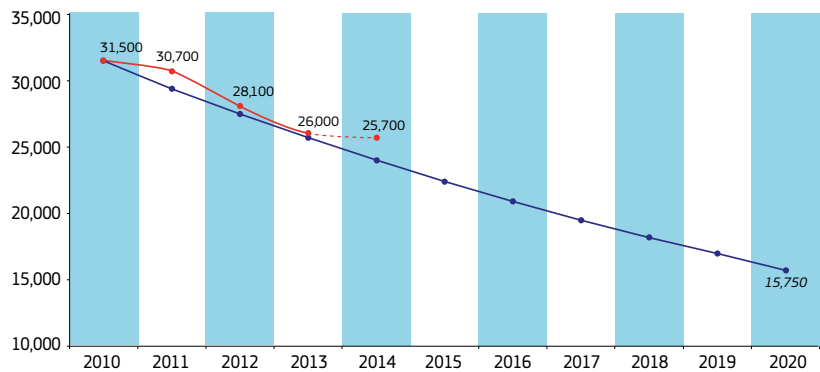


In 2014, the provisional figure for the EU in March 2015 is 25 700 reported road deaths. This is around 1 % fewer deaths than reported in 2013 and 18 % fewer than in 2010.

This means that the decrease rate has slowed down in 2014, compared to previous years. While achievements to date are good – cutting

the number of annual deaths by almost one fifth since the start of the strategy period 2010–2020 – they are not quite in line with the ambitious target. In order to halve the number of road deaths by 2020, the road fatality numbers must go down at a higher speed from today and onwards.

DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME SINCE 2010

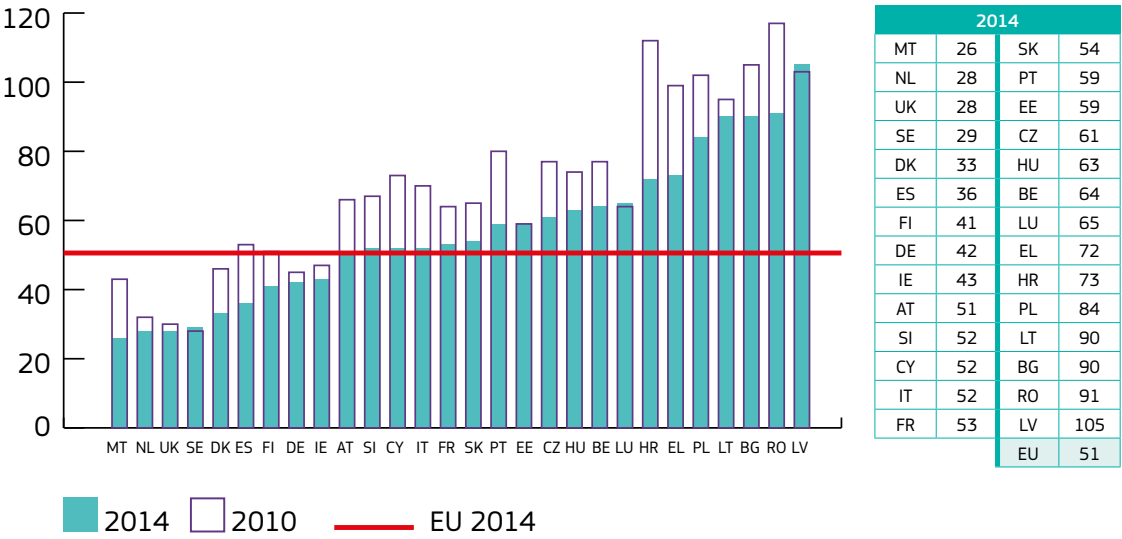


The overall long-term trend is that the number of road fatalities decreases. However, the year-to-year developments differ widely between Member States. Some Member States had an increasing number of road fatalities between 2013 and 2014, for example Slovakia, Latvia and Bulgaria. Other Member States had a significant decrease, for example Finland, Slovenia and Croatia with around 15 % fewer road deaths in 2014 than in the year before.

The decrease rate has slowed down in 2014



FATALITY RATE PER MEMBER STATE FOR 2010 AND 2014



Source: CARE (EU road accidents database).

In terms of fatality rate, the most commonly used way of comparing road safety levels among countries, the EU has now reached 51 dead per million inhabitants. This is the lowest fatality rate for any region in the world. In 2010, the EU road fatality rate was 63 dead per million inhabitants.

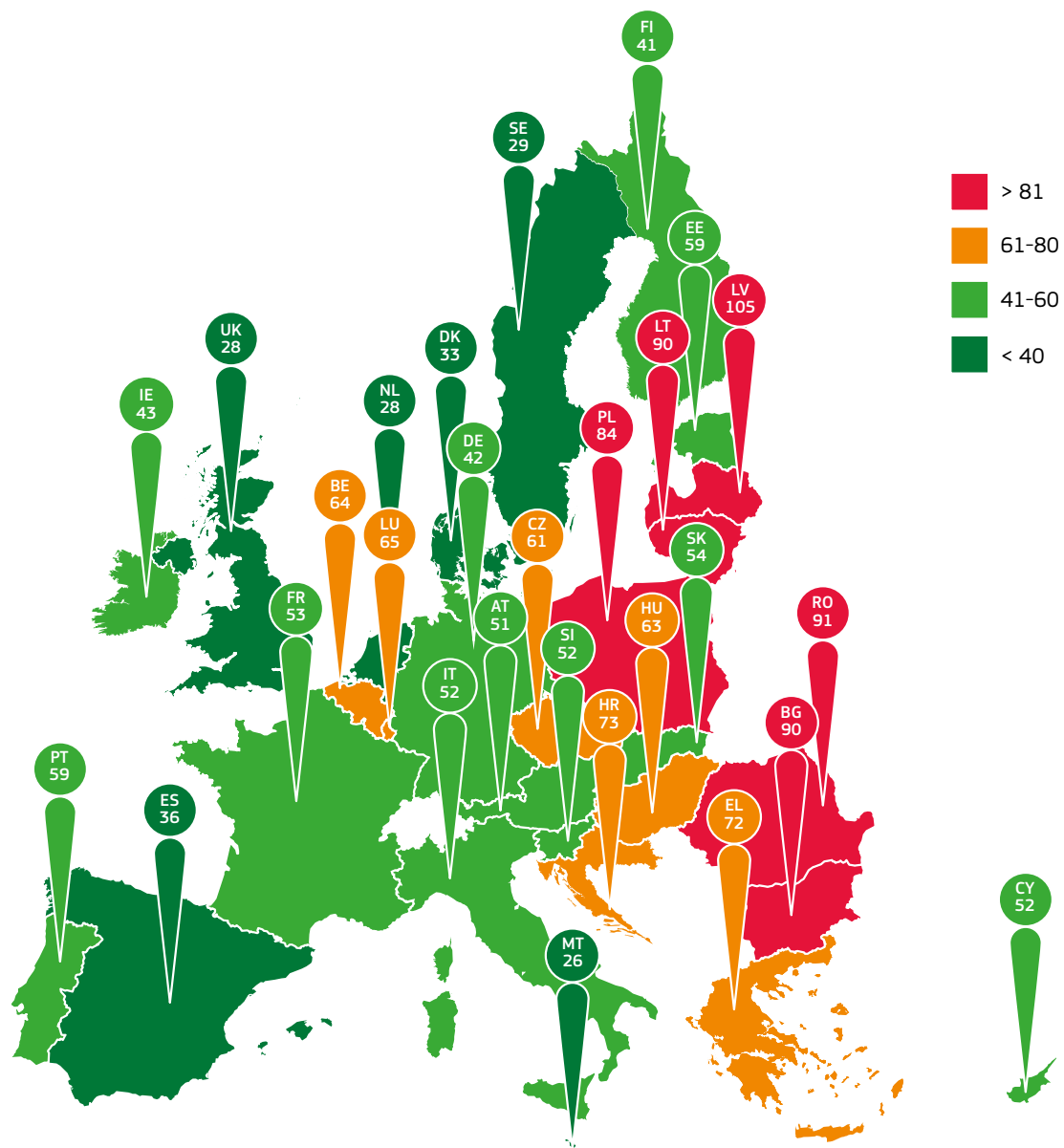
The lowest road fatality rate is reported from Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and Malta. These Member States had less than 30 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2014.

The highest road fatality rates are found in Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia with more than 90 dead per million inhabitants. Latvia reported the highest rate, 105 dead per million people.

Since 2010, the countries with the lowest fatality rates have had a slower than average decrease rate or even a stagnation of the number of road deaths.



ROAD FATALITY RATES 2014





The EU TEN-T network, consisting mainly of motorways, is comparatively safe. Only around 8% of all fatalities are caused on these roads. 38% of all fatalities are inside urban areas. This share has slightly increased over time. All other fatal crashes – the majority – take place on inter-urban roads.

The gender aspect remains strong. 76% of all who die in road traffic crashes are boys and men.

The young people, between 15 and 24 years old, make up 11% of the population but 17% of all road fatalities. This means that the young still face the largest risk in traffic. The good news is that their share is decreasing. In recent years, fatalities among young road users have decreased more than for any other age group.

The share of elderly road deaths is instead growing. This is a trend that will likely continue. The elderly are foreseen to become an even larger group within the total EU population. The risk rate for elderly is now almost as high as for the young road users.

Fatalities among young road users have decreased more than for any other age group.

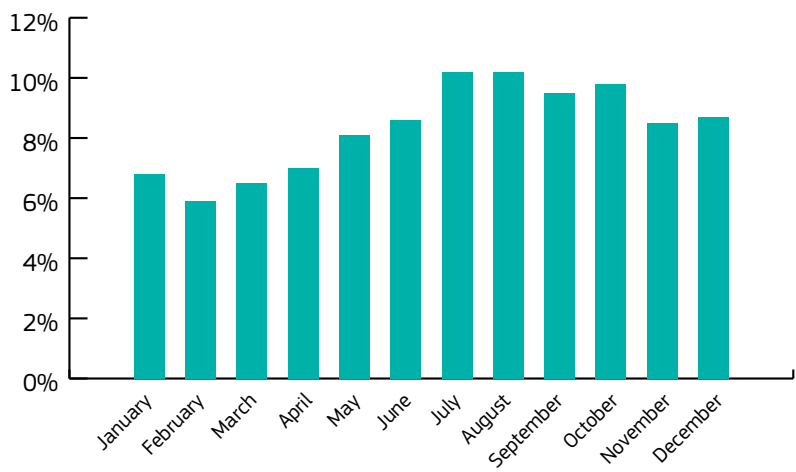
AGE GROUPS: SHARE OF ALL ROAD DEATHS AND SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION

AGE GROUP*	% OF FATALITIES	% OF POPULATION
<15	<3	16
15-24	17	11
25-49	36	35
50-64	19	20
>65	25	18

Fatal road crashes are not evenly spread around the year. Weekend night time and holiday seasons are more accident-prone than work days. The safest month of the year is February, normally accounting for less than 6% of all reported road deaths. July and August are peak period for fatal crashes, linked to increased traffic volumes during the European summer vacation months.



SHARE OF ROAD DEATHS PER MONTH



More fatal crashes take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays than on Mondays-Thursdays. The weekend risk pattern is especially strong for young people, aged 18-24, and especially during night-time. The reason is likely a higher prevalence of drink-driving, drug-driving and driver fatigue at weekend nights.

Apart from road deaths, the road traffic crashes also cause thousands of slight and serious injuries every year.



2. Pedestrian safety

- 22 % of all killed on the roads are pedestrians.
- Pedestrian fatalities decreased slower than other fatalities since 2010.
- Highest risk in urban areas.
- The share of women as victims is higher than among other road user fatalities.
- Elderly are particularly at risk.





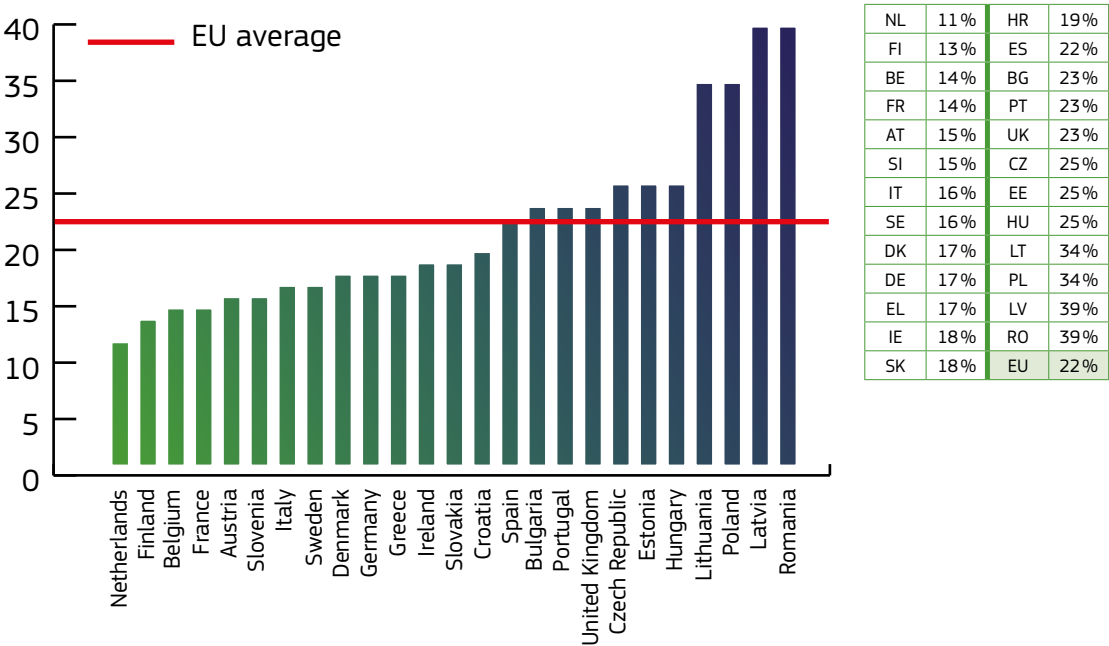
In 2013¹, 22 % of all who died in road traffic crashes were pedestrians.

The number of pedestrians killed on roads in the EU has decreased by only 11%, compared to the total fatality decrease of 18% from 2010 to 2013.

The share of pedestrian deaths is especially high in Romania, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania where more than a third of all killed in road traffic crashes are pedestrians.

Pedestrian fatalities have decreased by only 11 % since 2010.

PEDESTRIANS' SHARE OF ALL ROAD DEATHS, PER COUNTRY



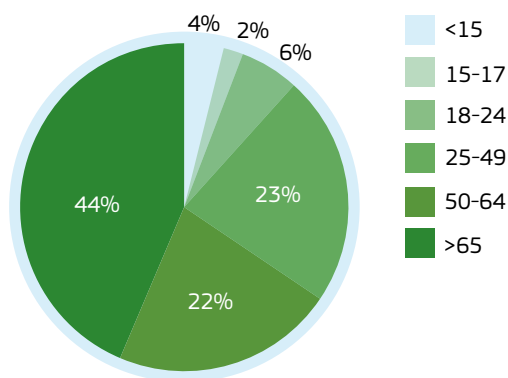
Pedestrians face larger risk on urban roads. Of all pedestrian fatalities, 69% are killed inside urban areas. Pedestrian fatalities on motorways are mostly linked to accidents at roadwork sites or to crashes where car occupants are injured when stepping out of the car.

Among the pedestrians killed in road traffic crashes, 36 % are women – a larger percentage than for the total number of road fatalities.

1) 2013 data are the latest reported detailed numbers and will be used from this chapter onwards.



PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES PER AGE GROUP



The share of elderly is also higher among the pedestrian fatalities than among the total road deaths. Around 44 % of all killed pedestrians were 65 years or older. The 15-24 year olds make up only 8 % of the pedestrian fatalities.

EXAMPLES OF PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ACTIONS IN MEMBER STATES

EDUCATION:

- Specific educational measures aimed at e.g. safe crossing by pedestrians and awareness of intoxicated pedestrians (Ireland, Road safety strategy 2013-2020)
- Promoting the statutory requirement of using reflective material by pedestrians (National Road Safety Programme of the Republic of Croatia 2011-2020)

ENFORCEMENT:

- Increased sanctions for drivers who infringe rules at pedestrian crossings and bus stops and for pedestrians in breach of traffic regulations (National strategy for improving road safety in Bulgaria for the period 2011–2020)
- Revision of the right of way regulations regarding pedestrian crossings (Poland, National road safety programme 2013-2020)



VEHICLES:

- Pedestrian-friendly fronts with external airbags (Danish Road Safety Commission National Action Plan 2013-2020.)
- Encouraging voluntary introduction of pedestrian detection systems in motor vehicles (Netherlands, Road Safety Strategic Plan 2008-2020)
- Exploring the possibility of applying testing requirements governing pedestrian protection to SUVs and vehicles with a short front end (Germany, Road Safety Programme 2011)

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Providing safe areas for pedestrian mobility: visibility, zebra crossings, design of the road, speed of vehicles (Spain, Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020)
- Technical safety assessment of un-signalised pedestrian crossings (Austrian Road Safety Programme 2011-2020)
- Intensification of existing and design of new pedestrian zones (Road safety enhancement strategy in the Slovak Republic in the years 2011 to 2020)

3. Cyclist safety

- 8% of all fatalities are cyclists.
- Low decrease of fatalities over time.
- Big differences between countries.
- The young are comparably safe, the elderly are over-represented among fatalities.
- Serious head and neck injuries most common.





In total, the cyclists make up 8% of all who die on the road in the EU.

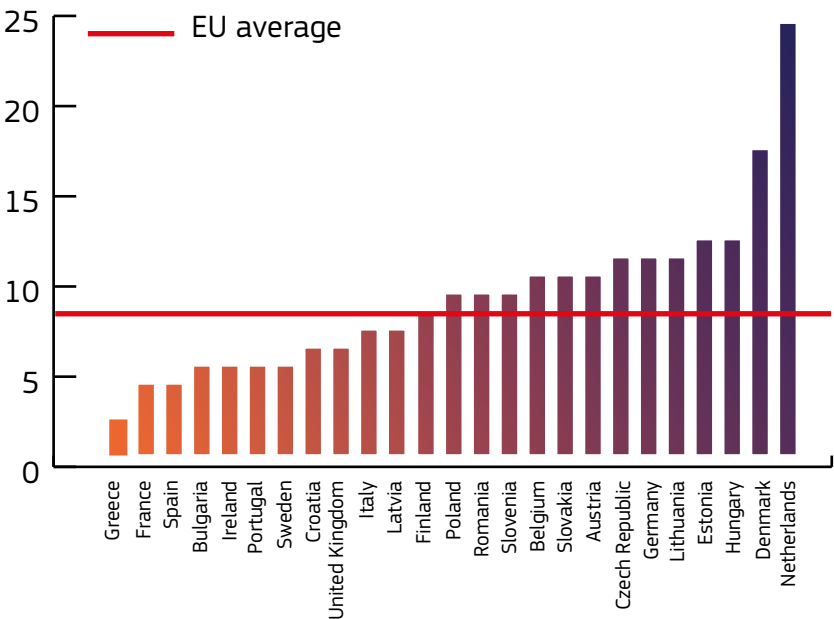
The number of cyclist fatalities has decreased by only 3% which is much lower than the total fatality decrease of 18% from 2010 to 2013. One possible reason for the slow reduction of the number of cyclist victims is that the total number of cyclists goes up in the EU as more people turn to more sustainable and healthy transport modes.

The number of cyclists varies substantially, from the countries with a traditionally strong bicycle culture to countries with few cyclists and less

developed cycling infrastructure. The share of cyclist road deaths also differs much between Member States. The share of cyclist deaths is especially high in Denmark and the Netherlands. The cyclists make up 17% of all road deaths in Denmark and 24% of all road deaths in the Netherlands.

Almost one quarter of all road deaths in the Netherlands are cyclists.

CYCLISTS' SHARE OF ALL ROAD DEATHS, PER COUNTRY

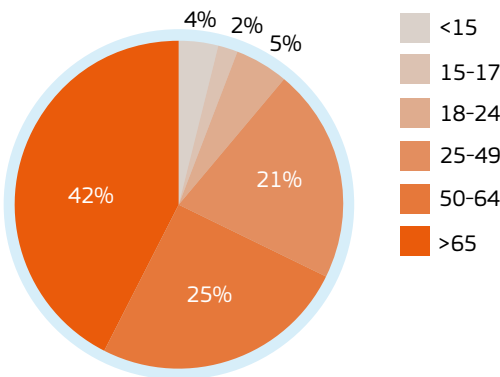


EL	2%	RO	9%
FR	4%	SI	9%
ES	4%	BE	10%
BG	5%	SK	10%
IE	5%	AT	10%
PT	5%	CZ	11%
SE	5%	DE	11%
HR	6%	LT	11%
UK	6%	EE	12%
IT	7%	HU	12%
LV	7%	DK	17%
FI	8%	NL	24%
PL	9%	EU	8%



Cyclists suffer fatal and serious crashes on both urban and inter-urban roads. Of all cyclist fatalities, 57 % are killed inside urban areas.

CYCLIST FATALITIES PER AGE GROUP



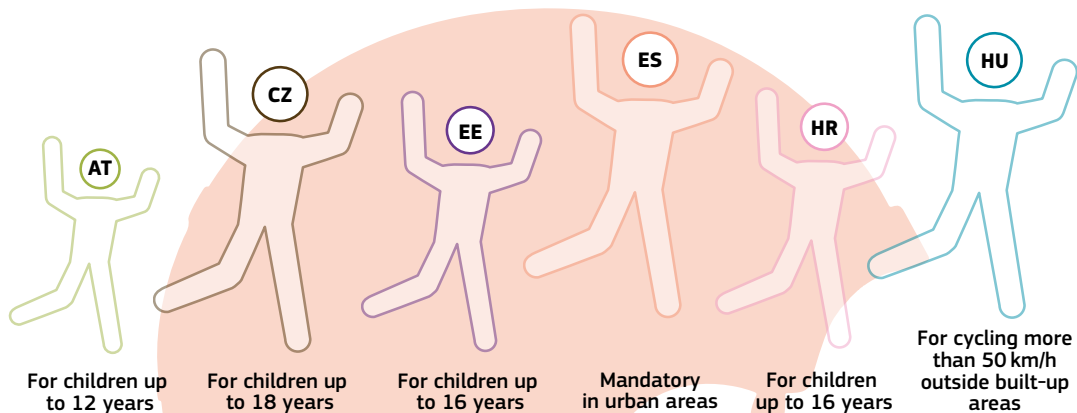
Among the cyclists killed in road traffic crashes, 21 % are women.

The age profile among cyclist fatalities is similar to that for pedestrians. Children and young people are comparably safe. Cyclists younger than 25 years make up around a tenth of all cyclist road deaths. The elderly are over-represented, 42 % of all killed cyclists are 65 years or older.

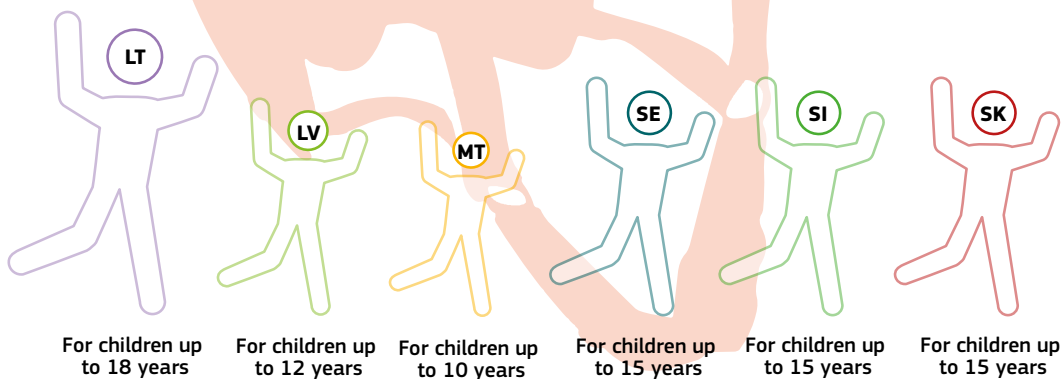
Among cyclists, the most common serious injuries are to the head and neck. The DaCoTA research project¹ found that bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head and brain injuries by between 63 % and 88 % in the case of a serious crash. The International Transport Forum Road Safety Annual Report 2013 showed that among the countries reported on, cyclist fatalities decreased by 45 % 1990-2011 in countries with no helmet law but by 53 % in countries with some helmet law. Today the rules and the use rate for bike helmets differ widely between Member States.



1. www.dacota-project.eu



BICYCLE HELMET LAWS IN EU MEMBER STATES



4. Motorcyclist safety

- 15% of all fatalities are motorcycle riders; 3% are moped riders.
- Fatality decrease in line with overall reduction trend.
- High share of all deaths in Greece, Cyprus and Malta.
- 94% are men.





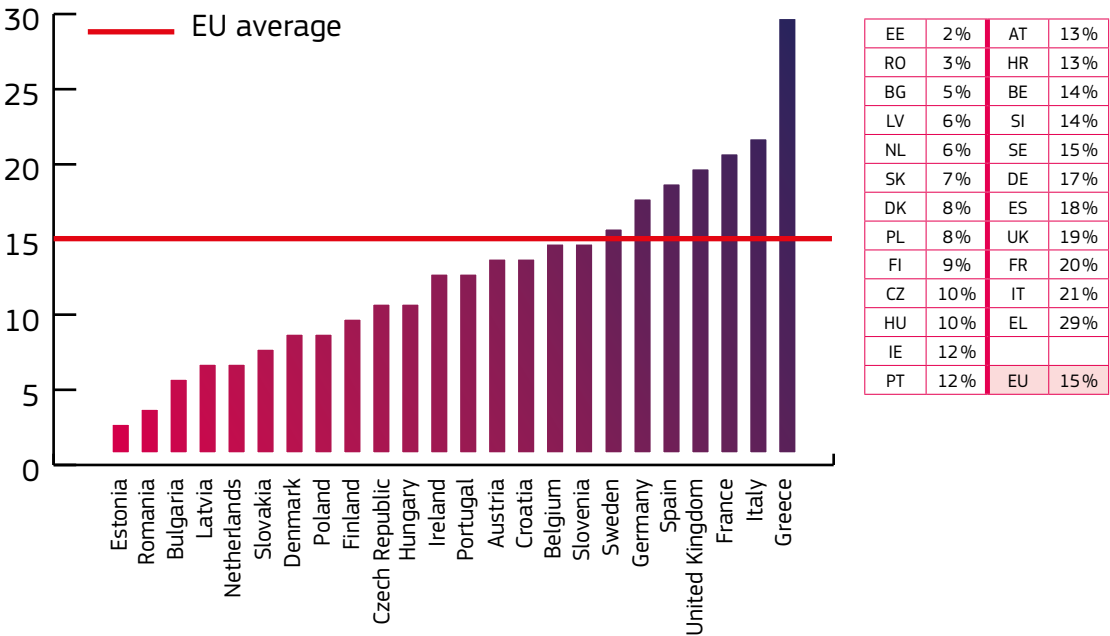
In total, the motorcyclists make up 15 % of all who die on the road in the EU. There are 11 motorcyclist deaths per 100 000 registered motorcycles compared to 5 car occupant deaths per 100 000 registered cars. This reflects the fact that the motorcycle rider is less protected in case of a crash.

The number of motorcyclists killed on roads in the EU has decreased by 17 % between 2010 and 2013, almost in line with the EU the total fatality decrease these years.

The motorcycle riders' share of all road deaths differs substantially between Member States. The lowest shares are reported from Estonia, Romania and Bulgaria where motorcyclists account for less than 5 % of all road deaths. On the other end of the scale, Greece, Italy and France report more than 20 % of all fatalities as motorcyclists.

Motorcyclists are killed and injured on all kinds of roads. The majority, 56 %, are killed on inter-urban roads.

MOTORCYCLISTS' SHARE OF ALL ROAD DEATHS, PER COUNTRY

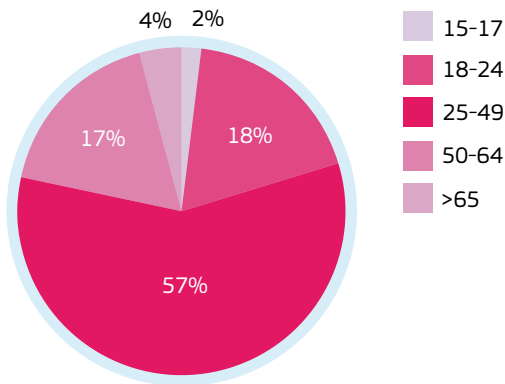




Among the motorcyclists killed in road traffic crashes, 94% are men.

The age profile among motorcyclist fatalities is almost the opposite that of pedestrians and cyclists. Only 4% of all killed motorcyclists were older than 65 years. 57% were between 25 and 49 years.

MOTORCYCLISTS FATALITIES PER AGE GROUP



Motorcycle use and motorcycle fatalities are much more dependent on weather and season than car driver fatalities with little use of powered two-wheelers during the winter months in Northern Europe.

Moped riders make up around 3% of all EU road deaths.

Mopeds and other light powered two-wheelers make up around 3% of all EU road deaths. Higher than average shares are reported from for example the Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark, all with more than 5% of road deaths being moped riders.



Conclusion

The EU has an ambitious road safety target for this decade: halving the number of road deaths from 2010 to 2020. The target is not impossible to reach, but it is challenging. In order to catch up the slow improvement from 2013 to 2014, the annual decrease in the coming years must be around 8%, the same percentage decrease as the two years before last.

The good news are that road fatalities among young people continue decreasing. Motorcyclist road deaths also keep up with the decrease rate of the total fatality numbers.

The bad news is that pedestrians and cyclists do not follow the same pattern. These groups need additional attention, especially as part of the urban road safety efforts. The fact that more people choose to walk or take the bike is essentially a good development for the EU and in line with the need for greener transport. It is a shared responsibility to offer road safety solutions to support this new mobility pattern.

A focus on vulnerable road users does not necessarily come at the expense of other road user groups. It can in fact have benefits for all. Also car drivers and truck drivers contribute to the safety or unsafety of pedestrians and cyclists. Vehicle aspects, road user behaviours and infrastructure design must be addressed to increase safety for everyone.

The work ahead also includes new possibilities for analysis of the non-fatal but serious road crashes. In 2015, the first new EU-wide data on serious road injuries should be reported by Member States. Understanding the real scope of the injury problem is the first step towards reducing also these crashes towards the long-term vision zero goal.



For more information about the European Commission and road safety,
visit our website: <http://ec.europa.eu/roadsafety>

