



Road safety in the EU: fatalities below pre-pandemic levels but progress remains too slow

Brussels, 21 February 2023

Today the Commission is publishing preliminary figures on road fatalities for 2022. Around **20,600 people were killed in road crashes last year**, a 3% increase on 2021 as traffic levels recovered after the pandemic. This represents however **2,000 fewer fatalities** (-10%) compared with the pre-pandemic year 2019. The EU and UN target is to halve the number of road deaths by 2030.

Contrasting trends across Member States

EU-wide, road deaths in 2022 rose by 3% on the previous year, not least as traffic levels recovered levels following the pandemic. Importantly, many of the gains achieved during the COVID-19 period (including a fall of 17% between 2019 and 2020) have not been lost. Compared with 2019, the number of deaths in 2022 fell by 10%.

However, progress has been very uneven between Member States. The largest decreases, of more than 30%, were reported in Lithuania and Poland, with Denmark also recording a 23% fall. By contrast, over the last three years, the number of road deaths in countries such as Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden has remained rather stable or has risen¹.

The overall ranking of countries' **fatality rates** has **not changed significantly since prior to the pandemic** with the safest roads in Sweden (21 deaths per one million inhabitants) and Denmark (26/million) while Romania (86/million) and Bulgaria (78/million) reported the highest rates in 2022. The **EU average** was **46 road deaths per million inhabitants**.

Most affected groups

Based on available data for 2021 (*detailed 2022 data is not yet available*) across the EU, 52% of road traffic fatalities occurred on rural roads, versus 39% in urban areas and 9% on motorways. Men accounted for three out of four road deaths (78%). Car occupants (drivers and passengers) accounted for 45% of all road deaths while pedestrians represented 18%, users of powered two-wheelers (motorbikes and mopeds) 19% and cyclists 9% of total fatalities.

Within **urban areas**, the pattern is however very different with **vulnerable road users** (pedestrians, cyclists and users of powered two-wheelers) representing **just under 70% of total fatalities**. Urban road user fatalities occur overwhelmingly in crashes involving cars and trucks and thus highlight the need to improve the protection of vulnerable road users.

While the increased share of cycling in the mobility mix in many Member States is extremely welcome, a serious cause for concern is the trend in the number of cyclists killed on EU roads. This is the only road user group not to see a significant drop in fatalities over the last decade, which is notably due to a persistent lack of well-equipped infrastructure. In 2022, for example, preliminary figures from France show a 30% increase in cycling fatalities compared with 2019.

Background

In 2018, the EU has set itself a 50% reduction target for road deaths – and, for the first time, also serious injuries – by 2030. This was set out in the Commission's [Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety](#) and [EU road safety policy framework 2021-2030](#) which also lay out road safety plans aiming to reach zero road deaths by 2050 ('Vision Zero').

Road safety has also been a core element of recent EU mobility policy initiatives including the [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy](#), the Commission proposal for a [revision of the TEN-T regulation and the Urban Mobility Framework](#).

The EU is at the forefront of the [Second Decade of Action for Road Safety, proclaimed by the UN for 2021-2030](#) in August 2020.

In the coming weeks, the Commission will present a package of proposals tackling road safety from a range of angles to make European roads safer still.

For more information[Road safety statistics 2022 in more detail](#)**Road deaths per million inhabitants – preliminary data for 2022**

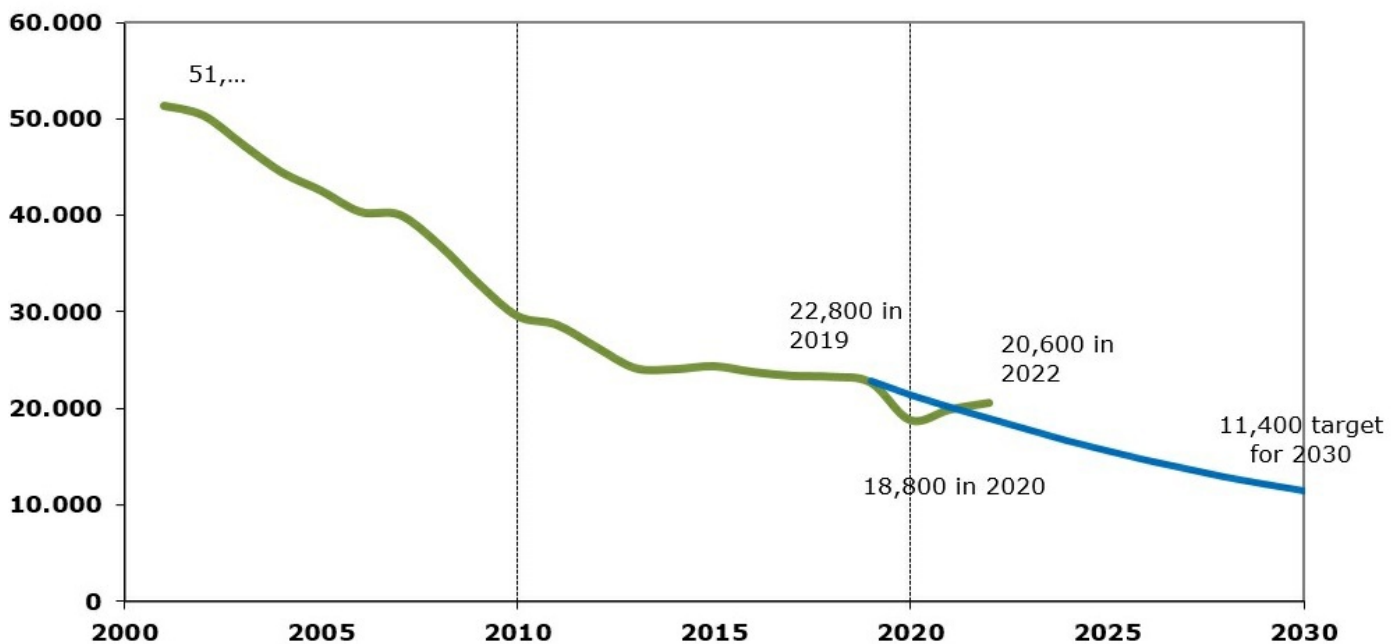
	Rate per million population				% change 2022 in relation to:		Average 2017-19
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021	2019	
EU-27	51	42	45	46	3%	-10%	-11%
Belgium	56	43	45	52	16%	-7%	-3%
Bulgaria	90	67	81	78	-5%	-15%	-17%
Czechia	58	48	50	50	-1%	-15%	-15%
Denmark	34	28	22	26	18%	-23%	-15%
Germany	37	33	31	34	9%	-8%	-12%
Estonia	39	44	41	38	-9%	-4%	-10%
Ireland	29	30	27	31	14%	11%	9%
Greece	64	54	57	58	1%	-11%	-13%
Spain	37	29	32	36	12%	-2%	-5%
France	50	39	45	49	11%	0%	-2%
Croatia	73	58	72	71	-6%	-7%	-13%
Italy	53	40	49	53	9%	-2%	-5%
Cyprus	59	54	50	42	-16%	-27%	-26%
Latvia	69	73	78	60	-24%	-15%	-19%
Lithuania	67	63	53	43	-19%	-35%	-35%
Luxembourg	36	42	38	40	8%	18%	-6%
Hungary	62	47	56	56	-1%	-10%	-13%
Malta	32	21	17	50	189%	63%	47%
Netherlands	34	30	29	35	20%	4%	7%
Austria	47	39	41	41	2%	-11%	-11%
Poland	77	66	59	51	-14%	-34%	-33%
Portugal	67	52	54	63	16%	-5%	-2%
Romania	96	85	92	86	-8%	-12%	-14%

Slovenia	49	38	54	40	-25%	-17%	-14%
Slovakia	50	45	45	46	0%	-8%	-8%
Finland	38	40	41	34	-16%	-10%	-18%
Sweden	22	20	20	21	5%	0%	-17%
Switzerland	22	26	23	31	35%	44%	25%
Norway	20	17	15	23	55%	15%	16%
Iceland	17	22	24	24	0%	50%	-33%

The 2022 figures are based on preliminary data for most countries and are subject to changes when the final data are released in autumn 2023. Estimates for 2022 cover the whole year and all roads and refer to deaths within 30 days but for the following countries they are based on partial data: Germany and Greece (each 11 months), Belgium and Hungary (each 9 months), Spain (rural roads), Netherlands (partial data; also, police-registered fatalities are under-reported by around 10-15%), Portugal (fatalities within 24 hours), Switzerland (6 months). No data for Liechtenstein for 2022.

Data for 2022 are compared with three time-periods: 2021 (the previous year), 2019 (the baseline year for the target of 50% fewer deaths by 2030) and the average of 2017-19 (to take account of fluctuations in small countries). The percentage changes in the table are based on the absolute number of fatalities, not the rate per million population.

2022 Road safety statistics



Source: CARE (EU database on road crashes)

In green: Number of fatalities

In blue: EU 2030 target

¹ : It is important to note that this is based on preliminary and often partial data.

IP/23/953

Press contacts:

[Adalbert JAHNZ](#) (+ 32 2 295 31 56)

[Anna WARTBERGER](#) (+32 2 298 20 54)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)