Road fatality statistics in the EU (infographic)

The EU boasts a pretty good record on road safety, but which countries are the safest? Discover EU road fatality figures by country, age, gender and more.

Every year thousands of people lose their lives or are seriously injured in accidents on EU roads. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of road deaths in Europe decreased by 36%. Compared to 2019, when there were 22,800 fatalities, 4,000 fewer people lost their lives on EU roads in 2020.

Preliminary figures show that 18 EU countries registered their lowest ever number of fatalities.

Sweden still has the safest roads (18 fatalities per one million inhabitants) while Romania reported the highest rate in 2020 (85 fatalities per one million inhabitants). The EU average was 42 per million inhabitants, compared to the world average of more than 180.

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to less traffic, but its impact on road safety is hard to measure.
In 2018, 12% of people killed on EU roads were aged between 18 and 24, while only 8% of the European population falls within this age group. This means that young people are disproportionately more likely to be involved in a fatal road accident. However, fatalities among this age group have dropped 43% since 2010.
The proportion of elderly fatalities (aged 65 and over) rose from 22% in 2010 to 28% in 2018. Children under 15 years old accounted for 2%.

Three quarters (76%) of EU-wide road fatalities were male, a pattern relatively unchanged since 2010 and which is similar across all EU countries.

What the EU is doing to improve road safety

In October 2021, Parliament approved motor insurance rules better protecting road accident victims throughout the EU. The new regulations still need to be formally adopted by the Council, after which EU countries will have two years to implement them.

On 5 October 2021, MEPs adopted a resolution on the EU Road Safety Policy Framework, in which they set out the main steps needed to reach the goal of zero deaths on European roads by 2050. Those include safe speed limits (30km/h in residential areas), zero-tolerance for drink-driving and more safety features in infrastructure and vehicles. This is in reaction to the European Commission’s proposal for an EU road safety policy for 2021-2030.

On 16 April 2019, MEPs adopted new rules to make 30 advanced safety features mandatory, such as intelligent speed assistance, driver distraction warning and emergency braking system.

Compulsory safety technologies could help save more than 25,000 lives and avoid at least 140,000 serious injuries by 2038, given that human error is involved in about 95% of all road traffic accidents.

To make roads safer, the EU also strengthened the rules on the management of infrastructure safety and is working to ensure common rules for self-driving vehicles.

Road safety
Preliminary 2020 road safety statistics
Fact sheet: road traffic and safety provisions