

European Road Safety Observatory

Road safety targets Monitoring report

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Reporting period 2000-2020



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Version	1.1, May 2021
Authors	Rob Decae, Charles Goldenbeld, Frouke Hermens (SWOV)
Internal review	Nathan De Vos (Vias institute)
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Sources	All information in this document for 2020 is based on data in the CARE database. For 2020, information is based largely on preliminary data. Date of extraction: 15th of May 2020.

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1 Trends in the number of fatalities in the EU	2
1.1 Observed fatalities and EU targets	
2 Fatalities by country	3
2.1 Mortality: the number of fatalities per million inhabitants (2020)	3
2.2 Trend in number of fatalities	4
2.3 Number of road fatalities (2019)	6
3 Synthesis	7
4 References	8
5 Notes	8

1 Trends in the number of fatalities in the EU

1.1 Observed fatalities and EU targets

In 2010, the EU set a target (European Commission, 2010) to halve the number of road fatalities by 2020, with respect to their level in 2010. Figure 1 explores to which extent this target has been met and compares the EU target (dark blue line) and it presents the observed number (light blue line) across the 27 EU member states.

Figure 1. Observed fatalities and EU targets

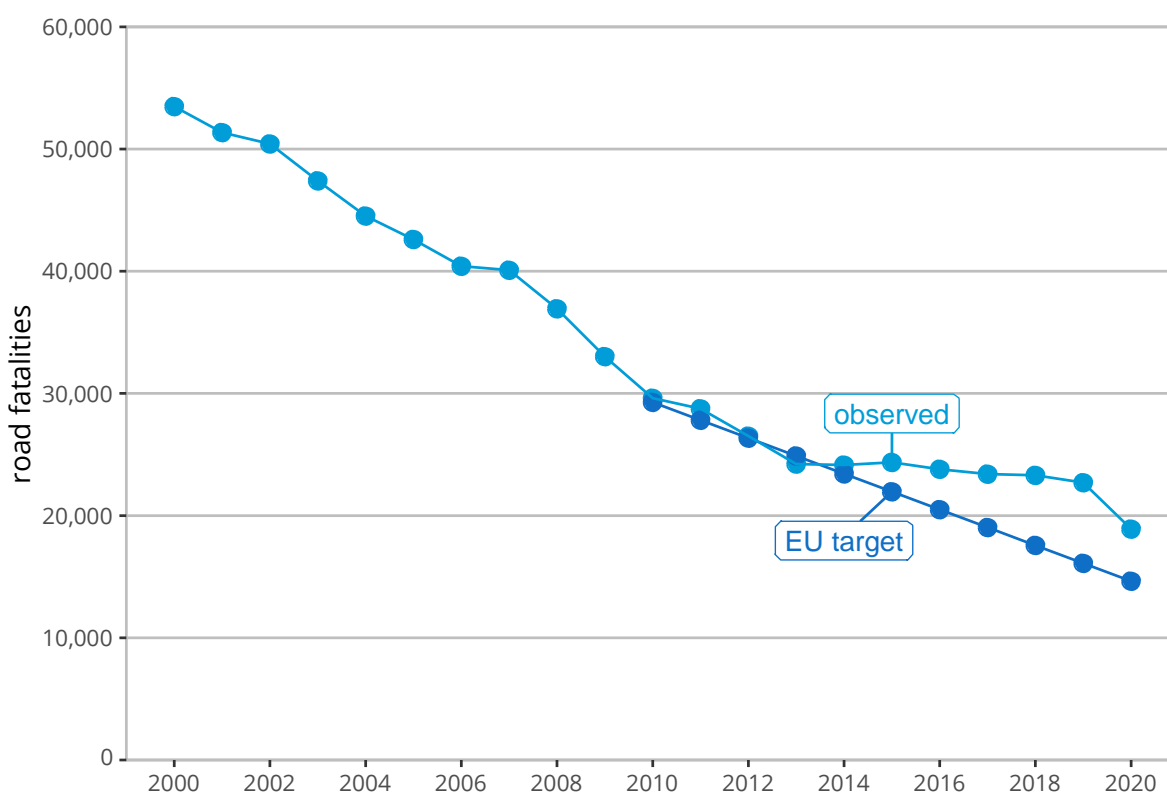


Figure 1 shows that between 2010 and 2014 the number of observed road fatalities was close to or even below the targeted value numbers. In contrast, during the five subsequent years, the number of road fatalities stabilized between 23,400 and 22,500. As a consequence, in 2019 the observed number of fatalities exceeded the target by over 6,000. The EU target for 2020 was not met. However, significant progress has been made: in 2020, the number of fatalities was 58% lower than in 2000 and 36% lower than in 2010.

2 Fatalities by country

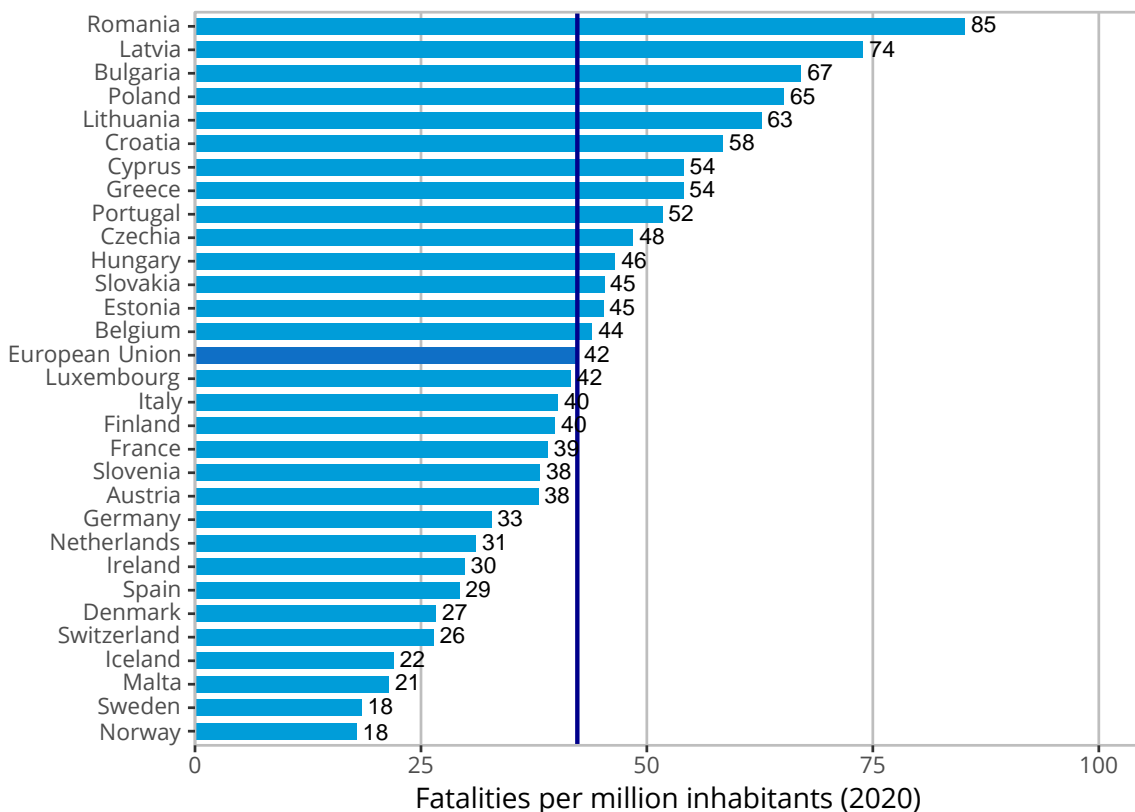
This section will take a closer look at road safety data on the individual country level. The following subsections will present data on:

- Mortality per country in 2020 (Sect. 2.1)
- Long-term and short-term changes in the number of fatalities per country between 2010-2020 (Sect. 2.2).
- Road fatalities per country in 2019 (Sect. 2.3)

2.1 Mortality: the number of fatalities per million inhabitants (2020)

Larger countries often have higher total numbers of road fatalities. To compensate for differences in population size, road mortality rates can be used, which compute the number of fatalities per million inhabitants. Figure 2 presents the 2020 mortality figures for the 27 EU- member states and the EFTA countries.

Figure 2. Road mortality (number of road fatalities per million inhabitants) in the EU and EFTA¹ (2020).



The vertical dark blue line shows that in 2020, the EU saw a total number of fatalities per million inhabitants of 42. The five best performing EU countries in 2020 were Sweden (18), Malta (21), Denmark (27), Spain (29) and Ireland (30). On the other side of the spectrum,

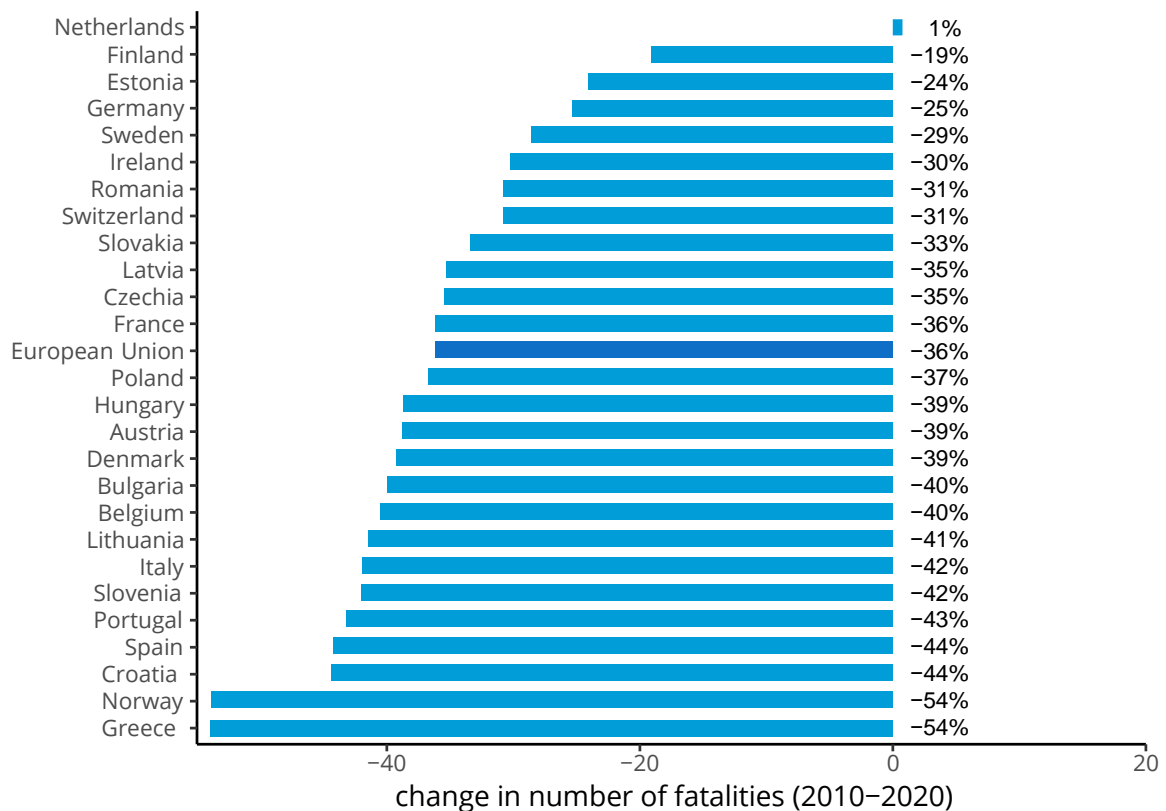
¹Liechtenstein had 1 road fatality in 2020.

the five least performing countries were Romania (85), Latvia (74), Bulgaria (67), Poland (65) and Lithuania (63). EFTA members Norway (18) and Iceland (22) both performed exceptionally well.

2.2 Trend in number of fatalities

To examine which countries were most able to reduce their numbers of road fatalities, Figure 3 presents the long-term trend in the number of fatalities between 2010 and 2020 expressed as the percentage change in fatality numbers in 2020 compared to the fatality numbers in 2010.

Figure 3. Long-term trend in the number of road fatalities in the EU and EFTA² (2010-2020), reference year:2010.



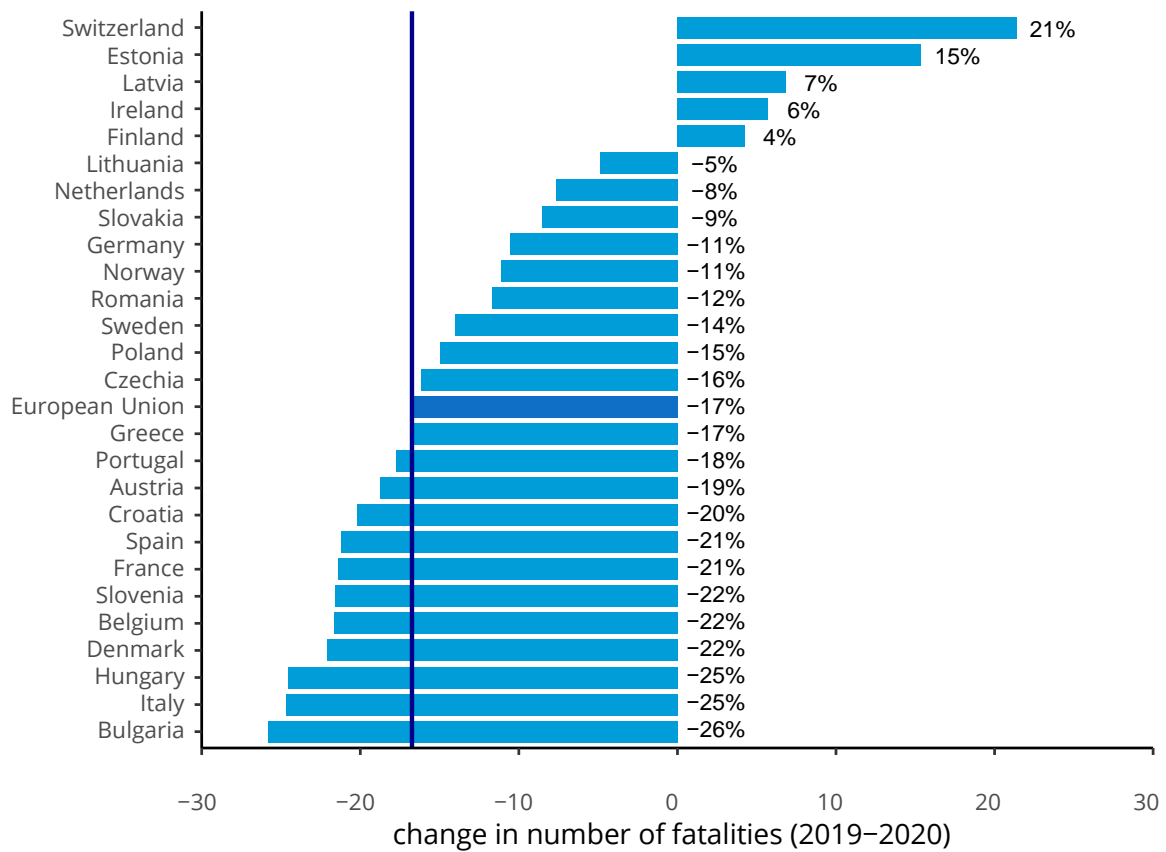
Note: Iceland (0%), Cyprus (-20%), Luxembourg (-19%) and Malta (-15%) were excluded from the graph due to their small number of fatalities which tends to fluctuate from year to year. For the Netherlands, the number of fatalities registered by the police is under-reported. The more accurate nationally reported figures indicate a decrease of 6% between 2010 and 2020.

On average across the EU, the total number of road fatalities dropped by 36% between 2010 and 2020, with the largest reductions (42% or more) for Greece, Norway, Croatia, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia. Two of these better-performing countries have reached the 50%-reduction-target for 2020.

²Liechtenstein had 1 road fatalities in 2020.

The year-on-year changes between 2019 and 2020 are shown in Figure 4. The EU as a whole saw a 17% reduction in overall fatalities during this last recorded year. Four countries experienced a substantial increase in fatalities: Iceland (33%), Switzerland (21%), Luxembourg (18%) and Estonia (15%) while a number of countries performed much better than the EU as a whole, with best EU performers Bulgaria, Italy and Hungary all showing a reduction of at least 25% (excluding countries with less than 50 fatalities per year).

Figure 4. Year-on-year change in the number of road fatalities in the EU³ and EFTA^{4,5} (2019-2020).



³Four countries had less than 50 fatalities during last year: Iceland(33%), Luxembourg(18%) , Cyprus(-8%) and Malta(-31%). These countries are not included in the graph.

⁴Liechtenstein had 1 road fatalities in 2020.

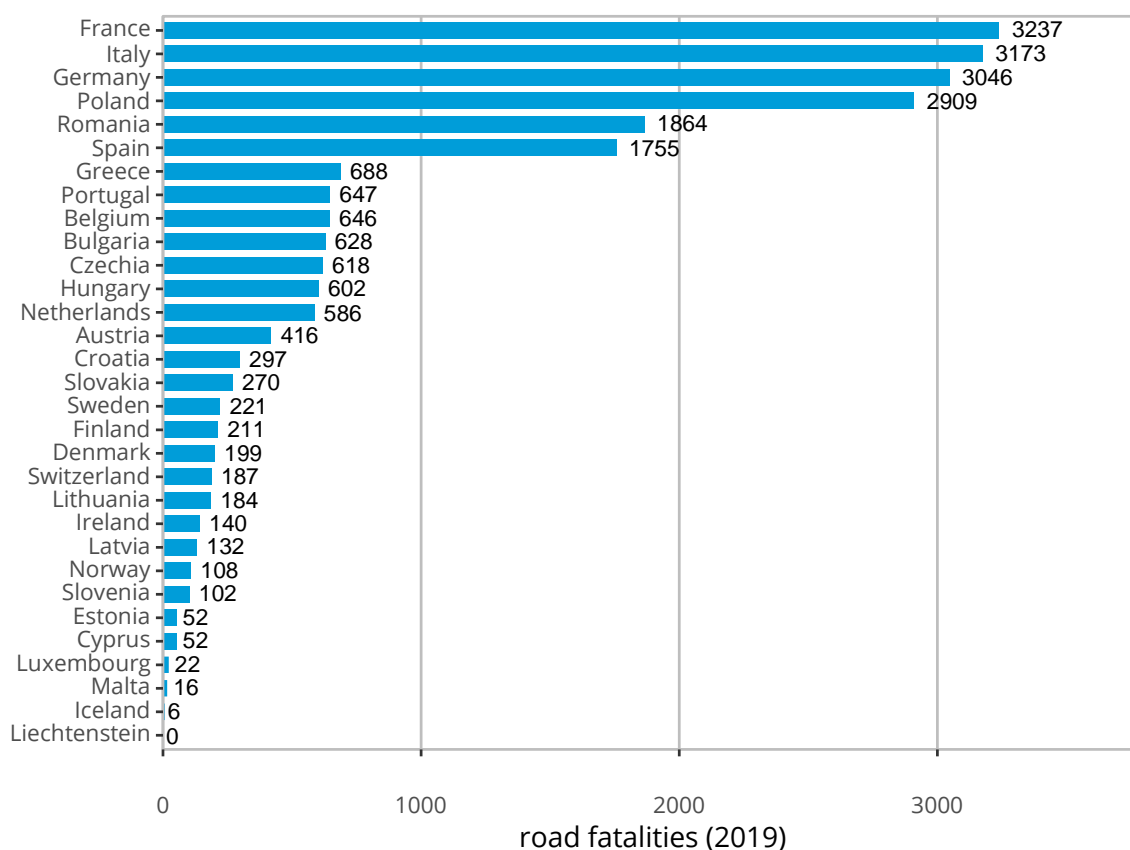
⁵Liechtenstein had no fatalities in 2019.

2.3 Number of road fatalities (2019)

Figure 5 presents the number of road fatalities for each of the 27 EU countries and the four EFTA countries^{6,7,8,9}. In four EU countries (Italy, Germany, France, and Poland), the number of road fatalities approaches or exceeds 3,000. Two Member States (Romania and Spain) have between 1,800 and 1,870 road fatalities and six countries (Portugal, Greece, Czechia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Belgium) between 600 and 700 road fatalities. For all other EU countries, the number of fatalities is below 600.

Absolute numbers of fatalities cannot be meaningfully compared but should be related to the number of inhabitants of a country (road mortality), as was done in section 2.1 or to the distance travelled (fatality risk). The absolute number of fatalities is provided here to complement the data in section 2.1 and 2.2

Figure 5. Number of road fatalities in the EU and EFTA (2019)



Note: final 2020 data should be available in the autumn and will be included in the next monitoring report.

⁶For a number of countries, the number of fatalities could be found in the CARE system at the extraction date, but for other countries, the number of fatalities were provided separately by the European Commission and have been published nationally.

⁷Portugal - as of 2018, includes data for Azores and Madeira which account for around 4% of the total.

⁸Ireland - provisional figures for 2018 and 2019.

⁹Netherlands - The number of fatalities registered by the police is under-reported and equates to around 85% of the total number of fatalities published nationally. In 2019, the overall total was 661.

3 Synthesis

The EU target of reducing road fatalities by 50% during the 2010-2020 period was not met. The exceptional circumstances in 2020 have led to a substantial decrease in road fatalities in many countries but this effect is likely to be temporary. However, the underlying trend remains downward. Eight Member States registered their lowest fatality numbers on record in 2019: Croatia, Finland France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden. Based on the provisional data for 2020, Greece (and Norway) have reached the EU target and eight other countries have reduced their number by at least 40%. EU-wide, the fatality rate was 42 fatalities per million inhabitants in 2020. This was much lower than in 2019 when there were 51 fatalities per million inhabitants. The safest roads were in Sweden (18 deaths/million inhabitants) and (Malta (21 deaths/million inhabitants) while Romania (85 deaths/million inhabitants), Latvia (74 deaths/million inhabitants) and Bulgaria (67 deaths/million inhabitants) reported the highest fatality rates in 2020. The change in year-on-year fatalities at EU level was substantial (-17%), due largely to reduced traffic levels. Bulgaria, Italy and Hungary performed well during the last recorded year (2020).

4 References

European Commission (2010). Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020 (COM(2010) 389 final of 20 July 2010). Retrieved 14 July 2020 at: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/road_safety/pdf/com_20072010_en.pdf

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5 Notes

The main data source for this report is CARE (Community database on road accidents). The database contains data that was obtained from national data sources, not only EU members but also from the four EFTA countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). The database was last queried on 1 May 2021. As the database is not complete for all countries and all years, additional data was provided by the European Commission in order to be able to calculate totals for the EU-27 fatalities and derived ratios for individual countries. Non-CARE data were only used when no CARE data was available for the particular country and year.

The number of inhabitants per country was retrieved from the Eurostat database on 2 May 2021.

Absolute numbers of fatalities can be very small for small countries, which can strongly influence derived ratios. Care should be taken when interpreting variations in numbers for these countries.