

European Road Safety Observatory

Road safety targets Monitoring report

June 2022

Reporting period 2010-2021



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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. A new 50% target has been introduced for fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. Figure 1 explores to which extent this target has been met and compares the old and new EU target (darker blue lines) and it presents the observed number (blue-green line) across the 27 EU member states.

Figure 1. Observed fatalities and EU targets

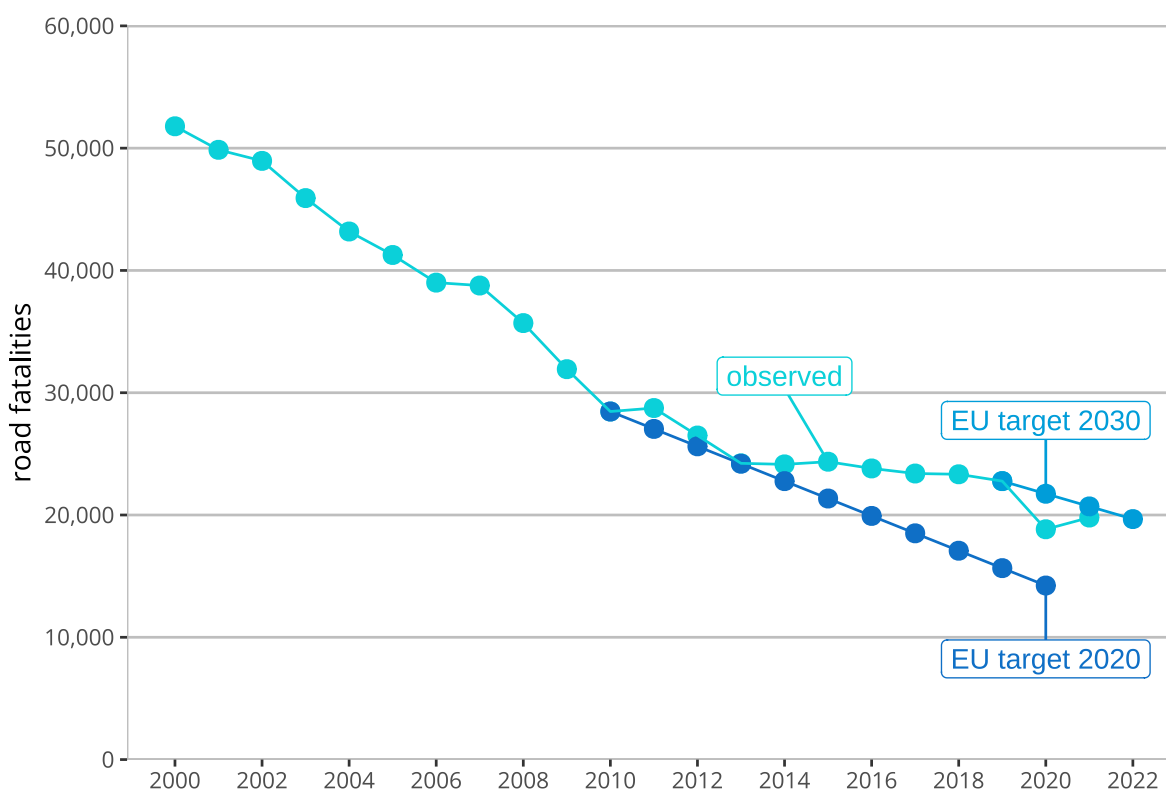


Figure 1 shows that between 2010 and 2014 the number of observed road fatalities was close to or even below the targeted value numbers. In contrast, during the five subsequent years, the number of road fatalities stabilized between 23,400 and 22,500. As a consequence, the EU target for 2020 was not met. However, significant progress has been made: in 2021, the number of fatalities was 62% lower than in 2000 and 30% lower than in 2010. The European Commission has formulated a new target for 2030: a 50% reduction of the number of fatalities in 2019 to be realized in 2030. This new target is effective as of 2021. In 2021 the observed number of fatalities was 900 lower than the new target value.

2 Fatalities by country

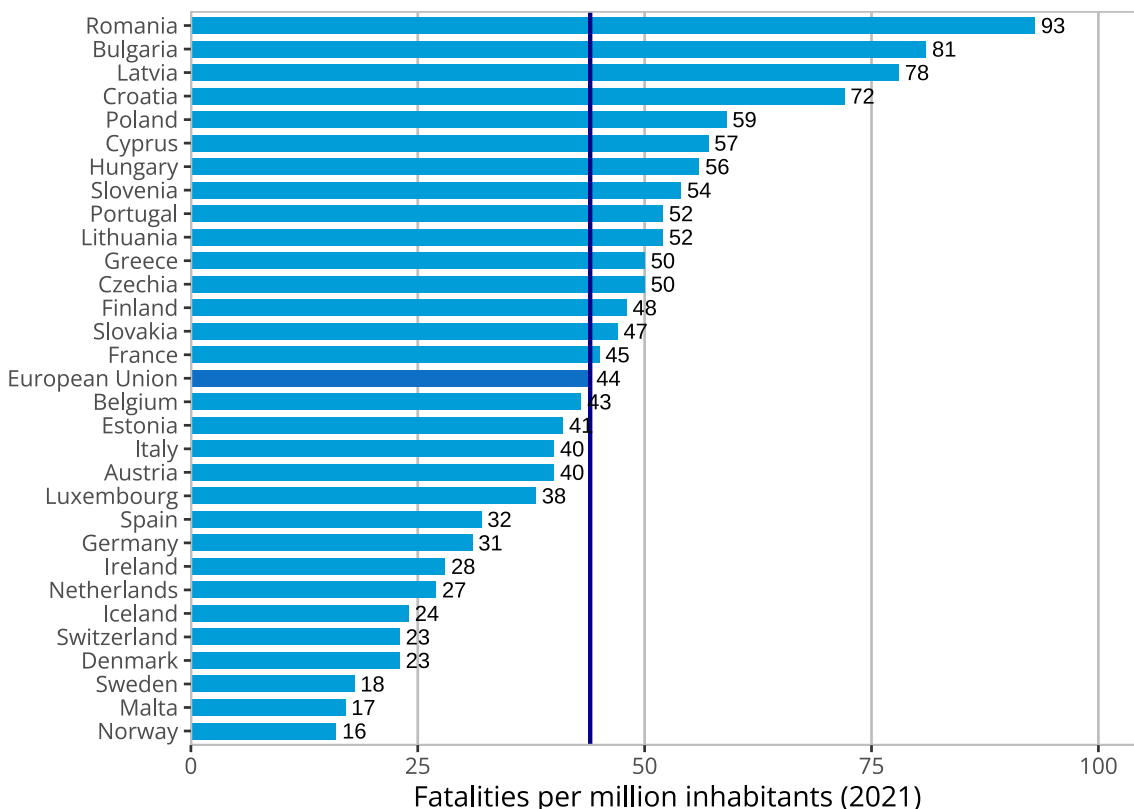
This section will take a closer look at road safety data on the individual country level. The following subsections will present data on:

- Mortality per country in 2021 (Sect. 2.1)
- Long-term and short-term changes in the number of fatalities per country between 2010-2021 (Sect. 2.2).
- Road fatalities per country in 2020 (Sect. 2.3)

2.1 Mortality: the number of fatalities per million inhabitants (2021)

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 2021 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 (2021).



The vertical dark blue line shows that in 2021, the EU saw a total number of of 44 fatalities per million inhabitants. The five best performing EU countries in 2021 were Malta (17), Sweden(18), Denmark (23), The Netherlands (27) and Ireland (28).

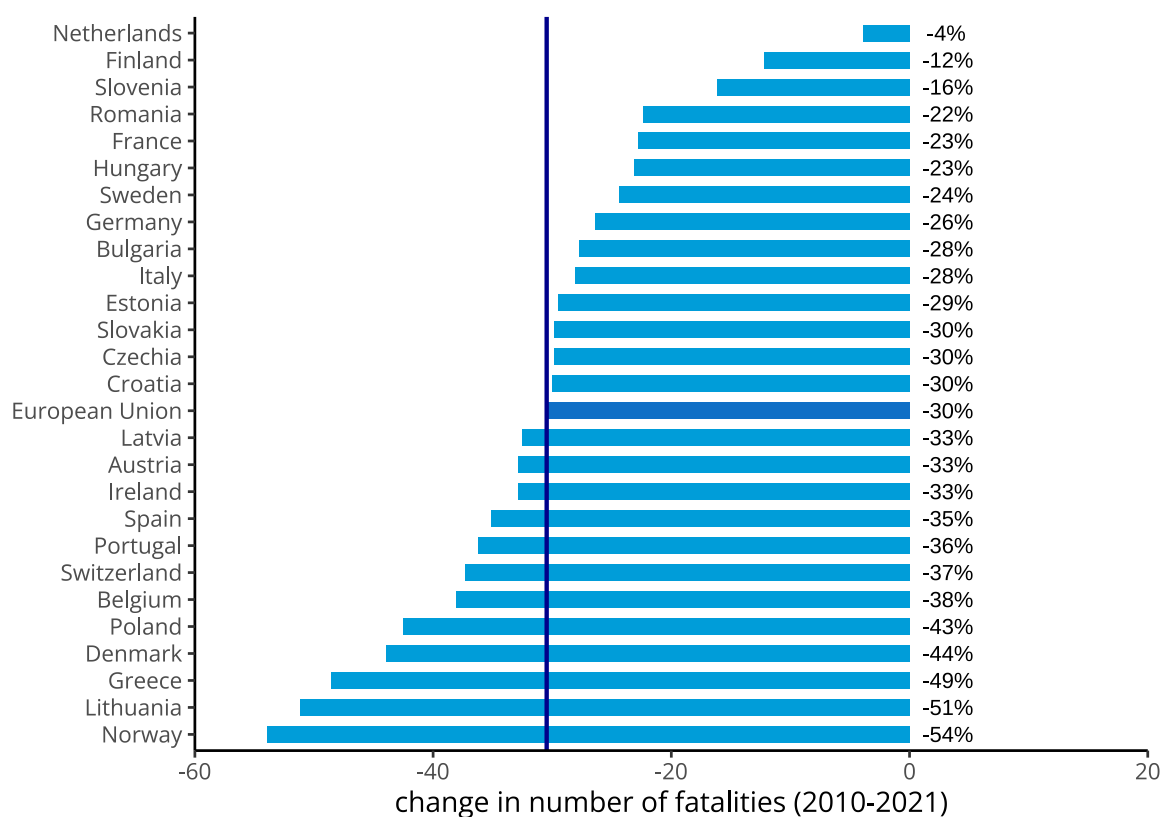
¹Liechtenstein had no road fatality in 2021.

On the other side of the spectrum, the five least performing countries were Romania (93), Bulgaria (81), Latvia (78), Croatia (72) and Poland (59). EFTA members Norway (16) and Switzerland (23) 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 2021 expressed as the percentage change in fatality numbers in 2021 compared to the fatality numbers in 2010.

Figure 3. Long-term trend in the number of road fatalities in the EU and EFTA² (2010-2021), reference year:2010.



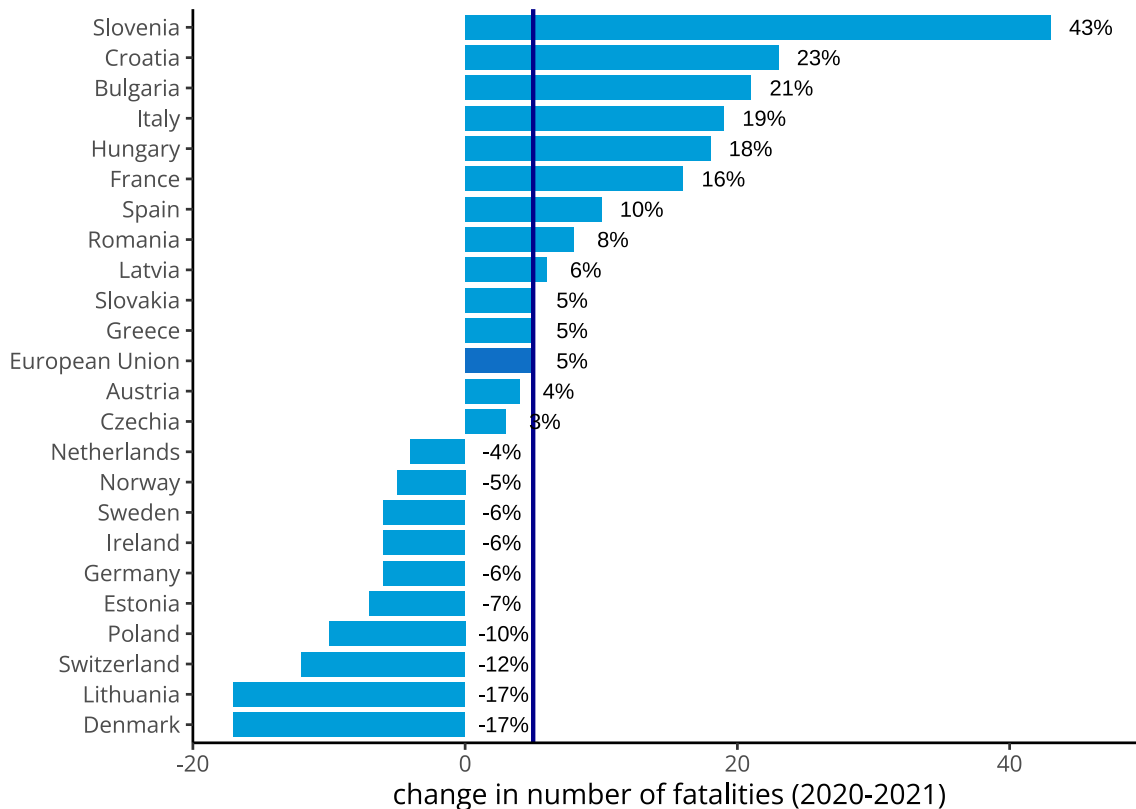
Note: Iceland (+14%), Malta (-31%), Luxembourg (-23%) and Cyprus (-18%) were excluded due to their small number of fatalities which tends to fluctuate from year to year.

On average across the EU, the total number of road fatalities dropped by 30% between 2010 and 2021. When ignoring countries with less than 50 fatalities per year, all countries showed a reduction in the number of road fatalities between 2010 and 2021. The largest reductions (40% or more) for Norway (-54%), Lithuania (-51%), Greece (-49%), Denmark (-44%) and Poland (-43%). Two of these better-performing countries have reached the 50%-reduction-target for 2020.

²Liechtenstein had 0 road fatalities in 2021.

The year-on-year changes between 2020 and 2021 are shown in Figure 4. The EU as a whole saw a 5% increase in overall fatalities during this last recorded year. Six countries experienced a substantial increase in fatalities: Slovenia (43%), Croatia (23%), Bulgaria (21%), Italy (19%), Hungary (18%) and France (16%), while a number of countries performed much better than the EU as a whole, with best EU performers Poland (-10%), Denmark (-17%) and Lithuania (-17%), excluding countries with less than 50 fatalities per year.

Figure 4. Year-on-year change in the number of road fatalities in the EU and EFTA^{3,4}, (2020-2021).



³Four countries had less than 50 fatalities during last year: Iceland (13%), Luxembourg (-8%), Cyprus (-6%) and Malta (-18%), . These countries are not included in the graph.

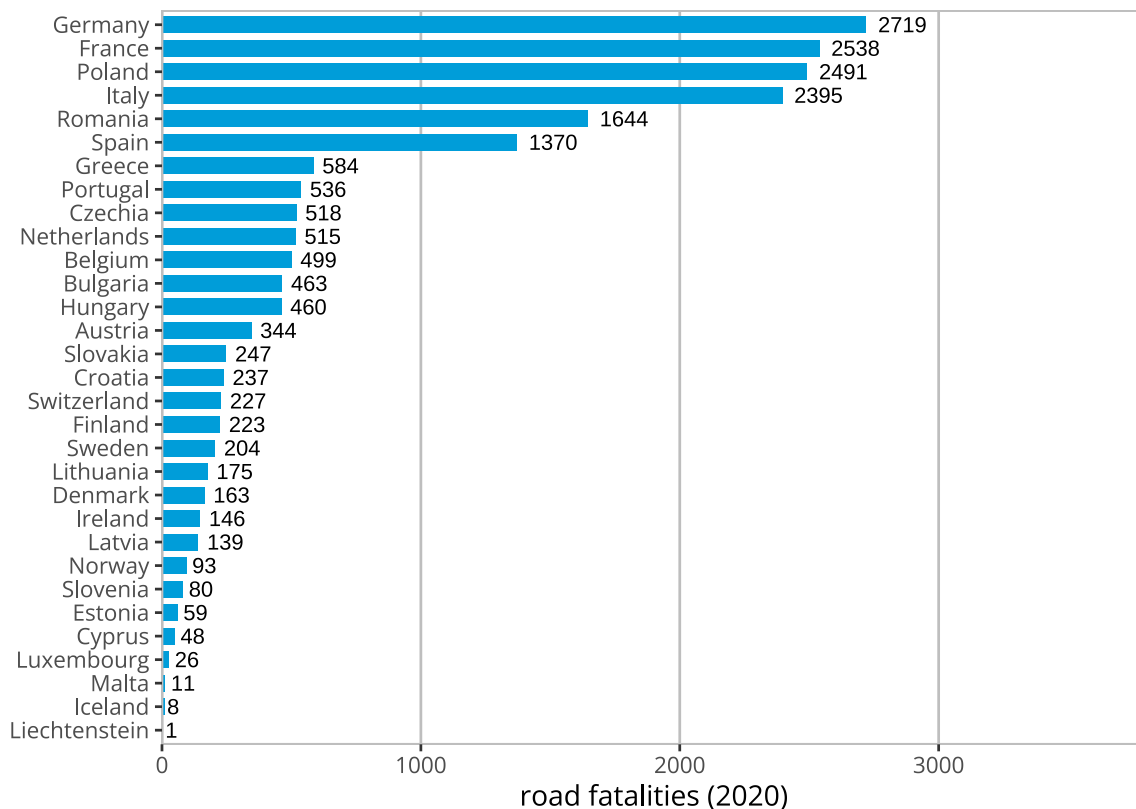
⁴The year-to-year change in Belgium, Finland and Portugal was very small (0%) and could not be plotted in the graph.

2.3 Number of road fatalities (2020)

Figure 5 presents the number of road fatalities for each of the 27 EU countries and the four EFTA countries^{5,6,7}. In four EU countries (Italy, Germany, France, and Poland), the number of road fatalities approaches or exceeds 2,000. Two Member States (Romania and Spain) have between 1,300 and 1,700 road fatalities and seven countries (Greece, Portugal, Czechia, The Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria and Hungary) between 400 and 600 road fatalities. For all other EU countries, the number of fatalities is below 400.

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 (2020)



⁵For 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.

⁶Portugal - as of 2018, includes data for Azores and Madeira which account for around 4% of the total.

⁷The Netherlands - 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 2020, the overall total was 610.

3 Synthesis

The EU target of reducing road fatalities by 50% during the 2010-2020 period was not met. Norway and Greece achieved this target and several other countries reduced their number by at least 30/35%. The new overall target is to halve the number of deaths by 2030 with 2019 as the baseline year. The exceptional circumstances in 2020 and 2021 have led to a substantial decrease of road fatalities in many countries but this effect is likely to be temporary. However, the underlying trend remains downward. Based on preliminary figures, nine Member States (Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Sweden) registered their lowest ever number of road fatalities in 2021. EU-wide, the fatality rate was 44 fatalities per million inhabitants in 2021. This was much lower than in 2019 when there were 51 fatalities per million inhabitants. But many of the countries performed even better than the EU average. The safest roads were in Malta (17 deaths/million inhabitants) and Sweden (18 deaths/million inhabitants) while Romania (93 deaths/million inhabitants), Bulgaria (81 deaths/million inhabitants) and Latvia (78 deaths/million inhabitants) reported the highest fatality rates in 2021. The change in year-on-year fatalities at EU level was modest at 5%, but varied widely between countries. Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia saw a substantial increase of more than 20%, while Denmark and Lithuania experienced a decrease of 17% during the last recorded year (2021).

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 data-base 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 6 June 2022 . 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 24 April 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.