

# “Road to perdition?” Young drivers on European roads

Fourth European Road Safety Day  
Nicosia, 25 July 2012



# Young people

## Young people have always been risk-takers

*"I see no hope for the future of our people, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words"* Hesiod (700 bc)

*"The young are permanently in a state resembling intoxication."*  
Aristotle (300 bc)

*"The over-involvement of young, and male, road users is one of the largest and most consistently observed phenomena in traffic throughout the world. It is so robust that it is almost like a law of nature."*  
Leonard Evans (1991)

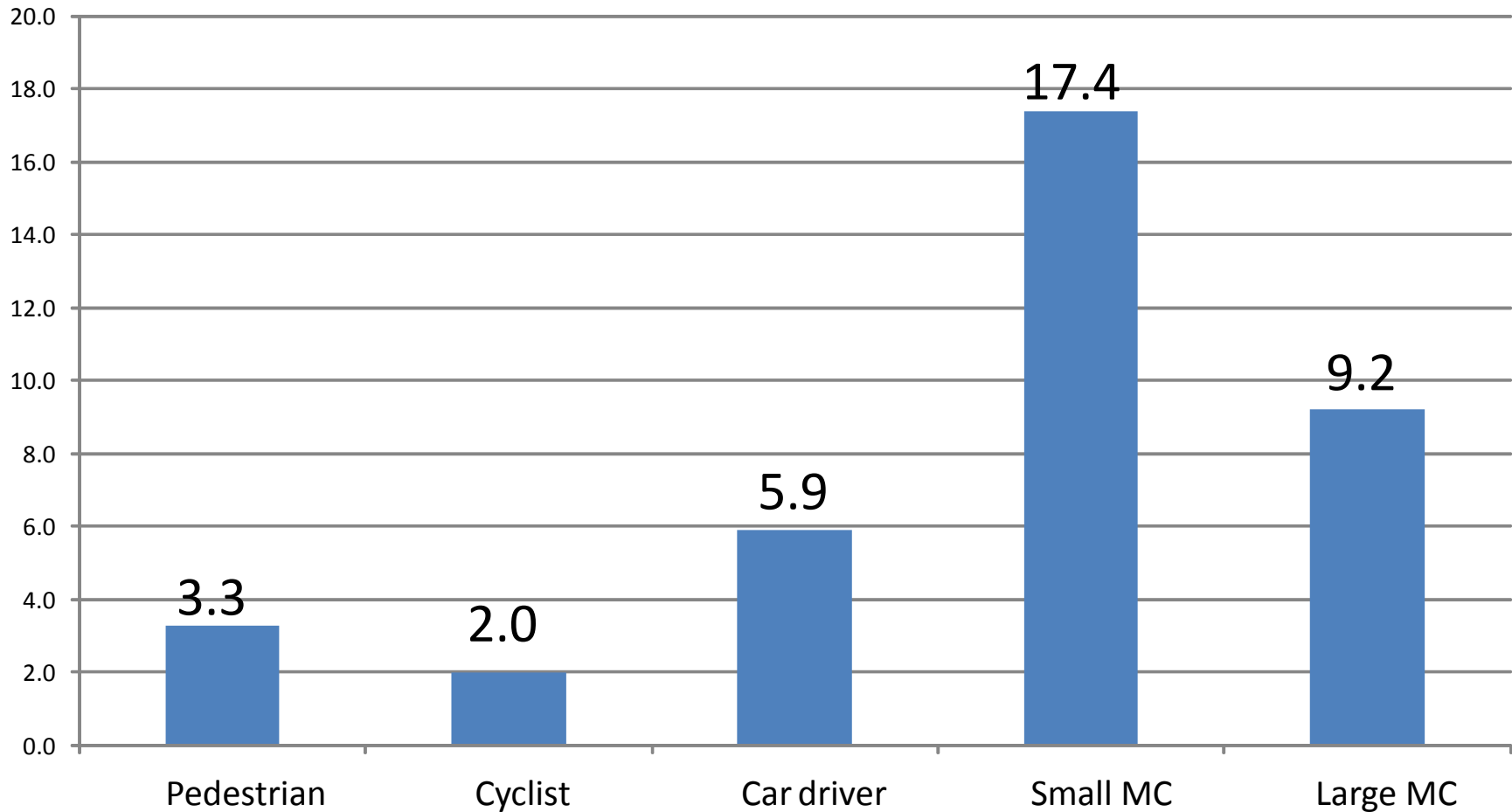
*"With age comes wisdom...and so does road safety"*  
Rune Elvik (2010)

# Young people (15-30)

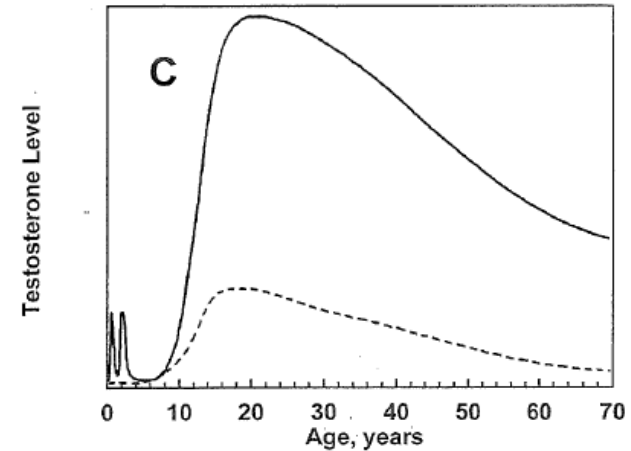
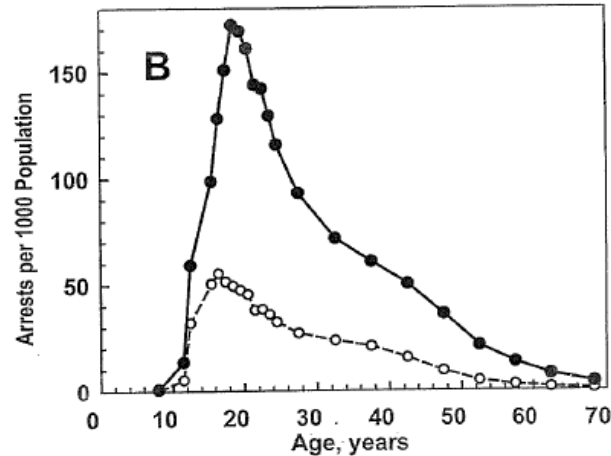
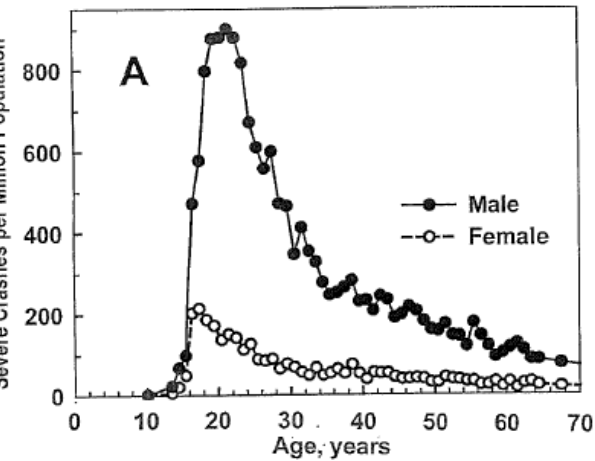
- 140,000 young people killed in collisions in the EU-27 between 2001 and 2010
- 9,150 killed in 2010
- A reduction of 44% compared to 2001
- 81% of those are male
- Young people represent 20% of the population but 30% of all road deaths
- No official definition of young people. At age 15:
  - Travel choices no longer dictated by parents
  - End of compulsory education
  - In many countries first possibility to drive a moped
  - Legally responsible

# Higher risks for all young users

Relative injury risk of road users aged 18-24 compared to safest age group for each type of road user (Norwegian data)



# A biological basis for high risk?

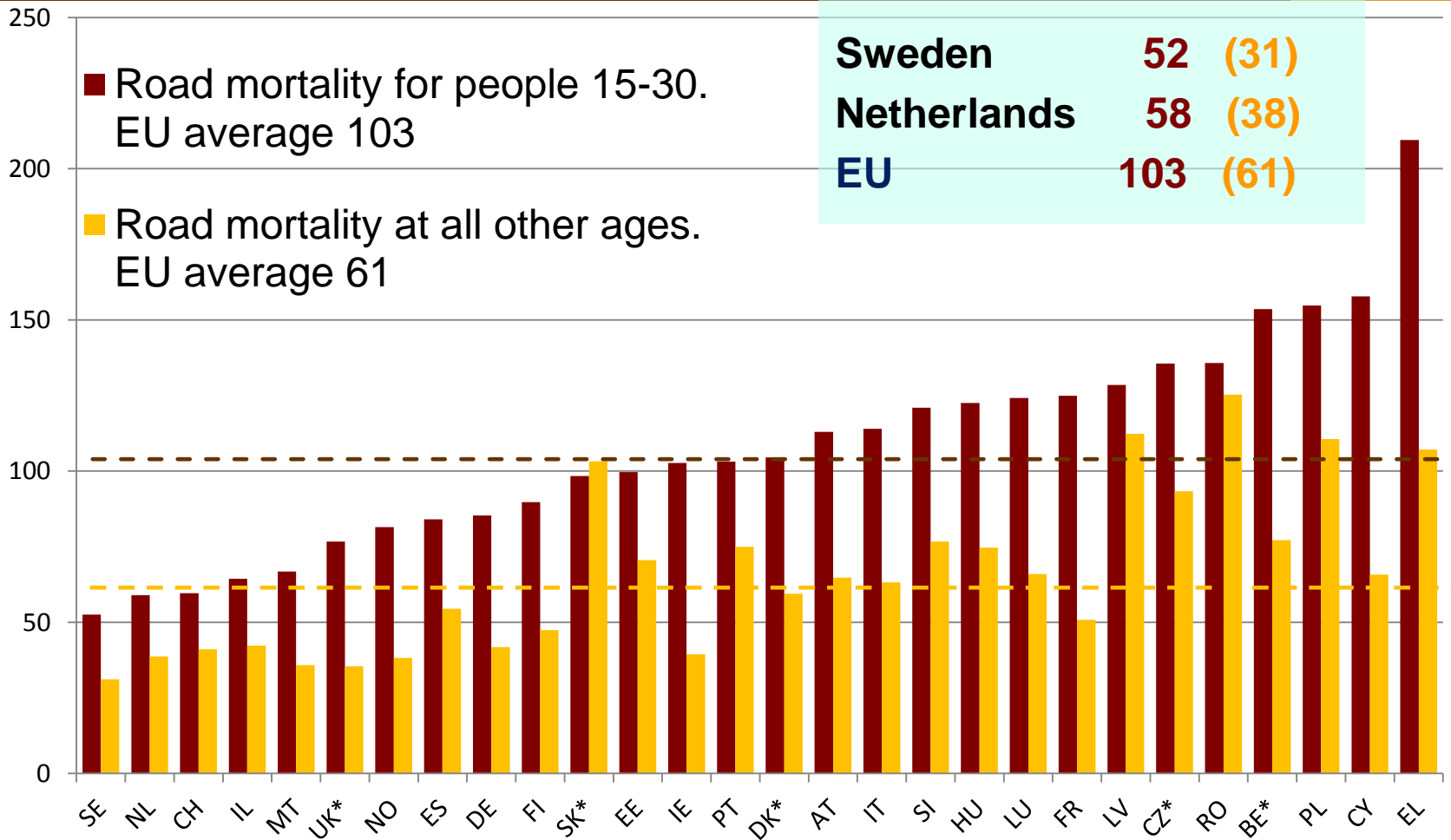


*Severe collisions/ million pop. Arrest /1000 pop.*

*Testosterone level*

- Research suggests that the high involvement of young drivers in accidents may in part have a biological basis (high testosterone levels; higher cognitive functions of the brain not fully developed until the age of about 25)
- Training is a double-edged sword: it is necessary, but it may give drivers an excessive confidence in their driving skills

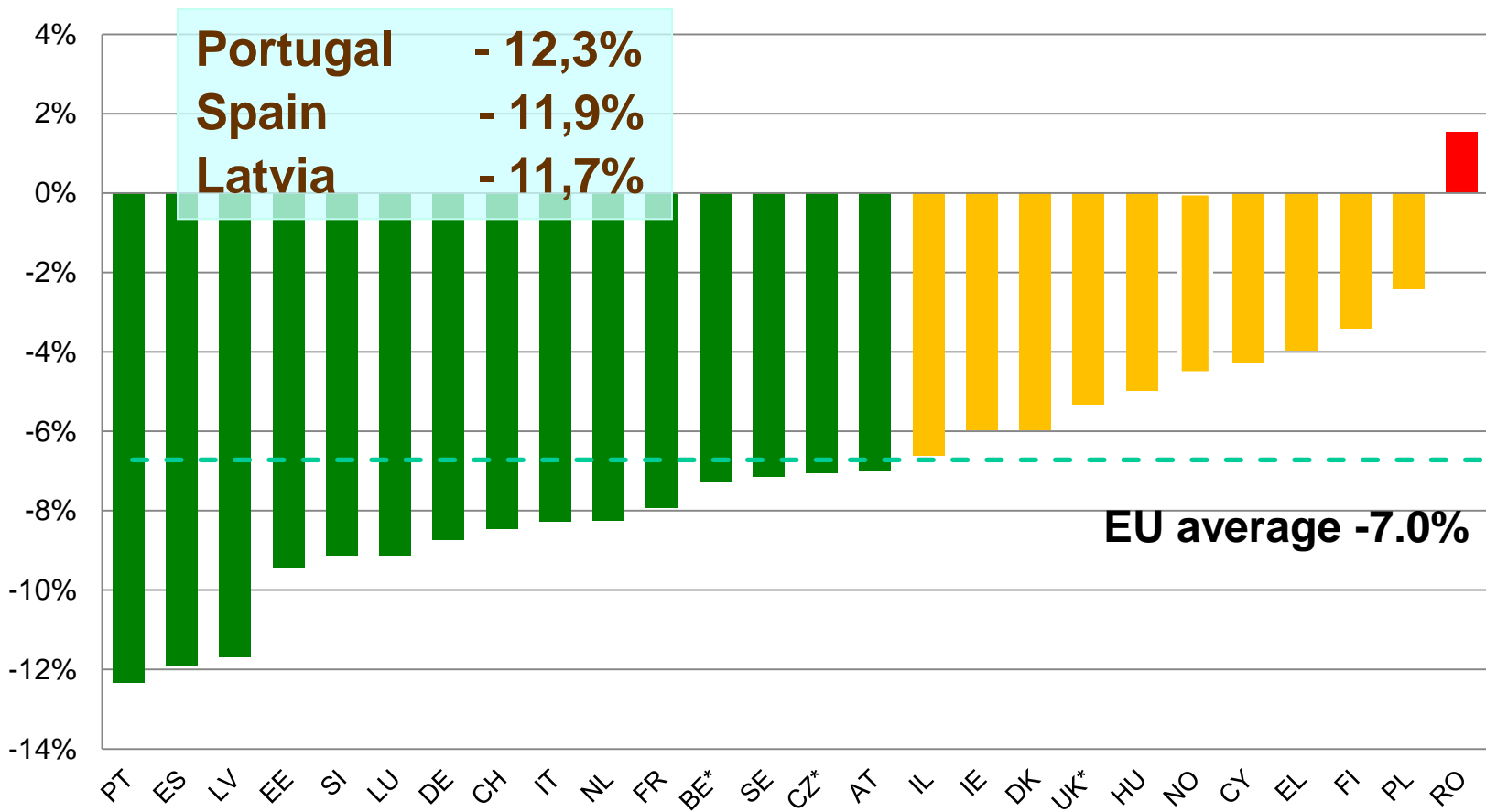
# Young people at higher risk than the rest of the population



<b>Sweden</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>(31)</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>(38)</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>(61)</b>

Young people deaths per million young inhabitants (with road deaths per million inhabitants at all other ages for comparison). *Average 2008, 2009 and 2010.*

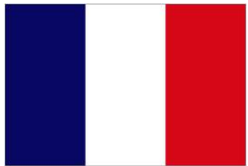
# Reduction in young people (15-30) killed since 2001



Average annual % change between 2001 and 2010 in the number of young people (15-30) killed on the roads

# Latvia, Spain, France

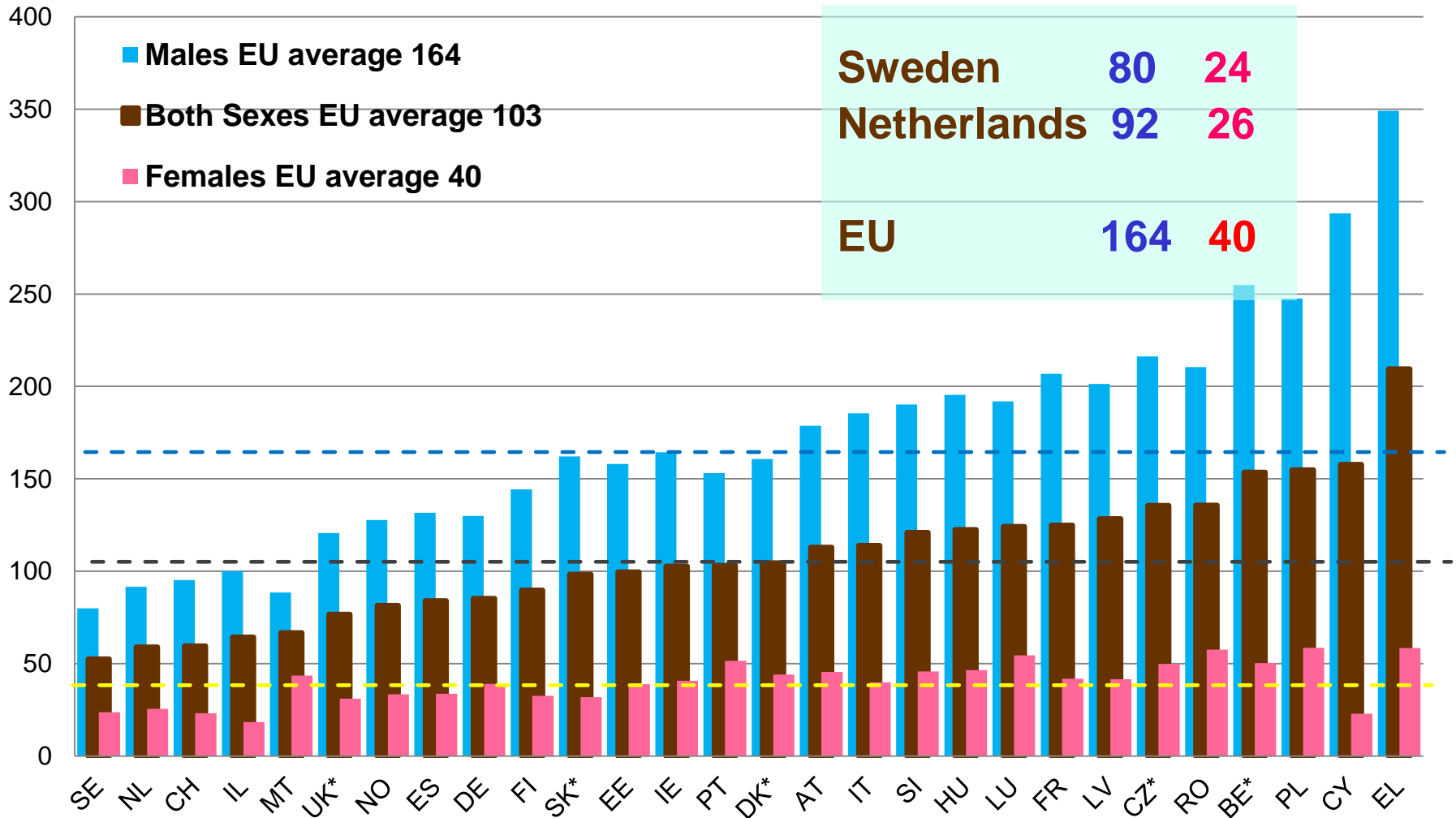
- Police enforcement and stricter sanctions for all
- Penalty point system for all drivers (stricter for novice drivers)
- Lower alcohol limit for novice drivers
- Education and campaigns (BOB, ...)
- Raise of the minimum age for driving a moped (Spain)
- Fully automated safety camera system = The measure with the highest impact also for young people





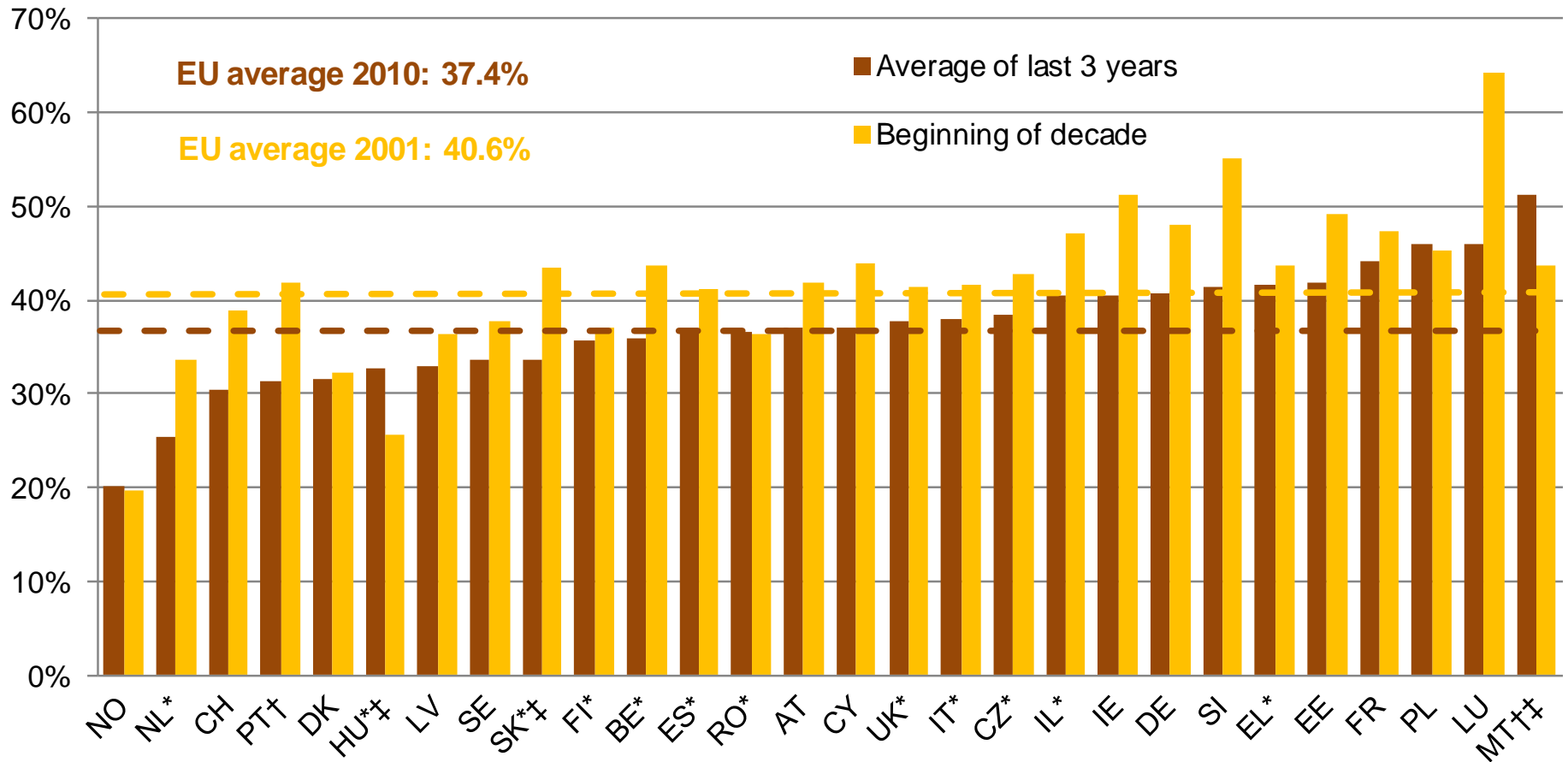
# Young people: a male problem

Young people's road mortality per million young people, in total and by gender



# Young drivers an important cause for concern

## 37% of road deaths in EU happen in a collision involving a young driver (18-25)



# ETSC Recommendations

- Continue to research the causes of young, novice driver risk with a view to designing more effective countermeasures.
- Ensure effective legislation and enforcement.
- Improve training and licensing systems.
- Ensure high levels of experience, via accompanied driving, prior to licensing for solo driving.
- Reduce exposure to risk immediately following licensing for solo driving.
- Provide appropriate incentives and disincentives, e.g. stricter demerit point systems.

Youth comes but once in a lifetime.

Henry W. Longfellow (1807-1882) U.S. poet.