

European Commission

Country Profile France





This document is part of a series of 30 country profiles: one for each Member State of the EU 27 and three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland). The purpose of this series is to provide an overview of the road safety situation in a specific country.

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France

1. Highlights

Road Safety Outcomes

- In 2021, 2,931 people were killed in road crashes in France mainland (not including overseas territories).
- France is 12th out of 27 EU countries in terms of the lowest numbers of fatalities per million inhabitants.
- Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in France shows a high proportion of powered two-wheeler fatalities and fatalities occurring on rural roads.
- Over the period 2012-2021, France recorded a somehow lower decrease in road fatalities compared to the EU, while cyclist fatalities were increased significantly.

Road Safety Performance Indicators

- In France, the use of seat-belts among passenger car occupants is higher than the EU average.
- Self-reported drink-driving is higher than the EU average.
- France has a younger passenger car fleet compared to the EU average.

Road Safety Policy Measures & Country Characteristics

- Unlike some countries there is no age restriction in France to transport children on motorcycles.
- In France, there is a lower BAC limit for bus drivers compared to other professional drivers.
- French road infrastructure is characterized by high road density.



2. Road Safety Outcomes

2.1 Road Safety Trends

In France mainland (not including overseas territories), 2,931 people were killed in road crashes in 2021^a. Over the period 2012-2021, the number of fatalities in France decreased by 20%, which is lower to the respective European Union (EU) trend (25%).

In terms of mortality rates, there were 43 road fatalities per million inhabitants, which is just below the EU average (45). The trend of mortality rate in France was similar to the EU trend over the period 2012-2021.

Data for serious injuries in France are not available in the CARE database.

Table 1. Number of fatalities and serious injuries (2012 and 2021)

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Fatalities	3,653	2,931	-20%	-25%
Serious Injuries	/	/	-	-



Figure 1. Mortality rate development, 2012 – 2021

^a It is noted that the global COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the CARE data for 2020 and 2021 for many European countries. Traffic volumes dropped sharply during the pandemic due to traffic restrictions, which was associated with a significant drop in road traffic crashes and fatalities.



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2.2 Risk Figures



Figure 2. Mortality rates by country, 2021

Taking into account the number of vehicles, France recorded 0.62 fatalities per 10,000 registered vehicles which is at the EU average (0.63).



Figure 3. Fatalities per thousand registered vehicles, 2021



In 2021^b, car occupants accounted for almost half of road traffic fatalities in France (48%). This percentage is slightly higher than that observed in the EU as a whole (45%). Powered two-wheelers accounted for 23% of road fatalities, which is just above the proportion that is seen in the European Union (19%).

Over the period 2012-2021, there has been a decrease in road fatalities in France for all transport modes except for cyclists. The highest decrease was recorded for occupants of lorries (29%), while cyclist fatalities were increased substantially (38%).

Of those vulnerable road users (VRUs: pedestrians, cyclists and powered two-wheelers) that were fatally injured in France in crashes involving either passenger cars or buses/coaches or lorries and heavy goods vehicles, 70% were involved in a crash with a passenger car, and 28% were involved in a crash with a lorry or heavy goods vehicle. Over time France showed a slighter or similar decrease of fatalities in these types of crashes than the EU.

Also, the number of fatalities in single vehicle crashes decreased less than the respective EU average. It is noted that recorded cyclist fatalities in single vehicle crashes were increased more than 2.5 times compared to 2012.

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Bus/coach occupants	7	4	-	+26%
Car occupants	1,881	1,414	-25%	-28%
Cyclists	164	227	+38%	-12%
Heavy goods vehicles	56	44	-21%	-11%
Lorries, under 3.5t	145	103	-29%	-14%
Other/unknown	40	70	+75%	-13%
Pedestrians	489	401	-18%	-34%
Powered two-wheelers	871	668	-23%	-18%
Total	3,653	2,931	-20%	-25%

Table 2: Number of fatalities by transport mode, 2012 and 2021

^b Different shares of transport modes in the casualty numbers, as shown in this section, may also reflect differences in the size of the vehicle fleet and the usage of different modes rather than a difference in safety level.



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Table 3: Number of VRU fatalities in crashes involving passenger cars, buses or coaches and lorries or heavy goods vehicles, 2012 and 2021

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Crashes involving buses or coaches	30	15	-50%	-47%
Crashes involving cars	799	636	-20%	-29%
Crashes involving lorries or heavy goods vehicles	255	256	0%	-15%

Table 4: Number of fatalities in single vehicle crashes by transportmode, 2012 and 2021

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Bus/coach occupants	5	3	-	+26%
Car occupants	916	740	-19%	-28%
Cyclists	28	74	+164%	-12%
Heavy goods vehicles	31	28	-10%	-11%
Lorries, under 3.5t	77	50	-35%	-14%
Other/unknown	23	41	+78%	-13%
Powered two-wheelers	321	249	-22%	-34%
Total	1,401	1,185	-15%	-18%

2.4 Age and Gender

The distribution of road fatalities across age groups in France is similar to that of the EU. Over the period 2012-2021, the number of fatalities dropped for all age groups except for men aged 50 years old or older.









Table 5: Number of fatalities in t	y age and gender, 2	2012 and 2021
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	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Female				
<18	77	48	-38%	-44%
18-24	162	93	-43%	-40%
25-49	225	142	-37%	-37%
50-64	139	111	-20%	-23%
65+	320	249	-22%	-25%
Unknown	0	0	-	-22%
Total	923	643	-30%	-31%
Male				
<18	169	137	-19%	-27%
18-24	591	411	-30%	-37%
25-49	1,120	787	-30%	-30%
50-64	425	441	+4%	-13%
65+	425	512	+20%	-8%
Unknown	0	0	-	-9%
Total	2,730	2,288	-16%	-23%



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2.5 Area and Road Type

The majority of road fatalities in France occurred on rural roads (59%). The percentage of fatalities that occurred on urban roads in France (33%) is slightly lower than the EU average (39%). Over the period 2012-2021, an increase of 9% was recorded for fatalities on motorways.

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Motorway	222	243	+9%	-6%
Rural	2,404	1,732	-28%	-28%
Urban	1,027	956	-7%	-24%
Unknown			-	-48%
Total	3,653	2,931	-20%	-25%

Table 6: Number of fatalities by road type, 2012 and 2021

Figure 6. Distribution of road fatalities by road type, 2021



Figure 7. Distribution of road fatalities inside urban areas by type of transport mode, 2021





2.6 Time Period

The distribution of fatalities by day of the week and time of the day is very similar to that for the European Union. Most of fatalities occurred during working weekdays. Over the period 2012-2021, France showed a downward trend, especially regarding night-time fatalities during the weekend, which is in line with the EU average.

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Working week - Daytime	1,956	1,643	-16%	-21%
Working week- Night-time	328	260	-21%	-30%
Weekend - Daytime	881	682	-23%	-25%
Weekend - Night-time	488	346	-29%	-39%
Unknown	0	0	-	-75%
Total	3,653	2,931	-20%	-25%

Table 7: Number of fatalities by time period, 2012 and 2021

Figure 8. Distribution of road fatalities by time period, 2021



2.7 Lighting and Weather Conditions

The majority of fatalities both in France and in the EU are during daylight and with dry weather conditions.

Table 8: Number of fatalities by lighting and weather conditions, 2012and 2021

	2012	2021	Trend	EU trend
Lighting Conditions				
Daylight	2,087	1,767	-15%	-17%
Twilight	275	217	-21%	-25%
Darkness	1,291	947	-27%	-33%
Weather Conditions				
Dry	3,048	2,468	-19%	-24%
Rain	458	340	-26%	-28%
Other/Unknown	147	123	-16%	-25%



3. Safety Performance Indicators

3.1 Road User Behaviour

Table 9: Road Safety Performance Indicators, 2021

	France	EU				
Speeding ^c						
% of passenger cars travelling within speed	d limits ^{1, 4}					
Motorways	/	-				
Rural Roads	/	-				
Urban Roads	/	-				
Seat belt & CRS use rates (%) ^{1,2}						
Front	98.0	93.3				
Rear	92.0	75.5				
Child restraint systems	/	67.0				
Helmet use rates (%) ¹	Helmet use rates (%) ¹					
PTW driver	98.0	97.0				
PTW passenger	/	94.4				
Cyclist	/	37.8				
DUI of Alcohol ³ (self-reported)						
% car drivers have driven at least once in the last 30 days over the legal limit	15.6	11.8				
Driver Distraction ¹						
% of drivers not using hand-held mobile device/phone while driving	95.0	94.8				

Sources: ¹Baseline project, ²ETSC (2022), ³ESRA3 project (2024), ⁴national sources

^c An EU average is not available for speeding, due to different legal speed limits among countries, which does not allow for a straightforward comparison. Please also note that for some Safety Performance Indicators of Section 3, the EU average is based on a small number of EU Member States with available data (see Section 6.1).



3.2 Vehicle Safety

Table 10: Vehicle Safety Performance Indicators, 2019

	France	EU
% of new passenger cars rated with 4 EuroNCAP stars and above ¹	/	83.6
Average age of passenger car fleet (years) ²	10.3	11.8
Sources: ¹ Baseline project, ² ACEA (2022)		

3.3 Enforcement

Table 11: Number of traffic police tickets per thousand population, 2020

Tickets per 1,000 population	France	EU
Speeding	205	139.7
Non-use of seat-belt	2.0	5.7
Illegal use of mobile phone	5.5	4.4
Driving above alcohol legal limits	3.5	1.9
Source: FTSC (2022)		

Source: ETSC (2022)



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4. Road Safety Policy and Measures

4.1 National Road Safety Strategy

 Table 12: National road safety strategy and targets

In France, the road safety strategy is announced with each meeting of the Interministerial Road Safety Committee. The last one was held on 17th July 2023.

	France
Timeframe	2030
Lead Authority	Prime Minister level, who chairs the Interministerial Committee for Road Safety
Targets	
Fatalities	-50%
Serious injuries	-50%
Baseline Year	2019
SPIs	Yes, for behaviour attitudes in traffic
Link	https://www.onisr.securite-routiere.gouv.fr/en/road-safety- policy/interministerial-road-safety-committees

Source: national sources

4.2 Traffic Laws and Regulations

National road safety legislation in France reflects the situation in the majority of EU countries with a few exceptions. For the use of child restraint systems, age criteria are defined, while in most EU countries, height criteria are used. Furthermore, unlike most countries there is no age restriction in France to transport children on motorcycles.

Table 13: National road safety legislation

	France	Most common in EU
Speed limits for		
passenger cars (km/h)		
Urban roads	50	50: 26/27
Rural roads	80	90: 17/27
Motorways	130	130: 14/27
Allowed BAC levels (g/l)		
General population	0.5	0.5: 19/27
Novice drivers	0.2	0.2: 12/27, 0.0: 9/27
Professional drivers	0.5 (0.2 bus drivers)	0.2: 10/27, 0.0: 9/27, 0.5: 6/27
Seatbelt requirement		
Drivers	Yes	Yes: 27/27
Front Passenger	Yes	Yes: 27/27



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	France	Most common in EU	
Rear Passenger	Yes	Yes: 27/27	
Child restraint systems			
CRS required	Up to 10 years	up to 135 cm: 11/27, up to 150 cm: 11/27	
Children in front seats	Prohibited under 10 years	Allowed in CRS: 22/27	
Children on motorcycles	Not restricted	Prohibited under certain age/height: 18/27	
Helmet requirement			
Powered Two Wheelers	Yes	Yes: 27/27	
All roads	Yes	Yes: 27/27	
All engines	Yes	Yes: 25/27	
Cyclists	Yes	Not mandatory: 19/27	
Age restriction	Up to 12 years	Not restricted: 16/27	
Mobile phone use			
Hand-held phone use allowed	No	No: 26/27	
Hands-free phone use allowed	Yes	Yes: 27/27	
E-scooters			
Age restriction	Allowed from 14 years	Not restricted: 9/27, Allowed from 14 years: 6/27	
Max. speed limit (km/h)	25	25: 18/27	
Helmet required	No	Not required: 12/27	
Allowed on road lanes	Yes (not allowed outside urban areas)	Yes: 18/27	
Allowed on pavements	No	No: 13/27, Yes: 9/27	
Allowed on bicycle paths	Yes	Yes: 21/27	
Sources, EC (2023) WHO (2018) FERSI (2020) National sources			

Sources: EC (2023), WHO (2018), FERSI (2020), National sources

4.3 Driving Licences

Table 14: Policies and regulations related to driving licences

	France	Most common in EU
Novice Drivers		
Accompanied driving	15 years	17 years: 13/27, No: 7/27
Probation period for novice drivers	Up to 3 years	2 years: 7/27, 3 years: 5/27
Renewal Procedure		
Renewal procedure (compulsory)	Yes	Yes: 26/27
Renewal interval	Every 15years	Every 10years: 13/27, Every 15years: 9/27
Medical requirements	Yes ^d	Yes: 22/27
Source: National sources		

^d A decree establishes the list of medical conditions that are incompatible or compatible with or without accommodations or restrictions for obtaining, renewing or maintaining a driving licence or that may result in a driving licence being issued with limited validity.



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4.4 Road Infrastructure

Table 15: Policies and regulations related to road infrastructure

	France	Most common in EU
Audits or star rating required for new road infrastructure TEN T	Yes	Yes: 10/27, Partial:17/27
Inspections / star rating of existing roads TEN T	Yes	Yes:26/27
Design standards for the safety of pedestrians / cyclists	Yes	Yes:25/27
Investments to upgrade high risk locations	Yes	Yes:20/27
Policies & investment in urban public transport	Yes	Yes:23/27
Policies promoting walking and cycling	Yes	Yes: 21/27

Source: WHO (2018)



5. Structure and Culture

5.1 Country Characteristics

Population density in France^e is similar to the EU average. Its GDP per capita is above that of the European Union.

Table 16: Country Characteristics, 2021

	France	EU
Demographics ²		
Population (inhabitants)	67,656,682	447,000,548
Population density (inh./km ²)	106.6	109.0
% children (0-17)	21.4	18.2
% adults (18-64)	57.9	61.6
% elderly (65+)	20.7	20.3
% of urban population	81.4	75.2
Economic Data ²		
GDP per capita (euro)	36,670	32,560
Infrastructure ¹		
Country Area (km ²)	638,475	4,225,134
Road network length (km)	1,105,094	4,473,380
Road density (km/km ²)	2.0	1.1
% of motorways	1.06	1.67
% GDP spent to road infrastructure ³	0.4	0.4
Vehicle Fleet ¹		
Vehicles per population	0.72	0.73
% of passenger cars	79.9	77.3
% of motorcycles	5.7	11.4
% of HGVs	14.2	11.1
% of buses	0.2	0.2
Exposure ¹		
Modal split of passenger transport on land		
(passenger-km in %):		
- Passenger cars	85.0	85.2
- Bus/coach/Metro/Tram	5.6	8.7
Modal split of freight transport on land		
(tonne-km in %):		
- Road	84.9	74.6
<u>- Rail</u>	10.3	16.4
Environment ¹		
CO2 emissions from road transport	117.1	739.8
(million tonnes)	/	, 5910
Share of road transport emissions in total	87.0	76.3
transport emissions (%)		
Sources: ¹ EC (2023b), ² Eurostat, ³ OECD (202	23)	

^e Population and country area concern the whole France, including the overseas departments.



France

5.2 Structure of Road Safety Management

Key Functions	Key Actors		
Formulation of national road safety strategy	 The Inter-ministerial Committee for Road Safety (CISR): overall decision-making body for road safety The National Road Safety Council (CNSR): propositions to improve road safety. It involves all stakeholders The Ministry of Interior via the Directorate of Road Safety (DSR) 		
Monitoring of the road safety development	 ONISR (French Road Safety Observatory), responsible for the traffic crash database and evaluation of the road safety policies 		
Improvements in road infrastructure	 The Ministry of Transport (MTE) for trunk road network Road concessionaires Local authorities (County and City level) 		
Improvement in vehicles	 The Ministry of Transport (MTE) responsible for vehicle regulations The Ministry of Interior responsible for driver regulations and training (DSR) 		
Improvement in road user education	Directorate of Road Safety (DSR)Ministry of Education		
Publicity campaigns	 Directorate of Road Safety (DSR) Insurance companies Road Safety association 		
Enforcement of traffic laws	 Police forces: "gendarmerie nationale" in nonurban areas, "police" in urban areas 		
Other relevant actors	 Ministry of Justice Ministry of Health Ministry of Work Research institute: University Gustave Eiffel (technical improvements for infrastructure and vehicles) Centre of studies and expertise on risks, environment, mobility and development (CEREMA) 		

 Table 17: Road Safety Management Structure

Source: National sources



Table 18: Self-declared behaviour and attitudes

	France	EU Average	Ranking among EU countries
Risk Taking			
% at least once in the past 30 days			
 drive after drinking alcohol 	19.4	17.0	11/18
 drive faster than the speed limit inside urban areas 	48.0	55.7	5/18
 transport children under 150cm without using CRS 	18.5	17.2	10/18
Enforcement Perception % of likely of being checked for			
- drink-driving	18.1	16.8	7/18
 respecting speed limits 	35.9	34.4	9/18
 using of hand-held mobile phone while driving 	12.6	15.0	12/18
Support for policy measures % of support to a legal obligation to			
 zero tolerance for all novice drivers 	79.4	76.6	5/18
 limiting the speed limit to 30km/h in all built-up areas (except on main thoroughfares) 	43.7	38.3	5/18
- requiring all cyclists to wear a helmet	73.0	60.1	5/18

Source: ESRA3 project (2024)



6. Notes

6.1 Data Sources

CARE (Community database on road accidents in Europe)

All information in section 1 of the Country Profile is based on the CARE database. The full glossary of definitions of variables used in this Report is available at <u>EC Mobility & Transport - Road Safety</u> webpage.

The European average is based on the average of the 27 EU countries. EU trends and aggregated figures are based on the most recent figures available (2021). In case of missing values, the EU averages and aggregated data were produced by imputing figures based on data from previous years. For values less than 10, the trend is not shown since it may be due to randomness. Also, due to missing data on serious injuries for some EU countries, EU total/average is not calculated. Date of extraction: July 2023

ACEA (2022)

European Automobile Manufacturers' Association. *The automobile industry - Pocket guide 2022/2023*. ACEA, 2022. https://www.acea.auto/files/ACEA_Pocket_Guide_2022-2023.pdf

Data on the average age of the passenger car fleet come from the ACEA. The European average is based on the average of 24 EU countries. Date of extraction: July 2023

Baseline project

Information in section 3 is based on Key Performance Indicators collected within the Baseline project.

https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/statistics-andanalysis/data-and-analysis/key-performance-indicators-kpis_en

Alternative sources were used for countries with no available data in the Baseline project (e.g., ETSC, national sources). The European average is based on the average of 17 EU countries for speeding, 23 EU countries for seat-belt use, 13 EU countries for CRS use, 14 EU countries for helmet use, 14 EU countries for driver distraction and 13 EU countries for vehicle safety. Date of extraction: July 2023

European Commission 2023

Data were retrieved from EC Mobility & Transport - Road Safety website:<u>https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/driving-abroad/road-rules-and-safety/index en.htm</u> Date of extraction: July 2023



European Commission – Statistical Pocketbook 2023 (b)

European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport. *EU transport in figures – Statistical pocketbook 2023*. Publications Office of the European Union, 2023. Date of extraction: November 2023 <u>https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2832/319371</u>

Eurostat

Data were retrieved from Eurostat: <u>https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat</u> The European average is based on the average of the 27 EU countries. Date of extraction: July 2023

ESRA project

Information in sections 3 (drink-driving) and 5.3 is based on data from the ESRA 3 (E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes) project (2023). https://www.esranet.eu/

The European average is the average of 17 European countries. In the ranking of the countries in Table 18, Switzerland is also included. Date of extraction: November 2023

ETSC

Information in section 3 is based on data from the following ETSC report. The European average is the average of 25 European countries.

European Transport Safety Council. *How traffic law enforcement can contribute to safer roads*. PIN Flash Report 42. ETSC, 2022. https://etsc.eu/how-traffic-law-enforcement-can-contribute-to-safer-roads-pin-flash-42/

FERSI (2020)

Kamphuis, K. & van Schagen, I. (2020) E-scooters in Europe: legal status, usage and safety. Results of a survey in FERSI countries. FERSI paper. <u>https://fersi.org/</u>. Date of extraction: July 2023

IRTAD (International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group)

Data related to the percentage of GDP spent to road infrastructure (Section 5.1) is retrieved from the OECD database: <u>https://stats.oecd.org/.</u> Date of extraction: July 2023

WHO

Data were retrieved from the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety, published in 2018. The European average is based on the average of the 27 EU countries.

https://www.who.int/violence injury prevention/road safety status/ 2018/en/. Date of extraction: July 2023



6.2 Definitions

Road Crash

Any crash involving at least one road vehicle in motion on a public road or private road to which the public has right of access, resulting in at least one injured or killed person. Data are based on police reports and there may be an underestimate because of underreporting (especially for non-fatal crashes and crashes not involving a motorised vehicle).

Fatalities

Total number of persons fatally injured within 30 days of the road crash; correction factors applied when needed. Confirmed suicide and natural death are not included.

Seriously injured (at 30 days)

Total number of persons seriously injured corrected by correction factors when needed. Injured (although not killed) in the road crash and hospitalized at least 24 hours. The definition of "serious injury" varies considerably among EU countries, affecting, thus, the reliability of cross-country comparisons.

Lorry, under 3.5tn

Goods vehicle under 3.5t maximum gross weight. Smaller motor vehicles used only for the transport of goods.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Goods vehicle over 3.5t maximum gross weight. Larger motor vehicles used only for the transport of goods.

Powered two-wheelers

Driver or passenger of either a moped (two or three wheeled vehicle equipped with engine size of maximum 50cc and maximum speed that does not exceed 45 km/h. A moped can also have an electric motor. Speed pedelecs and electric powered bicycles that offer pedal assistance up to 45 km/h, also belong to this category of vehicles.) or a motorcycle (motor vehicle with two or three wheels, with an engine size of more than 50 cc. A motorcycle can also have an electric motor.).

Working week – Daytime

Monday to Friday 6.00 a.m. to 9.59 p.m.

Working week – Night-time

Monday 10 p.m. to Tuesday 5.59 a.m. Tuesday 10 p.m. to Wednesday 5.59 a.m. Wednesday 10 p.m. to Thursday 5.59 a.m. Thursday 10 p.m. to Friday 5.59 a.m.



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Weekend – Daytime

Saturday to Sunday 6.00 a.m. to 9.59 p.m.

Weekend – Night-time

Friday 10 p.m. to Saturday 5.59 a.m. Saturday 10 p.m. to Sunday 5.59 a.m. Sunday 10 p.m. to Monday 5.59 a.m.

Speeding

The percentage of passenger cars travelling within legal maximum speed limits based on roadside measurements during daytime.

Seat belt & CRS use rates

The percentage of passenger car occupants using seat belts and child restraint systems (CRS) based on roadside observations during daytime.

Helmet use rates

The percentage of powered two-wheeler riders and cyclists using helmets based on roadside observations during daytime. Helmet use rates for cyclists in some countries concern only urban roads. Please note that in some countries, the use of helmets is not obligatory for cyclists (see Table 13).

DUI of Alcohol

The percentage of car drivers who have driven at least once in the last 30 days over the legal alcohol limit based on a self-reported survey.

Driver Distraction

The percentage of drivers not using a hand-held mobile device/phone while driving based on roadside surveys during daytime on working days. The vehicle types included are passenger cars, light goods vehicles and buses/coaches.

Explanations of symbols in tables:

/ : not available

- : not applicable (e.g. calculation cannot be performed)



