

EU Road Deaths down by 3900 in 2020

- Covid-19 pandemic travel decrease mainly responsible for a 17% drop in road deaths last year in the EU;
- Deaths dropped by 37% in the last ten years – short of the EU target to cut by 50% by 2020;
- Greece announced as the winner of the 2021 ETSC Road Safety Performance Index Award – with road deaths down by 54% in ten years;
- 2020 a “turning point” year - future reductions in road deaths in doubt without political leadership.

EMBARGO 16 June 2021 00:01 CET

Brussels - There were around 3900 fewer road deaths in the European Union in 2020 compared to the previous year, according to a new report by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) published today. The unprecedented 17% annual reduction in deaths is most likely attributable to Covid-19 restrictions on travel.

18,844 people lost their lives in road traffic in the EU in 2020, 10,847 fewer than in 2010, representing a 37% decrease. 56,305 lives were saved on EU roads compared to the number who would have been killed if deaths had stayed at the same level as in 2010. The saving in human costs resulting from this reduction in deaths was valued at some €156 billion, according to EU research.

Only one EU Member State exceeded the EU target to cut road deaths by 50% over the decade to 2020: Greece with a 54% reduction. Norway, a non-EU country, reduced the number of road deaths by 55%. Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Belgium, Slovenia, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Denmark, Austria and Hungary achieved a decrease above the EU average of 37%, while other countries progressed to a lesser extent. The progress was slowest in the Netherlands with a 5% decrease and the UK with 14% in 10 years.

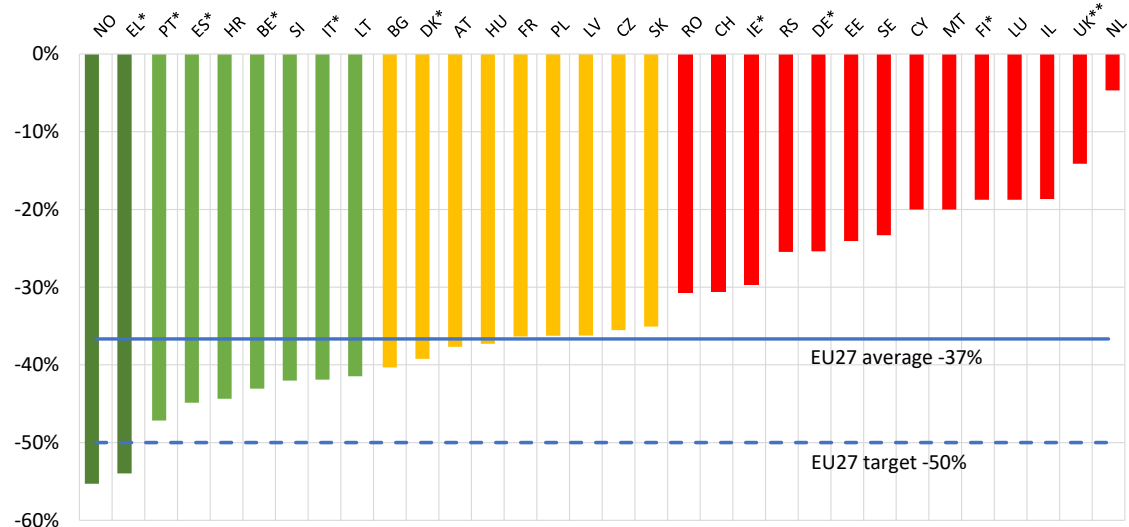
Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC said:

“Road safety is, in the end, a public health issue. Covid has killed 3.5 million people worldwide. Over the last decade, at least 13 million have died on the world’s roads. The extraordinary and necessary global response to the Covid pandemic has shown how policymakers and society as a whole can act when most people are working towards a common goal. Can we apply the same focus to the challenges of road safety? “

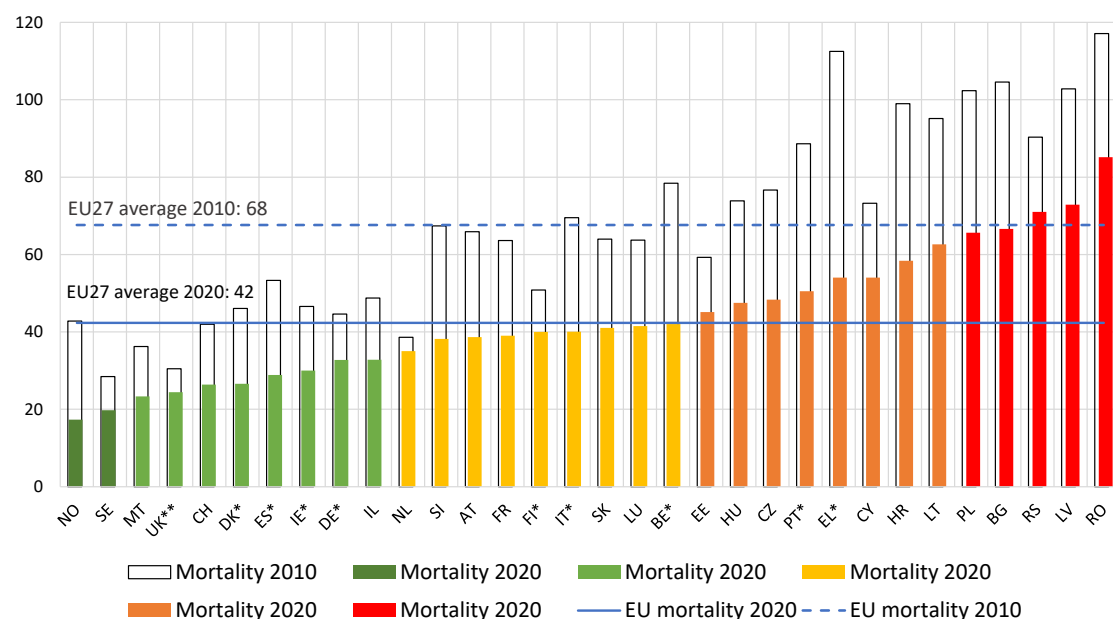
“Success is not guaranteed. After months of lockdowns and obeying strict rules, are we set for a decade of rule-breaking and excess, another ‘roaring twenties’? Or will we learn from this moment that life on earth is fragile, and needs to be protected? Europe needs political leadership more than ever. Every road user has the right and responsibility to move around

without risking their own life or the lives of others. Policymakers have a responsibility to build the Safe System that helps protect everyone. Will they approach it with the energy and dedication that many have approached the challenges of Covid? “

ETSC has announced today that Greece is the winner of the 2021 ETSC Road Safety Performance Index Award, given in recognition of outstanding efforts to improve road safety. Road deaths in Greece decreased by 54% over the decade to 2020. In the first part of the decade, the economic crisis may have played a role in reducing road traffic, but deaths continued to decline as the economy picked up again. The award recognises Greece's efforts in setting targets and improving infrastructure and education efforts.



Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2020. *National provisional estimates used for 2020, as final figures for 2020 are not yet available at the time this report went to print. **UK data for 2020 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2020. The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. The annual numbers of deaths in CY and EE are also relatively small and may be subject to annual fluctuations.



Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2020 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison). *National provisional estimates used for 2020, as final figures for 2020 were not available at the time this report went to print. The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. **UK data for 2020 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2020.

Download the report at:

www.etsc.eu/pin15

Notes to editors:

1. Data used in this report are provisional for several countries. Due to the unprecedented and differing effects of Covid restrictions in the various countries, final data may show more significant differences when compared to the provisional data than has been seen typically in recent years.
2. Tomorrow, 17 June, the European Parliament's transport committee will vote on a report on EU transport policy for the next decade. ETSC, together with seven other organisations, has called for action on speed, particularly in urban areas. See: <https://etsc.eu/un-global-road-safety-week-eight-organisations-call-on-european-parliament-to-take-action-on-speed/>. See also, ETSC one-page briefing on road safety priorities for 2030: <https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021-03-One-pager-2030-priorities.pdf>
3. ETSC's Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) programme receives financial support from the German Road Safety Council (DVR), Toyota Motor Europe, the Swedish Transport Administration, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration and CITA – the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee.
4. ETSC is an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe.
5. Follow ETSC on twitter @etsc_eu.

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