

An overview of serious road injuries in EU countries

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Background

- In 2014, the number of **serious road injuries** in the 23 EU countries that distinguish between seriously and slightly injured was more than **203,000**.
- Since 2010 the number of people seriously injured on roads of the above 23 EU countries has been **reduced** by just **1.6%**, compared to an 18% decrease in the number of road deaths.
- The number of serious road injuries in 2014 **increased** by more than **3%** compared to 2013 results.
- Research indicates that 50% of the total **social costs** of road crashes in high, middle and low-income countries relate to injuries. Two-thirds of these are serious injuries.

Lately the road safety focus is turning away from the need to try and prevent all crashes (which is seen as unrealistic and of insufficient priority) to the **prevention of death and serious injury**.

In 2017, European Union transport ministers formally agreed to set a **target of halving the number of serious injuries** on roads in the EU by 2030 from their 2020 level.

Objective

To present and discuss **aspects of serious road injuries** as well as a brief outline of **recommended action** at EU and national levels.



Defining, measuring and recording serious injury

- Due to **differing definitions** of serious injuries in national road crash reporting systems, comparisons of performance and target-setting have not been possible at EU level.
- Studies have indicated that only around **70%** of all serious injuries are reported. **Misreporting and underreporting** are largely due to the fact that, in most EU countries, the national road traffic injury **databases** are only **based on police reports**.
- Health sector data** for meaningful injury classification at country level is necessary to **complement police data** and to provide an optimal means of defining serious injury.
- In-depth data** is also needed from crash injury research to lead to meaningful conclusions concerning serious crash and serious injury causation.

Country definitions of serious road injury (2013)

Country	Country definitions of serious road injury (2013)
Austria	> 24 days health impairment
Belgium	> 24 hours in hospital
Bulgaria	As defined in penal code
Croatia	Definition unknown
Cyprus	Hospitalised
Czech Rep.	As decided by medical doctor or >=24h hospital
Denmark	Intracranial injury, skull fracture, face or eye injury; injury of trunk; injury of spine and/or pelvis; fracture/dislocation or severe sprain of shoulder, arm or hand; fracture/dislocation or severe sprain of hip, leg or foot; serious injuries in more than one main region, burn. The statistics only include injuries reported by the police.
Estonia	Not defined
Finland	Not defined
France	>=24 hours in hospital
Germany	>=24h in hospital
Greece	Police records; presumed >=24h in hospital
Hungary	Injuries needing hospital care or >8 days to hospital
Ireland	Hospitalised or according to national definition: An injury for which the person is detained in hospital as an 'in-patient', or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital: fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, severe cuts and lacerations, severe general shock requiring medical treatment.
Italy	Not defined
Latvia	>=24 hours in hospital
Lithuania	Definition unknown
Luxembourg	>=24 hours in hospital
Malta	Health department/Police definition
Netherlands	>=24 hours in hospital
Poland	Serious disability, serious incurable illness or a permanent mental illness, complete or a significant loss of ability to work or a permanent disfigurement of the body as well as injuries such as fractures, damage of the internal organs, serious cut or irregular wounds
Portugal	>=24 hours in hospital
Romania	Hospitalised or: Injuries requiring hospitalisation or any of the following injuries whether or not they are detained in hospital: Organ injuries, permanent physical or psychological disability, body disfiguration, abortion, fractures, concussions, internal wounds, serious cuts or broken parts, or severe general shock which requires medical care and injuries causing death 30 or more days after the accident.
Slovakia	Doctor's opinion + change of state between 1 and 30 days
Slovenia	>=24 hours in hospital
Spain	>=24 hours in hospital
Sweden	Injuries expected to result in hospitalisation
UK	Hospitalised or: An injury for which a person is detained in hospital as an "in-patient", or any of the following injuries whether or not they are detained in hospital: fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, burns (excluding friction burns), severe cuts, severe general shock requiring medical treatment and injuries causing death 30 or more days after the accident.



Average social costs of traffic injuries at market prices in €

Country	Fatality	Severe Injury	Slight injury
Austria	2,395,000	327,000	25,800
Belgium	2,178,000	330,400	21,300
Bulgaria	984,000	127,900	9,800
Croatia	1,333,000	173,300	13,300
Cyprus	1,234,000	163,100	11,900
Czech Republic	1,446,000	194,300	14,100
Denmark	2,364,000	292,600	22,900
Estonia	1,163,000	155,800	11,200
Finland	2,213,000	294,300	22,000
France	2,070,000	289,200	21,600
Germany	2,220,000	307,100	24,800
Greece	1,518,000	198,400	15,100
Hungary	1,225,000	164,400	11,900
Ireland	2,412,000	305,600	23,300
Italy	1,916,000	246,200	18,800
Latvia	1,034,000	140,000	10,000
Lithuania	1,061,000	144,900	10,500
Luxembourg	3,323,000	517,700	31,200
Malta	2,122,000	269,500	20,100
Netherlands	2,388,000	316,400	25,500
Poland	1,168,000	156,700	11,300
Portugal	1,505,000	201,100	13,800
Romania	1,048,000	136,200	10,400
Slovakia	1,593,000	219,700	15,700
Slovenia	1,989,000	258,300	18,900
Spain	1,913,000	237,800	17,900
Sweden	2,240,000	328,700	23,500
UK	2,170,000	280,300	22,200
EU average	1,870,000	243,100	18,700



(Source: Ricardo-AEA, 2014)

National Serious Road Traffic Injury Targets

Country	Target level	Target period	Required % decrease from one year to next
Austria	40%	2010-2020	5.0%
Bulgaria	20%	2010-2020	2.2%
Cyprus	50%	2010-2020	6.7%
Czech Republic	40%	2010-2020	5.0%
Denmark	50%	2013-2020	9.4%
Estonia	25%	2013-2015	5.5%
Finland	25%	2010-2020	2.8%
Ireland	30%	2013-2020	5.0%
Netherlands	25%	2007-2020	2.2%
Poland	40%	2010-2020	5.0%
Sweden	25%	2007-2020	2.2%



Recommendations for EU action

Planning, design, operation of road network

- Encourage knowledge transfer and the Safe System approach on TEN-T and secondary network.
- Establish a safety performance framework for the TEN-T network.
- Target a percentage increase in Euro RAP star rating of TEN-T roads to 2020 and beyond.
- Update TEN-T guidelines to ensure conformity to EC Directives 2004/54/EC and 2008/96.
- Set a speed limit of 120 km/h or lower on TEN-T roads.
- Promote & fund Safe Corridor, Safe City/Safe Town projects on TEN-T and secondary network.

Enforcement of key road safety rules

- Set up annual surveys of compliance with speed limits, alcohol legislation, seat belt use.
- Set 2020 targets at EU & national levels for compliance with speed & alcohol limits, seat belt use.
- Provide new guidance on best practice enforcement of key road safety rules.
- Promote & fund enforcement/intervention in Safe Corridor and Safe City/Safe Town projects on the TEN-T and secondary network.
- Mandate speed assistance systems & seat belt reminders in all seating positions & vehicles.

Vehicle and equipment safety standards

- Ensure that EU vehicle safety standards need to provide a high level of protection.
- Propose a range of new EU vehicle safety legislation to reduce serious and fatal injury.
- Promote and fund a Euro SHARP consumer information programme on PTW use crash helmets.
- Monitor the usage levels of helmets by PTW and cyclists and promote mandatory cycle helmet use legislation for school-aged children across the EU and target increased levels of use.
- Promote zero-rated Value Added Tax for cyclist and motorcyclist helmets.
- Revise EC Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement to include road safety
- Invite the High Level Group on Road Safety to consider national incentives to fast-track proven technologies via procurement, safe travel policies, and tax and insurance incentives.
- Devise safe travel policies for the EC and take up of ISO 39001.

Driver and rider standards

- Review Directive 2006/126/EC towards the introduction of a package of effective Graduated Driver Licensing measures for car drivers and powered two-wheeler riders.
- Review Directive 2003/59/EC to introduce new provisions/guidance on demonstrably effective training schemes for professional drivers.

Post-impact care

- Commission the review of post impact care in reducing road deaths and serious injuries.
- Include first responder training in commercial/public transport driver training and emergency services personnel.
- Monitor and rank annually the role of road traffic injury as cause of death and disability.

A new common EU definition of serious injury

Serious injury is newly defined as injuries classified as ≥ 3 on the 1 to 6 range of the Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS3+) which are the most serious injuries and ones that involve significant or long-term damage, consequences and costs.