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Subject:	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Report on the Implementation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework at the Mid-Point

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Report on the Implementation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework at the Mid-Point

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, EU roads claim nearly 20 000 lives – a devastating toll that is no mere statistic, but a reality that tears families apart, leaves communities grieving and wastes immeasurable human potential forever. Up to five times as many people – 100 000 individuals – sustain injuries on the roads that fundamentally alter the course of their life. These life-changing injuries often mean permanent disability, chronic pain and lost livelihoods; they have profound impacts on quality of life that extend far beyond the immediate victims to families, caregivers, and broader social networks.

The human cost of road collisions has been the most visible and tragic dimension. But there is also the economic burden of road crashes; in monetary terms, the cost of road crashes in the EU has been estimated at 2% of GDP annually[1]. These resources could otherwise fuel innovation, education, healthcare and other crucial public investments. Road safety should be a pillar of the EU's economic competitiveness as it directly influences the efficient movement of goods and labour and the operational costs of businesses across all sectors.

A transition to safer, more sustainable mobility is also essential for maintaining the EU's industrial leadership and competitiveness in global markets[2]. European automotive manufacturers and their supplier networks are at the forefront of developing advanced safety technologies, from autonomous emergency braking systems to vehicle connectivity, positioning the EU as a global leader in automotive safety innovation. Commitments to road safety not only save lives but also drive technological progress, create high-skilled employment, and maintain the EU's competitive edge in the rapidly evolving global automotive market. Road safety investments also contribute to the EU's preparedness and resilience by safeguarding the continuity and reliability of critical road infrastructure and related services, in particular where road corridors and nodes support both civilian and defence needs.

The EU and its Member States are firmly committed to road safety. At EU level, this was reflected – most recently – in the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030[3], which reiterated the shared goals to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030[4] and to achieve 'Vision Zero' – to come close to eliminating road deaths by 2050. In pursuit of these goals, Member States have adopted and implemented national strategies, action plans and other expressions of commitment such as inter-ministerial agreements and federal cooperation structures.

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1 EC Handbook on the external costs of transport 2019 (new version forthcoming).

2 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Industrial Action Plan for the European automotive sector, COM/2025/95 final of 5 March 2025, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0095.

3 COM (2018) 293: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Europe on the Move – Sustainability for Europe: Safe, Connected and Clean, Annex I Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Europe on the Move – Sustainability for Europe: Safe, Connected and Clean, Annex I, COM(2018)293 of 17 May 2018, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52018DC0293.

4 It has since been decided that the baseline year, from which progress is measured, will be 2019.

The EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 followed the key priority areas of the Safe System approach, including safer roads and roadsides, safer vehicles, safer road use, better post-crash response, and better data collection and analysis. It emphasised the critical importance of addressing the main risk factors – speeding, drink-driving, distraction, and failure to use protective equipment – while paying particular attention to vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

This communication is a mid-term report on progress towards achieving the EU's road safety objectives, taking stock of developments since 2019, identifying emerging challenges that were not fully anticipated by the original framework and suggests adjustments to ensure the EU remains on track to meet its 2030 objectives. Its analysis reveals encouraging progress in some areas but also points to some significant gaps that require immediate attention and reinforced action to save lives, reduce economic burden, and strengthen EU competitiveness.

1.1. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING ROAD SAFETY TARGETS

The latest data show that 19 900 people were killed in road crashes in the EU in 2024. This is 440 fewer lives lost than in 2023 - a 2% decrease[5]. Given the rise in the number of vehicles per person and in the number of kilometres driven, this is a significant achievement but it also highlights the need for sustained efforts at all levels.

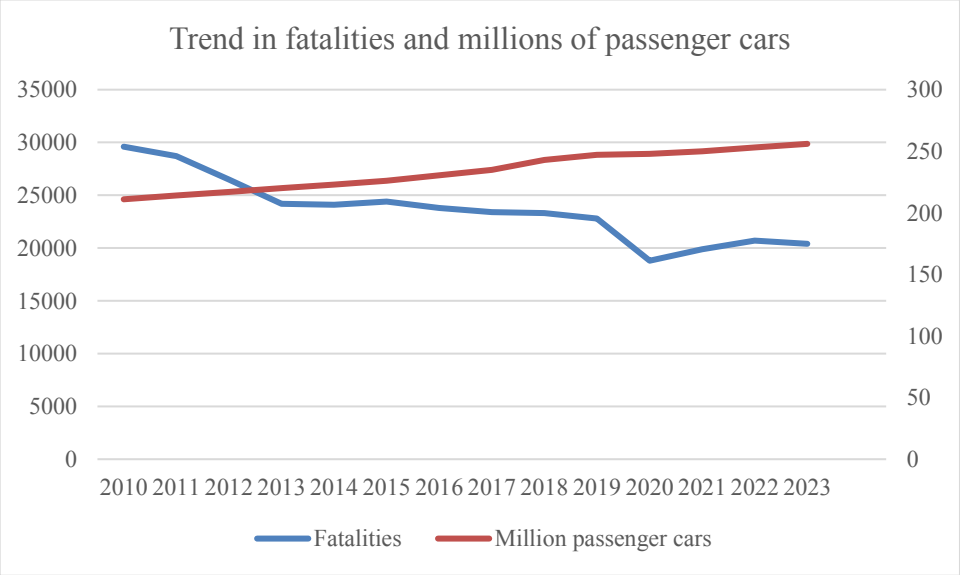

Figure 1 Trends in the number of fatalities and millions of passenger cars in the EU 2010-2023. Sources: EU CARE database on road crashes; for data on passenger cars, Eurostat (online data code road_eqs_carage)

[5] While this represents progress, the overall trajectory falls significantly short of the annual 4.6% reduction required to achieve the 2030 target of halving road deaths.

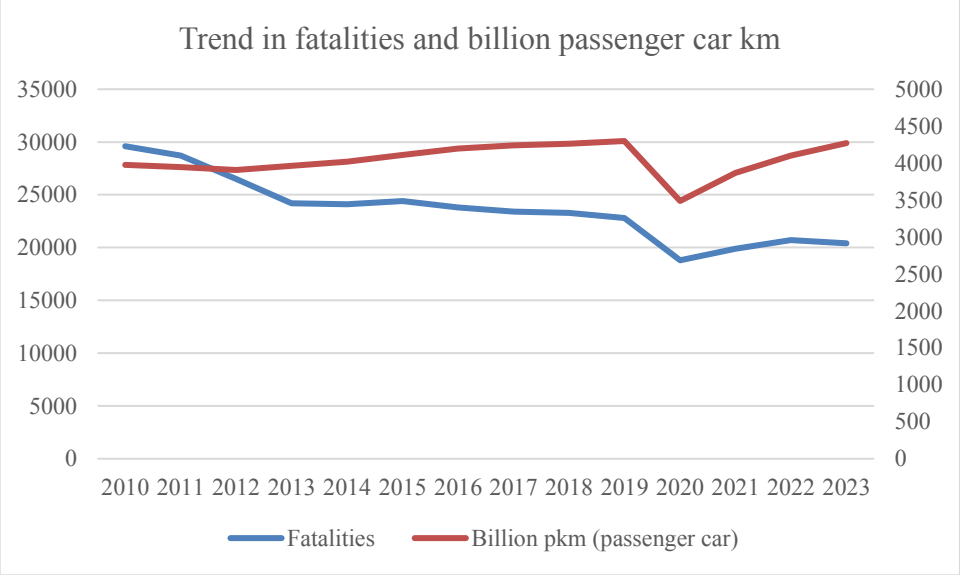

Figure 2 Trends in the number of fatalities and billions of passenger car kilometres driven in the EU 2010-2023. Sources: EU CARE database on road crashes; for data on passenger car-kilometres, Eurostat (online data code road_pa_mov)

Since the baseline year of 2019, road deaths have decreased by 12% EU-wide, but this improvement masks considerable differences among Member States. Only a handful of Member States – Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, and Slovenia – are currently on track to meet the 50% reduction target for 2030. Some Member States, including Ireland and Estonia, have experienced increases in road fatalities while others like France, Italy and the Netherlands have seen only marginal improvements. In 2024, the fatality rate ranged from 20 deaths per million inhabitants in Sweden to 78 per million in Romania.

To better understand these trends, the Commission worked with Member States to track their performance on key performance indicators related to road safety. These projects, Baseline[6] and Trendline[7] produced information about the factors associated with crash and injury risks and revealed significant differences between countries. See Section 2, below.

6 https://baseline.vias.be/en/about-the-project.

7 https://trendlineproject.eu/.

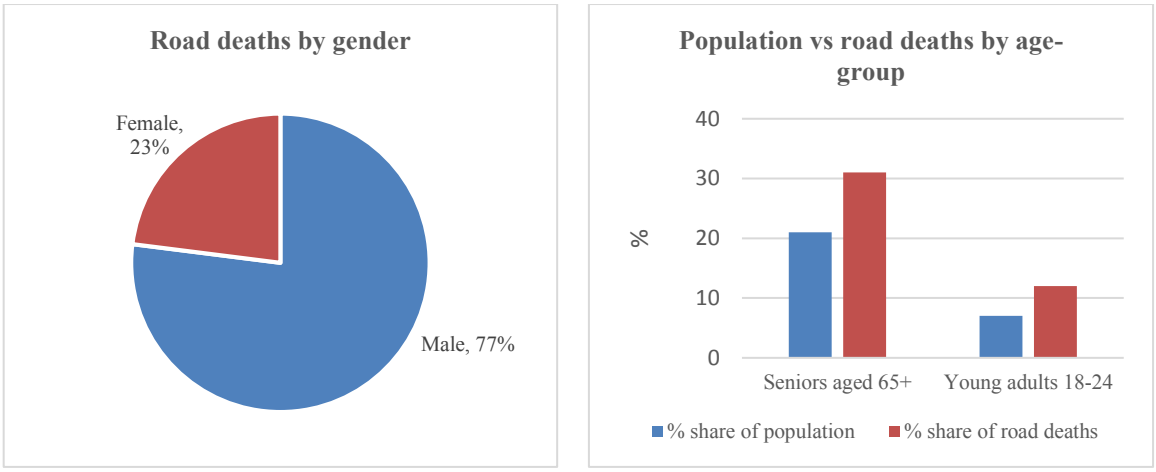

Figure 3 Breakdown of EU road deaths by gender and age groups, 2023. Sources: EU CARE database on road crashes; for population data, Eurostat (online data code demo_pjan)

In terms of the geographic and demographic breakdown of road victims, some clear trends emerge. Rural roads are still the most dangerous type of road. Men vastly outnumber women in road deaths. The disproportionately high share of young people and older people in road deaths – especially among people walking and on bicycles – is also a growing concern.

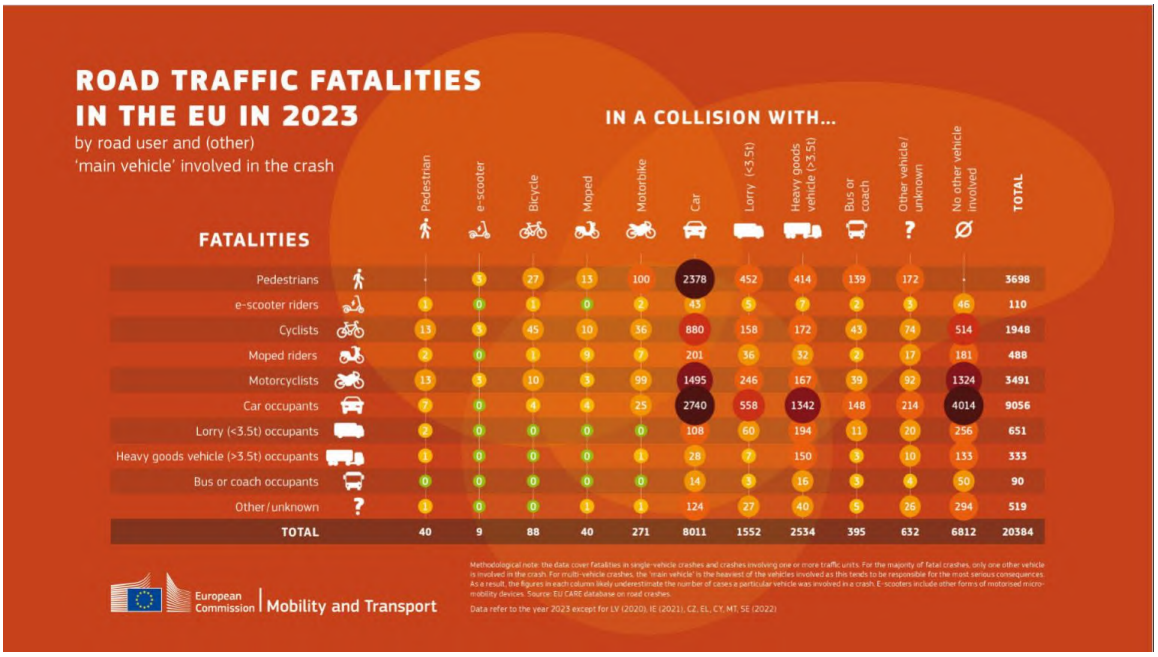

Figure 4 Collision matrix of EU road traffic fatalities by road user and other main vehicle involved in the crash, 2023. Source: EU CARE database on road crashes

In absolute terms, car occupants are the most likely to die in road crashes. They constitute around 44% of all fatalities, followed by pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists. Relative to the number of vehicles on the road, however, motorcyclists are at far greater risk of dying in a road crash. Road workers and maintenance staff are a specific

risk group. Further analysis of these geographic and demographic breakdowns of fatal road crashes can be found in reports of the EU Road Safety Observatory[8].

The reports show that a high number of car occupant and motorcyclist fatalities result from single-vehicle crashes, while pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable when they are involved in a collision with a car.

Progress in protecting vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and users of light electric mobility devices has been mixed. Between 2019 and 2023, approximately 900 fewer pedestrians were killed. However, the reduction in fatalities among cyclists and motorcyclists was much smaller, with decreases of around 100 in each category across the EU. Within towns, almost 70% of the people killed in road crashes were vulnerable road users. This percentage has remained stubbornly high, highlighting the critical need for action to improve road safety in towns.

At the same time, there has been a strong increase in other personal mobility devices such as e-scooters on EU roads and a commensurate rise in the number of injuries and fatalities in this category. Collection of data in the CARE database[9] for this specific road user category started in 2023. Consideration is now being given to how to tackle the safety challenges this category presents. A Commission study[10] in 2024 examined the challenges and opportunities associated with regulating personal mobility devices and recommended harmonised rules to address current fragmentation across the EU.

The Expert Group on Urban Mobility[11] has issued a series of recommendations[12], focused on protecting vulnerable road users. These favour implementing a speed limit of 30 km/h in urban areas as the measure with greatest impact, followed by developing quality requirements for road infrastructure that serves these groups such as safe pedestrian crossings and segregated walking and cycling paths.

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8 https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/data-and-analysis/thematic-reports_en.

9 EU database with disaggregated data on road crashes leading to death or injury: https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/methodology-and-research/care-database_en.

10 Study on the need for harmonised rules to support the rise of micro mobility and increased road safety for personal mobility devices – Final report (1.0), Publications Office of the European Union, 2024 https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/8572224.

11 Expert Group on Urban Mobility (E03863) established by Commission Decision C(2022) 5320 final.

12 https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/urban-transport/expert-group-urban-mobility_en.

2. KEY BEHAVIOURAL RISK FACTORS

Despite decades of investment on road safety, awareness campaigns and legislative measures, behavioural risk factors continue to claim lives. The main ones are excessive or inappropriate speed, driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, distraction, and the failure to wear a seatbelt. Further details on each of these risk factors can be found in analysis published on the EU Road Safety Observatory.[13] The following are examples:

Drink-driving: about 25% of all road fatalities in the EU are alcohol-related. Random roadside breath testing shows high overall compliance with alcohol limits, at approximately 98%. Yet even this seemingly small 2% non-compliance rate translates to roughly five million impaired drivers on EU roads.

Speeding: excessive or inappropriate speed is estimated to be directly responsible for about 30% of all fatal road crashes in the EU. In many countries, compliance with speed limits falls below 50% on city roads.

Distraction: in-depth EU crash analyses indicate that driver distraction is a contributory factor in 10–30% of fatal crashes, depending on country and data source.

No seat belt: More than one-quarter of car occupants killed in crashes were not wearing a seat belt at the time. Observation surveys show that some countries report rear-seat compliance rates below 50%, representing a significant safety gap.

Measures to improve road safety need to apply the Safe System approach to address these behavioural issues alongside other measures to improve road infrastructure and vehicle safety, and to deliver effective post-crash care.

3. KEY SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Evidence from implementing EU and national strategies, action plans and other strategic documents, and from feedback from Member State representatives, suggests that a number of systemic challenges continue to impede progress towards the 2030 goals.

- **Enforcement** of road traffic rules remains a challenge, with structural shortages of road traffic police officers, and a shortage of automated camera systems.
- **Limited societal acceptance**, particularly of enforcement measures. Public resistance to automated enforcement, lower speed limits, and stricter penalties reflects a broader cultural indifference to the need to prioritise safety over mobility convenience. Examples include setting fire to speed cameras and the removal by protesters of traffic-calming measures.
- **Lack of capacity:** authorities responsible for road safety infrastructure, traffic adaptations and enforcement, particularly those at municipal level, often lack qualified staff. There are persistent shortages in many EU Member States of driving instructors and examiners and of people responsible for the technical inspection of vehicles.

[13] See https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/data-and-analysis/thematic-reports_en for detailed reports on driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, protective equipment such as seat belts, distraction and speed. See also https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/eu-road-safety-policy/priorities/safe-road-use/alcohol_en for a 2022 study on the Prevention of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

- **Insufficient funding:** many Member States lack dedicated road safety budgets at national and local level and thus cannot hire qualified staff to design and implement road infrastructure safety projects or to maintain adequate numbers of enforcement staff.
- **Political will** at all levels remains inconsistent, with road safety often treated as a technical rather than a political issue. A poor understanding of the economic, social and environmental impacts of road trauma may be behind the hesitation to act.
- **Governance challenges** persist, with responsibilities fragmented across different administrative levels and sectors.
    - At the **EU level**, the strengthened mandate given to the High-Level Group on Road Safety[14], enabling it to include strategic advice and more frequent feedback may not always have led to the issues raised by EU Member State representatives receiving adequate EU follow-up across road safety-related policy areas.
    - The EU's road safety governance framework is not sufficiently structured to accommodate the wider roll-out of automated vehicles in road traffic, nor to exploit big data for the purposes of road safety action. Executive agencies with safety mandates have been established for other transport modes but there is no common framework to support the monitoring, coordination and technical work needed to safely roll-out automated vehicles on EU roads. This may entail a missed opportunity for both road safety and the EU economy.
    - Meanwhile, at the **national level**, despite many positive examples, a lack of coordination between transport, economic, health, justice and education authorities often thwarts the holistic approach to road safety that is needed[15].

[14] https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/high-level-group-road-safety_en.

[15] The WHO recommends appointing a 'lead agency', drafting national strategies and setting national quantified targets. See Belin M-Å, Khayesi M, Tran N., "'Road safety is no accident': building efficient road safety lead agencies, strategies and targets in the world, 2009–2023", *Injury Prevention*, 15 July 2025, http://doi:10.1136/ip-2024-045601

4. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

The EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030[16] is the strategic policy document for the current decade. It identified four main fields of action ('intervention areas') matching the four pillars of the Safe System approach: safe roads and roadsides; safe vehicles; safe road use; and effective emergency response. The Commission has taken action in each of these areas in the form of legislation, funding, outreach and capacity-building.

4.1. INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY

Building good roads and roadsides is key to increasing the safety of road users. In October 2019, the EU adopted a revised Directive on road infrastructure safety management (the RISM Directive)[17] with a view to reducing both the number and severity of crashes. The revised rules extended the scope of the Directive beyond the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), to motorways and primary roads and to all roads outside of urban areas that are built with the use of EU funds. This means that rural roads, where over half of all road deaths occur, now fall within the scope of the Directive, ensuring that safety is integrated into all phases of road planning, design and operation.

As part of this major exercise, Member States must perform regular network-wide road assessments, based on a risk scaling methodology that helps to better identify crash risks on specific sections of road. This will result in road safety inspections being targeted at the most dangerous sections and thus help to direct investment to where it is most needed The Commission has made available guidance[18] to help national authorities carry out their task as well as a map of Europe[19] showing the entire road network covered by the Directive.

The Commission is currently preparing guidance on the design of safe roads and vulnerable road user-friendly infrastructure, as a follow up to the European Cycling Declaration[20] and to the RISM Directive's requirement that vulnerable users be systematically taken into account in all road safety management procedures.

The Directive on Intelligent Transport Systems[21] provides for static and dynamic traffic regulations such as speed limits on the comprehensive TEN-T network, motorways, primary roads and urban nodes. It will improve driver compliance and lead to safer and

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16 COM (2018) 293, Annex I.

17 Directive (EU) 2019/1936 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management (OJ L 305/1, 26.11.2019, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1936/oj.

18 Network Wide Road Safety Assessment Methodology and Implementation Handbook, 93e39cd2-9e71-4ee0-8a8e-4de4fddaf068_en.

19 TENtec Map Viewers - Explore the TEN-T Network | European Transport Infrastructure

20 European Declaration on Cycling, OJ C/2024/2377, 3.4.2024.

21 Directive (EU) 2023/2661 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2010/40/EU on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport (OJ L, 2023/2661, 30.11.2023, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/2661/oj).

smarter traffic, by providing support for intelligent speed assistance and cooperative, connected and automated mobility.

4.2. VEHICLE SAFETY

Safe vehicles are the second pillar of the Safe System. Vehicles have a significant impact on road safety and rapid changes in technology mean they require constant regulatory attention.

The General Vehicle Safety Regulation[22], which sets minimum safety standards for all new vehicles sold on the EU market, came into full force in July 2024. It introduced requirements with significant potential to improve safety such as intelligent speed assistance, lane keeping assist, blind spot information and reversing detection systems, and enlarged head-impact protection zones capable of mitigating injuries in collisions with vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists. The Commission works continuously with Member States and stakeholders on implementing the Regulation and the regulatory framework for automated vehicles.

In April 2025, the Commission proposed to revise the EU rules on vehicle roadworthiness[23]. The goal is to keep vehicles safe during their entire lifetime, and to reduce air and noise pollutant emissions, in particular in the advent of technological developments and against the background of an aging EU vehicle fleet. The proposed new rules are intended to adapt the periodic technical inspections undergone by electric vehicles and advanced driver assistance systems, to introduce mandatory periodic technical inspection for motorcycles and annual inspections for older cars and vans, to bring in advanced emission testing methods to detect high-emitting vehicles and to make inspections of cargo securing mandatory at roadside inspections. It is estimated that, if implemented, all this would save around 7 000 lives and prevent around 65 000 serious injuries between 2026 and 2050.

4.3. SAFE ROAD USE

Safe road use, which includes appropriate speed levels, sober and undistracted driving and the use of safety equipment, is the third area of action in the current EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 and the third pillar of the Safe System approach. Driver licensing, targeted education and awareness-raising and strong enforcement regimes are significant components of an incentive structure encouraging the safe use of roads and vehicles.

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22 Regulation (EU) 2019/2144 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on type-approval requirements for motor vehicles and their trailers, and systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, as regards their general safety and the protection of vehicle occupants and vulnerable road users.

23 Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2014/45/EU on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers and Directive 2014/47/EU on the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union, COM/2025/180 and Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the registration documents for vehicles and vehicle registration data recorded in national vehicle registers and repealing Council Directive 1999/37/EC, COM/2025/179.

In October 2025, the EU adopted a revision of the **Driving Licence Directive**[24]. In addition to introducing mobile driving licences, the new rules provide for accompanied driving for young learners, stricter rules and/or penalties for novice drivers caught drink- and drug-driving, more risk-awareness, better protection of vulnerable road users, and a new framework allowing Member States to check a driver's mental and physical fitness to drive throughout their lifetime.

While previous EU rules improved compliance with road safety regulations by non-resident drivers, a significant loophole remained: approximately 40% of cross-border offences went unpunished due to challenges in identifying offenders and enforcing fines and driving disqualifications. These weaknesses have been addressed by the new Driving Licence Directive. For major offences, such as drink- or drug-driving, speeding more than 50 km above the speed limit, or infringing road traffic regulations and causing death or serious injury to others, the Member State issuing a driving licence will be obliged to impose a **driving disqualification** similar to the penalty issued by the Member State in which the offence took place. This will give the penalty EU-wide effect. In addition, the newly adopted **Cross-Border Enforcement (CBE) Directive**[25] increases cooperation among Member States by establishing mutual assistance to enforce financial penalties effectively for a wider range of road safety-related offences.

Speed remains the leading contributory factor in road crashes. Excessive or inappropriate speed is involved in 10-15% of all crashes and around 30% of fatal crashes and exacerbates the consequences of all crashes. If a pedestrian is hit by a car at 30km/h they have a 90% chance of survival; at 50km/h their chance falls to 20%[26]. While speed remains a politically and culturally sensitive issue, initiatives reducing speed bring significant benefits not just fewer road crashes, fatalities and injuries, but also environmental benefits, with emissions, noise pollution levels and fuel consumption all decreasing.

Many initiatives promoted at EU level already address speed inherently. They include the EU General Vehicle Safety Regulation and the CBE Directive mentioned above. Many national, regional, and local authorities have already introduced or are planning to introduce new speed management initiatives such as 30km/h zones in cities, particularly in areas where active and vulnerable road users and vehicles mix frequently in a planned manner[27].

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24 Directive (EU) 2025/2205 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2025 on driving licences, amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EU) No 383/2012.

25 Directive (EU) 2024/3237 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 amending Directive (EU) 2015/413 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences.

26 https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/speed-management--a-road-safety-manual-for-decision-makers-and-practitioners.-2nd-edition.

27 See G. Yannis and E. Michelaraki, 'Effectiveness of 30 km/h speed limit – A literature review', Journal of Safety Research 92 (2025) 490–503 which states 'Current scientific evidence indicated that the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in cities can save over 40% of lives, alongside significant positive effects on the environment, energy consumption and public health, including reduced fuel consumption and increased walking and cycling.'

Others have opted for other measures: for example, they have focused on improving infrastructure design to protect vulnerable road users, better risk identification and management or separation of traffic flows, on enforcing speed limits and on better education and communication.

4.4. EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Rapid emergency response is crucial in saving lives and in reducing the severity of injuries. EU action on post-crash care, the fourth pillar of the Safe System, aims to reduce the time between the crash and the arrival of medical teams at crash sites. Faster responses by emergency services improve survival chances significantly: one study from Spain[28] indicated that a 10-minute reduction in medical response is associated with a decrease by one-third in the probability of death.

Results from the Trendline study indicate that, in most European countries, the emergency response time is 10 minutes or less in half of incidents. In 95% of cases, the emergency response is about 25 minutes or less. Responses are on average 10 minutes longer in rural areas than in urban areas.

EU legislation on eCall made automated 112-based emergency call systems mandatory in all new cars sold in the EU from 1 April 2018 onwards. Analysis in Finland[29] indicates that the use of eCall reduces the time between the initial call to the emergency services and the arrival of medical teams at the crash site from 25 to 22 minutes. It reduces the response time even more on motorways: from 20 to 14 minutes.

In 2024, the Commission updated the eCall legislation to enable the use of eCall with the most recent communication technologies[30] from 1 January 2026 for new types of vehicles and from 1 January 2027 for all new vehicles. By contrast, the phaseout of 2G and 3G mobile communication networks throughout the EU in the coming years will create a risk that existing vehicles equipped with 2G-3G eCall devices will no longer be able to use the eCall service.

4.5. EU-LEVEL COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

The EU and its Member States have joint responsibility for and share competence in road safety policy. Improving safety requires coordinated action by all parties and at all levels of governance: public authorities, industry, user associations, NGOs, schools, and researchers.

At the EU level, the **High-Level Group on Road Safety**, comprising high-ranking national representatives is a forum for exchange and consultation with Member States. Members of the High-Level Group discuss progress at national level and often raise issues of common interest on which they would like to see action at EU level such as the

[28] Sánchez-Mangas R, García-Ferrrer A, de Juan A, Martín Arroyo A, 'The probability of death in road traffic accidents. How important is a quick medical response?', Accident Analysis & Prevention 2010, Volume 42, Issue 4, July 2010, pages 1048-1056, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2009.12.012.

[29] https://trendlineproject.eu/media/pages/trendline-results/c0a640421f-1764252485/kpi-post-crash-care-report.pdf

[30] IMS packet switched networks such as 4G and 5G.

regulation of personal mobility devices or the application of road traffic rules to automated vehicles.

The Commission holds biennial **road safety results conferences** to discuss progress, exchange best practices, and engage stakeholders. A **European Coordinator for Road Safety** coordinates efforts with Member States.

The Commission encourages voluntary commitments under the **European Road Safety Charter**[31], the world's biggest civil society platform for road safety with over 4 300 members. Annual awards recognise innovative initiatives, including recognition for safe European cities.

Using EU funding, the **EU Road Safety Exchange**[32] provides capacity building and twinning activities for Member States with the most potential to improve their performance. Officials build partnerships with counterparts in other countries through exchanging best practices and showcasing successful initiatives. Several collaborative exchanges have resulted in tangible progress in national road safety strategies and planning. After engaging with Sweden, Lithuania began work to broaden the application of 2+1 road infrastructure[33]. Romania has begun preparations to instal a national fixed speed camera network, inspired by the Spanish system, with deployment currently scheduled for 2026. Latvia has begun examining the potential for in-depth crash investigation, taking cues from Finland's methodology. Meanwhile, as part of its new road traffic law, Greece has reduced speed limits in urban areas to 30 km/h and is to introduce additional measures aimed at improving motorcyclist safety, following knowledge-sharing activities with Spain and Denmark.

These advocacy efforts have succeeded in bringing together interested stakeholders in the road safety community and in promoting a certain level of mutual assessment and learning among Member States. But the political prioritisation of road safety and the mainstreaming of road safety concerns in other sectors such as economic policy, health and workplace safety remain predominantly a matter of national responsibility.

4.6. FUNDING ROAD SAFETY

Funding is the key to implementing road safety solutions and accelerating progress on road safety across Europe, particularly in countries that lag behind in road safety performance.

The EU has used three main instruments to finance national and regional transport infrastructure projects contributing to road safety: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF), where management is shared between the Commission and the Member States, and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which is managed directly by the Commission. In addition, the Recovery and Resilience Facility has supported projects contributing to road safety.

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31 https://road-safety-charter.ec.europa.eu/.

32 https://etsc.eu/projects/eu-road-safety-exchange/.

33 A 2+1 road is a type of road with two lanes in one direction and one lane in the opposite direction, separated by a median or barrier, with the extra lane alternating every few kilometres. The design allows for safe overtaking while keeping construction costs lower than building a full dual carriageway.

Under CEF, the EU has also funded cross-border capacity building projects such as the network-wide assessments of road infrastructure, the key performance indicators, enforcement campaigns and the implementation of ITS services across borders.

A recent European Court of Auditors (ECA) report[34] estimated that over the last decade, EUR 6 663 million[35] of ERDF, CF and CEF funding – representing just over 2% of the value of these funds – had been committed to projects involving road safety. However, these estimates also cover infrastructure and other projects where road safety is only an auxiliary objective and not the main purpose of the action. The Court recommended that EU co-funding be prioritised for initiatives that would have the greatest impact on road safety.

Funding has also been made available for further research under the Horizon Europe programme, including for safe infrastructure, safe vehicles, safe road use and post-crash care. For the period 2021-2027, the amount allocated to road safety research projects is around EUR 123 million, representing around 0.13% of the total value of the current Horizon Europe programme.

On the financing side, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has made embedding safety in all road investments a priority in its 2022 Transport Lending Policy, which is scheduled for mid-term review in 2026. Road safety safeguards are moreover embedded in the Environmental and Social Standards that apply to all EIB operations. Through the Safer Transport Platform, the EIB supported targeted road safety investments, advisory support and technical assistance, generating projects across several EU Member States. Within the EU, the EIB mandates compliance with the RISM and Tunnel Safety Directives[36], including road safety impact assessments, and road safety audits.

4.6.1. SNAPSHOT OF EU-FUNDED ROAD SAFETY RESEARCH

Between 2021 and 2025, Horizon Europe supported over 20 research and innovation projects focusing on road safety.

EU-funded research activities on road safety have covered four main areas, matching the four pillars of the Safe System approach: safe infrastructure, safe vehicles, safe road use and fast and effective post-crash care.

The infrastructure-related projects, running until 2026-2027, aim to create a framework for data-driven safety assessment (Evoroads[37]), to develop an infrastructure for optimal road safety monitoring (iDriving[38]), and to develop road safety solutions for vulnerable road users in urban contexts (Soteria[39]).

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34 European Court of Auditors, special report 2024/04, Reaching EU road safety objectives: Time to move up a gear, https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2024-04/SR-2024-04_EN.pdf.

35 CEF: EUR 1 477 million; ERDF and CF: EUR 5 186 million.

36 Directive 2004/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network.

37 https://evoroads-project.eu/.

38 https://idriving-project.eu/.

39 https://soteriaproject.eu/.

As far as vehicle safety is concerned, current projects cover topics such as developing active and passive safety systems for future autonomous vehicles (SAFE-UP[40]) and mediating between human driving and automated driving (Mediator[41]).

Recent projects on safe road use range from safety assessment for road users in urban areas (PHOEBE[42]) to urban space management for active mobility patterns (REALLOCATE[43]) and ways to detect alcohol, drugs and fatigue among commercial drivers (PANACEA[44]).

Regarding fast and effective post-crash care, the focus is on developing efficient, countermeasures and post-crash measures for all road transport methods, linking medical and engineering tools (ProAct_Us[45]) and assessing the long-term consequences of road traffic crashes (IMPROVA[46]).

4.7. NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ROAD SAFETY ACTIONS

Although important initiatives are being pursued at EU level in terms of legislation, funding, research and outreach, the primary responsibility for road safety lies at the national, regional and municipal levels.

The country reports published with this report outline the many measures being taken at national level. In most cases, these measures are framed by multiannual strategies, action plans or government-level programmes of action that set distinct national priorities, allocate financing and set specific targets.

It is clear from these country reports that sustained action, investment and prioritisation of road safety has paid off in many cases. For example, although they still face challenges, Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia have each achieved a reduction of 33-35% in road fatalities in 2024 compared to 2019, bringing them well on track to meet the target of a 50% reduction by 2030. Meanwhile, some countries including Bulgaria, Romania and Greece still record significantly higher road fatalities than the EU average highlighting the need for more action in these Member States. While new road safety policy measures have been introduced in some countries in 2025, their impact is not yet reflected in the road safety data.

40 https://www.safe-up.eu/.

41 https://mediatorproject.eu/.

42 https://phoebe-project.eu/.

43 https://reallocatemobility.eu/.

44 https://panacea-project.eu/.

45 https://protact-us.eu/.

46 https://improva-roadsafety.eu/.

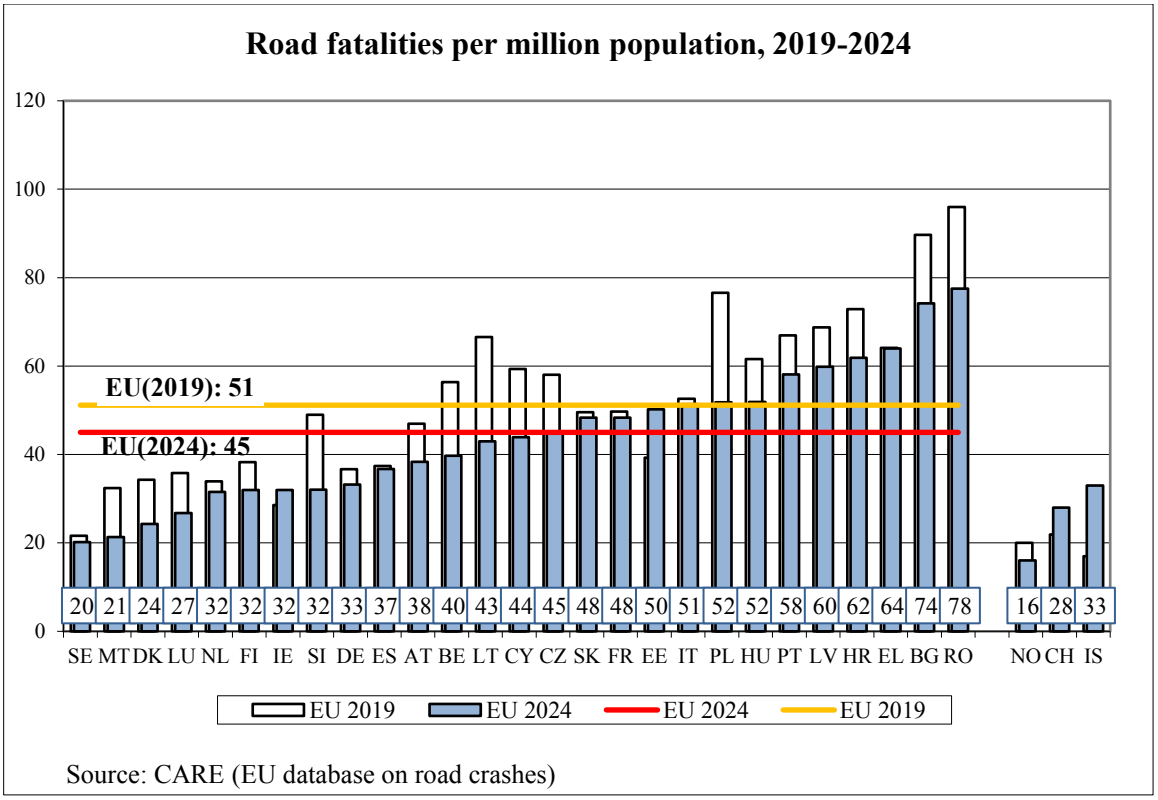

Figure 5 EU Road fatalities per million population 2019 – 2024. Sources: EU CARE database on road crashes; for population data, Eurostat (online data code demo_pjan)

Successful measures can differ depending on the national context. Notable successes include tailored investment in road infrastructure and urban road safety in Poland; the implementation of a 30 km/h speed limit in urban centres nationwide in Spain; the rollout of a comprehensive network of automated traffic cameras in France; a new national political road safety platform for all levels of federal and regional government in Belgium; and well-researched and well-executed road safety awareness campaigns in Denmark.

Details of the road safety profiles of each Member State can be found in the country reports published with this communication[47].

[47] https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/index_en; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html

5. SOCIETAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS WITH AN IMPACT ON ROAD SAFETY

Several issues that did not attract much attention when the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 was adopted have since emerged as areas requiring targeted action to reduce their impact on road safety.

5.1. DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS

The EU's demographic structure is undergoing significant changes with direct implications for road safety. The population is ageing, with the proportion of citizens aged 65 and above projected to increase from 22% in 2024 to 30% by 2050[48]. This demographic shift presents unique challenges, as older road users become more vulnerable due to physical frailty, slower reaction times, and higher injury severity rates[49].

The trend towards greater urbanisation continues, with over 75% of the EU population now living in urban areas[50]. This concentration of people in built-up settings is creating new mobility dynamics, including a greater variety of mobility modes, increased pedestrian and cyclist volumes and higher traffic density.

5.2. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

The automotive sector is undergoing an unprecedented technological transformation, one that has significant safety implications. Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) are becoming standard features, with technologies like automatic emergency braking, lane keeping assist, and intelligent speed assistance producing measurable safety benefits. Ensuring that drivers accept these features is key to their success.

Connected vehicle technologies are enabling real-time hazard warnings and the optimisation of traffic management. Vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication can alert drivers to dangerous conditions, accident locations and optimal routes. Their deployment in Member States has demonstrated their added value. Emergency services are proven to reach their destinations faster and more safely, and road operators have accurate real-time information on average speeds and traffic densities. The system grows more effective with the addition of each new vehicle, but comprehensive EU-wide coverage has still not been achieved, in particular for V2V services.

The gradual introduction of automated vehicles presents both opportunities and challenges. While higher levels of automation have been shown to reduce the impact of

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48 Source: Eurostat (online data codes proj_23np and demo_pjanbroad), relevant Statistics Explained article: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing#Past_and_future_population_ageing_trends_in_the_EU.

49 See thematic report on Seniors at https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/data-and-analysis/thematic-reports_en and https://etsc.eu/reducing-older-peoples-deaths-on-european-roads-pin-flash-45/.

50 Source: Eurostat (online data code cens_21urb01), also see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/publications.

human error, the transitional period will bring new challenges such as managing safe interaction between autonomous and human-driven vehicles in mixed traffic, ensuring the safety of non-motorised road users and establishing liability for traffic collisions involving automated vehicles.

5.3. EVOLVING MOBILITY PATTERNS

The transport and mobility sector is being transformed by new services and changing road user behaviour. The proliferation of micromobility solutions such as e-scooters, e-bikes, and other personal mobility devices has created new categories of vulnerable road user; these users often have to share scarce urban street space with pedestrians and cyclists.

Ride-hailing and car-sharing services have altered trip patterns, potentially increasing urban vehicle kilometres while concentrating activity into peak periods.

The gig economy has expanded delivery services using motorcycles and bicycles operated by workers facing time pressures and economic constraints that often encourage risk-taking behaviours[51], while the types of vehicles used by delivery drivers, including illegally imported e-scooters or unapproved mopeds that exceed applicable speed limits, have increased road safety risks.

5.4. IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has emerged as a significant but underestimated factor affecting road safety. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe, creating hazardous driving conditions. Heatwaves can cause road surfaces to deteriorate and affect driver performance, while increased frequency of storms, flooding and frosts creates dangerous conditions requiring adaptive infrastructure and emergency response capacities.

Rising temperatures also affect vehicle performance, particularly that of electric vehicles, and can increase the risk of tyre failure. The urban heat-island effect exacerbates these threats in cities, where surface temperatures can significantly exceed ambient air temperatures.

5.5. CYBERSECURITY AND DATA USAGE

Increasing connectivity between vehicles has led to new vulnerabilities that were barely recognised when the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 was first developed. Cybersecurity threats to connected and automated vehicles have the potential to cause crashes, disable safety systems and compromise privacy, which will be addressed also through the Cyber Resilience Act[52].

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[51] See: The human cost of fast deliveries: A systematic literature review of occupational risks and safety outcomes in last-mile delivery workers - https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140525001537.

[52] Regulation - 2024/2847 - EN - EUR-Lex

Data gathering has become much more prevalent over the last five years but the potential of big data has not yet been transformed into usable road safety insights. It is rare for in-vehicle data held by vehicle manufacturers, incident claim data held by insurers and healthcare incident data held by hospitals and ambulance services to be shared for road safety purposes. For instance, data from vehicle electronic data recorders is only accessible for specific research purposes, such as research into events in the seconds preceding a specific crash but is not made available in disaggregated form to help inform policy-making.

6. ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ADDRESSING ROAD SAFETY

Road crashes impose an enormous social, economic and health burden on the EU economy. The external socio-economic costs of fatal, serious and minor injuries are estimated to be around 2% of EU countries' GDP[53]. These costs have remained persistently high despite the progress made in reducing crash frequency and severity. Halving road deaths by 2030 (in relation to 2019) would prevent approximately 11 000 fatalities and help cut the approximately 100 000 serious injuries on our roads each year.

Healthcare and rehabilitation costs constitute the most immediate and visible economic impact. The costs of emergency medical services, hospitalisation, rehabilitation, and long-term care for crash victims strain healthcare budgets across Member States[54]. Moreover, the rate of serious injuries is declining at a slower pace than that of fatalities. The costs of dealing with **mental health** impacts on crash survivors, families and witnesses add a further economic burden[55].

Lost productivity and economic output make up a second major component of crash impact. Every road death equates to decades of lost life, both at home and at work, while serious injuries often result in permanent disability or reduced capacity to work. The productivity losses are the result of reduced working time and human-capital replacement costs, but also a result of the affected individuals being unable to carry out unpaid work such as household chores or volunteering.

Infrastructure and emergency response costs include emergency services deployment, traffic management during incident clearance, property damage, and vehicle repair or replacement. These direct costs are increasing as vehicles and road infrastructure become more technologically sophisticated and so more expensive to repair or replace.

Administrative costs arise from the expense of deploying police, fire and other (non-medical) emergency services at the site of crashes. There are also further costs associated with the administration of justice such as legal costs, the costs of prosecuting offenders and the costs of lawsuits and insurance.

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53 European Commission Handbook on the external costs of transport 2019 (new version forthcoming).

54 See: Study to Support Assessment of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 At the Mid-Point https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2832/2974277; https://op.europa.eu/en/

55 As an example, the Horizon Europe-funded IMPROVA project carried out a systemic review of over 1 400 studies on the psychological effects of road crashes and found a range of long-term consequences including stress-related disorders (such as post-traumatic stress disorder and adjustment disorders), anxiety disorders and phobias, affective mood disorders, (such as depression) and other functioning disorders.

In addition to the direct costs, road crashes generate significant indirect economic impacts. Examples include the lost time and increased fuel consumption generated by the **traffic congestion** caused by crashes.

7. INVESTMENT NEEDS

Reaping the potential economic benefit from preventing road crashes requires making substantial but cost-effective investments. Coordinated funding across all levels of government is needed to put in place infrastructure improvements, enhanced enforcement, vehicle safety technologies and education programmes.

However, research demonstrates that the economic return on these investments significantly exceeds the costs, making road safety improvement one of the most cost-effective public policy measures available[56]. The economic case for accelerated road safety action is compelling, with the costs of inaction far exceeding the investment required for effective action.

In its 2024 special report, the ECA noted that road safety was often not a key selection criterion for infrastructure projects co-funded by the EU; selection criteria often overlooked road sections with high accident rates. The ECA recommended clearer prioritisation so that future funding efforts focus on those measures most likely to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

In addition to the need for investment in new and re-designed road infrastructure, funding must also be earmarked for maintaining that road infrastructure. Not only are there more new vehicles on EU roads – since 2019 there has been an increase of nearly 5 million passenger cars and over 270 000 trucks[57] – but the impact of climate change is manifest in the increased frequency and intensity of fires, storms and floods, all of which have an impact on road integrity and safety. A further consideration is the increasing need to facilitate military mobility and dual-use requirements across the EU, requiring upgrades to selected sections of road infrastructure (including roads, bridges and tunnels) to ensure structural robustness and operational resilience. Such upgrades should be designed to avoid creating new bottlenecks, and to maintain functionality under increased loads and stressed conditions (e.g. increased heavy vehicle flows, incident-related rerouting).

The road risk factors and challenges also emphasise the continued need to invest in detection and enforcement capabilities for speeding, drink- and drug-driving, distraction, failure to observe red lights and wear a seatbelt. These investments need to ensure sufficient resourcing of police services to man and administer roadside checks and must support automated camera-based detection and enforcement systems.

Enforcement should be accompanied by funding of effective road safety awareness and education campaigns. Such campaigns need to be tailored to various target audiences (children, adolescents, learner and novice drivers, more experienced drivers and other

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[56] A recent Dutch study (https://swov.nl/nl/publicatie/verkeersveiligheidseffecten-van-2e-tranchemaatregelen) estimated that the ratio of costs to benefits in national road infrastructure investments was between 1:7 and 1:2.5. An older report by the Conference of European Directors of Roads summarised the cost-benefit ratios for a range of road safety measures: https://www.cedr.eu/download/Publications/2008/e_Road_Safety_Investments_Report.pdf.

[57] https://www.acea.auto/publication/report-vehicles-on-european-roads-2025/.

road users such as people cycling and using personal mobility devices) and to different risk groups such as young men, older people and motorcyclists. They are best carried out at the national or regional level, but Member State authorities have asked the EU to support the preparation and execution of such campaigns[58] and to facilitate with exchanges of best practice[59].

8. THE WAY FORWARD

This mid-term report reveals the need for accelerated and targeted action on multiple fronts. The Commission has identified a series of priorities for all relevant levels of governance (EU and national), pursuing existing or new actions that require immediate attention, sustained commitment and dedicated financing from all stakeholders.

8.1. ACCELERATING INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AND DEPLOYING INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

The continuing challenge to reduce road deaths and serious injuries demands prioritised investment in road infrastructure upgrades.

The Commission is currently drafting guidance to authorities responsible for road infrastructure on the design of 'forgiving roadsides', 'self-explaining and self-enforcing roads' and quality requirements for road infrastructure for vulnerable road users. This guidance will be published in 2026.

The TEN-T Regulation[60] was also updated in 2024 to include new safety requirements for the European network. Sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) must now also address road safety issues and Member States are required to collect data on safety for each urban node. The infrastructure planning must meet operational needs, including safety.

The Commission commits to:

- continuing to support Member States deal with issues identified in the road safety country reports (accompagnying this report), including when such support would be identified by Member States in their national and regional partnership plans for investment and reforms for the financing period 2028-2034;
- making road infrastructure investments in the EU conditional upon inclusion of road safety elements in those road sections having the greatest potential to

[58] For example, the EU has co-funded, through Erasmus+, the 'Knights for Road Safety' programme of road safety education for school children.

[59] Road safety education campaigns are frequently showcased at the annual EU Excellence in Road Safety Awards.

[60] Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1153 and (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

improve safety[61] and where targeted action can deliver the most improvement[62], including for vulnerable road users;

- supporting Member States in implementing, in their road investments, the forthcoming 2026 guidance on the design of forgiving roadsides, self-explaining and self-enforcing roads and infrastructure for vulnerable road users;
- supporting Member States in incorporating road safety, resilience and operability requirements into road maintenance and upgrade projects undertaken to facilitate military mobility or dual use, particularly those addressing bottlenecks such as bridges and tunnels, including through guidance on design; to this end, road safety procedures set out in Directive 2008/96/EC should be considered for the road sections that are out of its scope but are relevant for military mobility;
- supporting the provision of a wider range of road safety-related minimum universal traffic information free of charge to users, possibly including events such as 'end of queue' or 'emergency vehicles approaching' across an extended geographical network; to this end, a revision of the current technical specifications[63] is planned under the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Directive[64];
- further supporting Member States in the roll-out of improved traffic management and smart enforcement solutions[65];
- considering how best to promote the further uptake of cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS), including through technical specifications;
- issuing a guidance document to Member States on the continuity of the eCall service for 2G/3G eCall-equipped vehicles, including on possible regulatory tools at national level to maintain at least one circuit-switched network until 2030.

8.2. STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT AND DETERRENCE

The effectiveness of road safety measures depends critically on consistent and visible enforcement.

The Commission will:

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61 Based on RISM Directive, Art 5, Art 6(a) and 6(d), establishing the EU map of risk rating of roads covering the TEN-T Road Network, all motorways, all primary roads connecting major cities or regions and all EU funded inter-urban roads.

62 Priority should be given to the most problematic road sections identified in the 'Network Wide Road Safety Assessment Methodology and Implementation Handbook' (European Commission, 2023), or in accordance with the national methodologies complying with Article 5 of Directive 2008/96/EC (RISM Directive).

63 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 886/2013 of 15 May 2013 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to data and procedures for the provision, where possible, of road safety-related minimum universal traffic information free of charge to users.

64 Directive (EU) 2023/2661 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2010/40/EU on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport.

65 https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/urban-transport/expert-group-urban-mobility_en

- continue to support Member States in developing robust enforcement strategies to address the persistent challenges of speeding, drink-driving, and distraction by sharing best practices through initiatives and groups such as the High-Level Group on Road Safety, the Road Safety Exchange programme, the European Road Safety Charter and CARE expert group. This includes the use of automated enforcement technologies, and providing evidence-based research on successful approaches;
- continue to enable effective cooperation between driving licence and vehicle registration authorities, including through the use of IT tools such as MoveHub;
- make mutual assistance in the enforcement of road safety-related offences more effective with better defined procedures and provide financial support to that end;
- issue guidance for Member states on speed management.

8.3. ADVANCING VEHICLE SAFETY TECHNOLOGIES

Building on decades of vehicle safety regulation, most recently the General Vehicle Safety Regulation[66], the Commission will:

- work to accelerate the deployment of advanced safety systems and support the transition to connected and automated vehicles;
- carry out an evaluation of the safety measures of the General Vehicle Safety Regulation in 2027.

Additionally, the Commission is facilitating the creation of cross-border testbeds, enabling large-scale pre-deployments of autonomous vehicles for both passenger and goods transport under a single cross-border permitting scheme. These testbeds should help market readiness and commercialisation of autonomous vehicles and identify features that may need to be fine-tuned for safety purposes. This initiative will enable Member States to further roll out connected infrastructure (including cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS)) to share data faster across vehicles and infrastructure, further improving road safety.

8.4. NEW FORMS OF MOBILITY

Building on a study[67] examining the challenges and opportunities associated with regulating personal mobility devices, the Commission commits to:

- Drawing conclusions on the potential benefits of harmonising technical specifications of personal mobility devices[68] .
- preparing guidance to Member States and regional and local administrations on what issues should be taken into account to ensure the safety of riders and other

66 Regulation (EU) 2019/2144

67 Study on the need for harmonised rules to support the rise of micro mobility and increased road safety for personal mobility devices – Final report (1.0), Publications Office of the European Union, 2024 https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/8572224.

68 As requested by Transport Ministers at the Transport, Telecom and Energy Council meeting in December 2025.

road users during the use of personal mobility devices; this will expand on the guidance set out in the 2021 SUMP Topic Guide on Safe Use of Micromobility[69].

8.5. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INITIATIVES

The current 2021-2027 Horizon Europe programme will continue to prioritise road safety research and innovation, with a particular focus on understanding and addressing emerging challenges. Priority research areas include road safety and road resilience in rural areas, the safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and users of micromobility devices, and the use of artificial intelligence and big data to predict and avoid road crashes.

The Commission will also support innovation in vehicle safety technologies, including human/technology interfaces in vehicle systems. It will further encourage collaboration between automotive manufacturers, technology companies, and research institutions through the partnership for connected, cooperative and automated mobility (CCAM Partnership).

8.6. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

The Commission will continue to support exchanges of best practice on road safety education and awareness-raising, particularly through the EU Road Safety Charter[70], the EU Road Safety Exchange and its biennial conferences.

The Commission will also look to embed road safety education and awareness raising in other EU funding and outreach instruments, including in Erasmus+ and when identified by Member States in their national and regional partnership plans for the financing period 2028-2034, particularly in relation to urban and rural mobility.

8.7. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND EMPLOYERS IN ROAD SAFETY

The Commission will call on both private and public sector employers to adopt corporate policies that prioritise safety in business operations. These could be modelled on the recommendations from the academic expert group to the 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety[71] that took place in Marrakech, Morocco, in April 2025.

These recommendations include ensuring that road safety features in workplace safety regulations and practices, with government authorities and organisations leading the way. This could be achieved by implementing a cross-organisation safety culture and applying safety management systems such as ISO 45001 or ISO 39001.

Civil society organisations, including road safety advocacy groups, victim support organisations and professional associations, play crucial roles in maintaining public

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69 https://urban-mobility-observatory.transport.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-urban-mobility-plans/expert-corner-sump-reference-materials_en.

70 https://road-safety-charter.ec.europa.eu/.

71 Saving Lives Beyond 2025: Taking Further Steps: Recommendations of the Academic Expert Group for the 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, Swedish Transport Administration, 2025.

awareness, supporting policy development, and providing services to crash victims and their families.

The Commission will continue to push for such involvement of the private and third sectors in road safety, including through: its biennial conferences, the EU Road Safety Charter and the annual EU Excellence in Road Safety Awards[72].

8.8. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Commission will continue to offer monitoring and accountability mechanisms to road safety practitioners to drive progress towards the 2030 goals and ultimately to reach Vision Zero by 2050. This will be achieved by means of:

- the CARE database and the expert group to collect road fatality and injury data using standardised reporting tools, and through work with Member States on enhancing the quality of the data collected on serious injuries and on disaggregating data for certain vehicle types;
- the European Road Safety Observatory[73] and the publication of reliable and comparable data on road crashes and in-depth analysis and information on road safety trends, practices and policies in the EU.

8.9. ADDRESSING ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE

Continued exchanges of best practice among Member States and appropriate follow-up on issues raised through the High-Level Group on Road Safety, facilitated by the Commission, are expected to lead to further improvements.

Addressing new challenges can be done through type approval, national measures or EU legislation. Building better infrastructure relies mostly on national funding and road safety has to compete with other national political priorities. Education and enforcement will remain a national responsibility, subject to resource allocations and political will. With the recent EU road safety legislative package[74] entering into force and subject to the outcome on the roadworthiness proposals, road safety-related measures falling under EU competence have been updated. Overall, progress is likely to be steady, but incremental and to depend greatly on political will.

At the same time, the EU road safety stakeholder eco-system is not set up to reap the potentially significant road safety benefits that advances in vehicle automation technologies promise. Although the automotive action plan[75] identifies this area as

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72 https://road-safety-charter.ec.europa.eu/content/excellence-road-safety-awards.

73 https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory_en.

74 This comprised three directives: Directive (EU) 2025/2205 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2025 on driving licences; Directive (EU) 2025/2206 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2025 amending Directive (EU) 2025/2205 as regards certain driving disqualifications; Directive (EU) 2024/3237 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 amending Directive (EU) 2015/413 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences.

75 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Industrial Action Plan for the

crucial component of the EU's future competitiveness agenda, the institutional framework beyond trials has yet to be set up. There is, however, significant potential for such structures to be funded largely through user charges.

When reflecting on governance issues, the needs of strategic cross-border corridors and nodes should be considered, including those serving dual-use functions. This includes ensuring coherence between road safety, TEN-T implementation, cybersecurity and resilience considerations.

The Commission commits to:

- expanding capacity-building projects and exchanges of good practice on road safety between authorities at all levels of government;
- providing more structured feedback to Member States on shared concerns raised by them in the High-Level Group on Road Safety;
- reflecting on the need for changes to EU governance structures concerning the safe introduction of connected and automated vehicles.

The Commission calls on Member States to:

- ensure that they have in place well-functioning road safety governance and coordination structures and entities;
- allocate adequate funding to safety programmes;
- commit to regular monitoring and reporting of progress.

The Commission calls on local and regional authorities to:

- adopt comprehensive approaches to road safety that integrate safety into land-use and transport planning;
- implement speed management strategies;
- provide adequate infrastructure for vulnerable road users;
- develop emergency response capabilities.

9. CONCLUSION

This review of implementation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 reveals a sobering reality: while progress has been made, the pace of improvement is insufficient in many Member States to achieve the EU's goal for 2030. But the review also has some positives: it spotlights some effective measures that could be replicated or scaled up and reports on the promising introduction of new technologies and methods that can improve road safety. Moreover, some actions and investments take time to have an impact and are not immediately reflected in the road safety data. It is important that the Commission and Member States continue to take actions to achieve both short-term and long-term positive effects.

European automotive sector, COM/2025/95 final of 5 March 2025, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0095.

The results summarised in this report illustrate how much can be achieved when actors at all levels – from individuals to EU-level governing structures – contribute to the Safe System approach, within their areas of responsibility. But the slow-down in progress towards Vision Zero – against a background of increased traffic growth and new societal and technological trends – calls into question whether the current road safety 'toolbox' is fit for the future.

The analysis shows that road safety challenges are becoming more complex, influenced by demographic change, technological transformation, climate change and shifting mobility patterns that were not fully anticipated when the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 was developed.

However, the report also reveals significant opportunities to make progress. Technological advances in vehicle safety, growing awareness of the economic benefits of investments in safety, and an increasing political focus on sustainable mobility create favourable conditions for accelerated action.

The key is to harness these opportunities through coordinated, sustained, and properly resourced efforts across the EU and within Member States at all levels of government and society. Investments in road safety generate substantial returns, not only in the form of avoided costs but also in improved quality of life and economic productivity. The argument for action is compelling from both the social and economic perspectives.

Success will depend on renewed political commitment, adequate funding, greater cooperation between stakeholders, and a willingness to adopt innovative approaches to persistent challenges. The Commission stands ready to support Member States and stakeholders in this critical endeavour, mindful that achieving Vision Zero will require collective action and shared responsibility.

The lives that can be saved, the injuries that can be prevented, and the economic benefits that can be won justify the sustained efforts that will be required to achieve the EU's road safety objectives.

The Commission calls on Member States and all stakeholders to urgently embrace the challenge to create a future where the EU moves as close as possible to zero fatalities in road transport and mobility is sustainable and safe. Without renewed commitment, investment and action in all Member States and at EU level, this drive to save lives on our roads will remain a mere aspiration.