PIN BRIEFING

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS ON ROAD DEATHS IN APRIL 2020

July 2020

ETSC
European Transport Safety Council

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The PIN programme relies on panellists in the participating countries to provide data for their countries and to carry out quality assurance of the figures provided. This forms the basis for the PIN Flash reports and other PIN publications. In addition, all PIN panellists are involved in the review process of the reports to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

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ABOUT THE EUROPEAN TRANSPORT SAFETY COUNCIL (ETSC)

ETSC is a Brussels-based independent non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. Founded in 1993, ETSC provides an impartial source of expert advice on transport safety matters to the European Commission, the European Parliament, Member States and other countries. It maintains its independence through funding from a variety of sources including membership subscriptions, the European Commission, and public and private sector support.

ABOUT THE ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE INDEX PROJECT

ETSC's Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) programme was set up in 2006 as a response to the first road safety target set by the European Union to halve road deaths between 2001 and 2010. In 2010, the European Union renewed its commitment to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2020, compared to 2010 levels.

By comparing Member State performance, the PIN serves to identify and promote best practice and inspire the kind of political leadership needed to deliver a road transport system that is as safe as possible.

ETSC's PIN programme covers 32 countries: the 27 Member States of the European Union, together with Israel, Norway, the Republic of Serbia, Switzerland and the UK.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, most European governments put in place unprecedented restrictions on travel and movement including border closures, lockdowns for most of the population, closure of schools, workplaces, shops, leisure and sport facilities. This report assesses the impacts that had on road deaths in Europe during the month of April 2020 – by which time most countries were in lockdown.

Our national experts were asked to submit data on road deaths that occurred during the month of April 2020 and the average of the same month over the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 for comparison. Out of 27 EU countries, 25 were able to provide the requested data.[1]

Experts were also asked to provide data on traffic volumes based on the same periods. 11 EU countries were able to send such data.

Covid-19 countermeasures started at different times in different European countries. ETSC made a decision to ask for data for the month of April, as by this time the majority of European countries had imposed countermeasures that resulted in significantly reduced traffic volumes.

A road death in the EU is defined as any person killed immediately or dying within 30 days as a result of a road collision. Data for April 2020 could therefore only be provided at least after 30 days had elapsed from the end of the month of April, i.e. at the end of May. This explains the delay in publishing these figures.

[1] Data were not available in Bulgaria, Malta, Israel, Serbia, Switzerland and UK.

PART I

THE IMPACT OF LOCKDOWNS

1.1 ROAD DEATHS DECREASED TO UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL…

Out of 25 EU countries for which data is available, 19 saw a decrease in the number of road deaths in April 2020 compared to the month of April in the previous three years (Fig.1). While in some countries the monthly numbers of road deaths are statistically small and are therefore subject to fluctuations, an overall observation is that the Covid-19 lockdown had a major impact on reductions of road deaths.

In April 2020, 910 people lost their lives in road collisions in the EU25, compared to 1415 on average during the reference period: 505 deaths were prevented.

Such a large reduction of 36% in road deaths is unprecedented. By comparison, road deaths in the EU declined by just 3% between 2018 and 2019, and by 24% over the decade 2010-2019.

The highest reduction in road deaths (84%) was recorded in Italy, followed by Belgium, Spain, France and Greece with over 59% decrease.

Even though traffic volumes were reduced in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands road deaths during the month of April remained similar or were even higher than in previous years. Notably, Sweden had less strict Covid-19 containment measures compared to many other EU countries.

A more comprehensive picture of the effects of Covid-19 lockdown measures on road safety could be drawn if enough high quality data were available in more countries (e.g. changes in traffic volumes, speeding, changes in road user behaviour, travel modes, levels of traffic law enforcement, numbers of serious road traffic injuries, changes in road user groups involved in serious collisions). Unfortunately, these data are mostly not available at the present time. Improvement in such data collection is urgently needed.

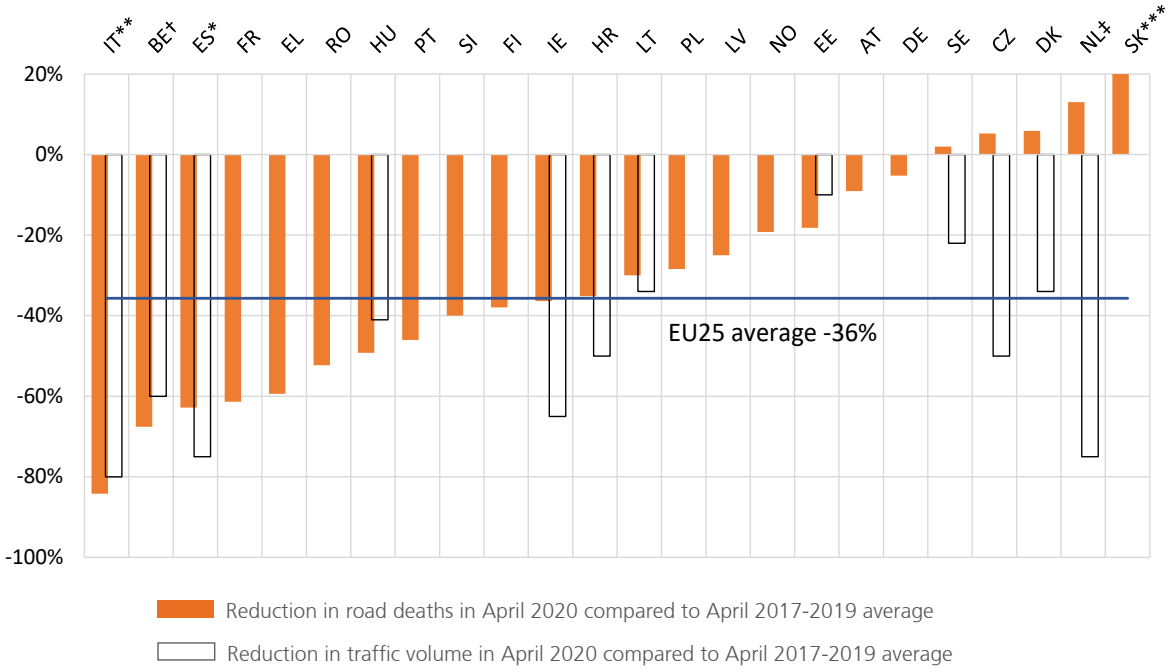


Figure 1. Percentage change in road deaths in April 2020 compared to road deaths in April 2017-2019 (three years average) and corresponding percentage change in traffic volume.
ES* - data on road deaths on non-urban roads and represent road deaths within 24 hours only. IT** - data on road deaths at the site of the collision only. SK*** - road deaths within 24 hours. BE† - an estimation of road deaths over the period between 15/03 and 30/04 based on a survey by VIAS in 13 police zones. NL‡ – data based on police records and not comparable with BRON (Statistics Netherlands) publication.

Note: In EE, LV, LT, SI and RS, monthly numbers of road deaths are statistically small (<10) and might be affected by fluctuations. LU and CY are excluded from the figure due to statistically small numbers of road deaths that are subject to large fluctuations.

Note: traffic volume data collection methodologies differ between countries and are not comparable. Some data on traffic volumes cover only part of the road network. LT – traffic volume data on main roads. DK - traffic volume data of car and HGV traffic compared to week nine of 2020. SE – traffic volumes on motorways only compared to March 2019. IE – traffic volume data on national road network from March 27 until 20 April provided by Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

1.2 …BUT NOT TO THE SAME DEGREE AS TRAFFIC VOLUME

From the limited official data on traffic volume changes available, as well as sources from GPS navigation providers such as TomTom[2] and Apple[3], a general observation is that road deaths did not usually decrease to the same degree as traffic volume.

The overall number of collisions was reduced significantly, but there are indications that collisions became deadlier as drivers sped up.[4] For example, overall collisions across France fell by 74% while road deaths decreased by 56%. During the lockdown period, total collisions on Czech roads decreased by 28% while the number of road deaths decreased by 12%. Overall collisions went down in the Netherlands but the number of road deaths registered by the police increased by 13%.

1.3 SPEEDING INCREASED IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES…

A further general observation can be made that, while traffic volumes were reduced, the number of vehicles observed going above the speed limit has increased in many countries. ETSC has seen ad-hoc media reports of excessive levels of speeding in Belgium[5], Germany[6] and the UK[7].

Denmark has published official data showing a 10% increase in the proportion of drivers speeding.[8] French speed camera data showed a 16% increase in the most serious speeding offences (50% above the legal speed limit) compared to the same period last year.[9]

Estonia has seen a 22% increase in the share of drivers exceeding the speed limit on high-speed rural roads compared with the 2018-2019 average.[10]

The number of speed violations detected on a sample of fixed safety cameras in Spain increased by 39% on non-urban roads compared with the same period in 2019.[11]

Incidents of speeding also increased in Hungary.[12]

A UK insurer that uses telematics to monitor young policyholders reported a 15% increase in speed alerts sent to drivers that exceeded speed limits.[13]

However, measurements in Sweden have not shown any changes in the levels of speed compliance.[14]

1.4 …AS WELL AS OTHER TRAFFIC OFFENCES, WHILE POLICE WERE BUSY ENFORCING LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

A RoadPol[15] questionnaire[16] circulated to its members revealed that less serious traffic offences decreased but serious offenses, such as severe speeding, increased. In some countries that registered an overall decreased in traffic law violations, traffic police were almost fully deployed to enforce Covid-19 measures and, as a result, fewer traffic offences were detected and enforced. In Spain, around 36% of those killed in cars and vans on non-urban roads (excluding Catalonia) were not belted, compared with 22% before the lockdown.

[2] TomTom Traffic Index, https://bit.ly/2NwhTWp
[3] Apple, Mobility Trends Reports, https://apple.co/2ViKPoX
[4] Reuters (2020), Car crashes deadlier as drivers speed during lockdowns, https://reut.rs/2CXlk6n
[5] RTBF, Coronavirus : le trafic automobile a diminué de 55 à 75% dans la capitale en mars, https://bit.ly/2Z9D7yI
[6] RTL, Verkehr zu Corona-Zeiten: Weniger Unfälle, aber mehr Raser, https://bit.ly/3dlOZx7
[7] BBC, Coronavirus: Speeding drivers flout limit during lockdown, https://bbc.in/3eE6gbP
[8] Transport-og Boligministerriet, https://bit.ly/3g4W90b
[9] Gouvernement, Baisse de la mortalité routière au mois d'avril 2020, https://bit.ly/2YVBO7R
[10] Information provided by the PIN Panellist
[11] Information provided by the PIN Panellist
[12] Information provided by the PIN Panellist
[13] ETSC (2020), Insurer: Lockdown accelerates UK young driver speeding by 15%, http://etsc.eu/ZI2YG
[14] Information provided by the PIN Panellist
[15] RoadPol (previously TISPOL), is a network of European traffic police forces, committed to reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries on European roads. https://www.roadpol.eu/
[16] Unpublished, information provided by RoadPol.

1.5 COUNTRY EXAMPLES

SPAIN

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN RESULTED IN A 62% DECREASE OF ROAD DEATHS ON NON-URBAN ROADS, BUT SPEED VIOLATIONS INCREASE

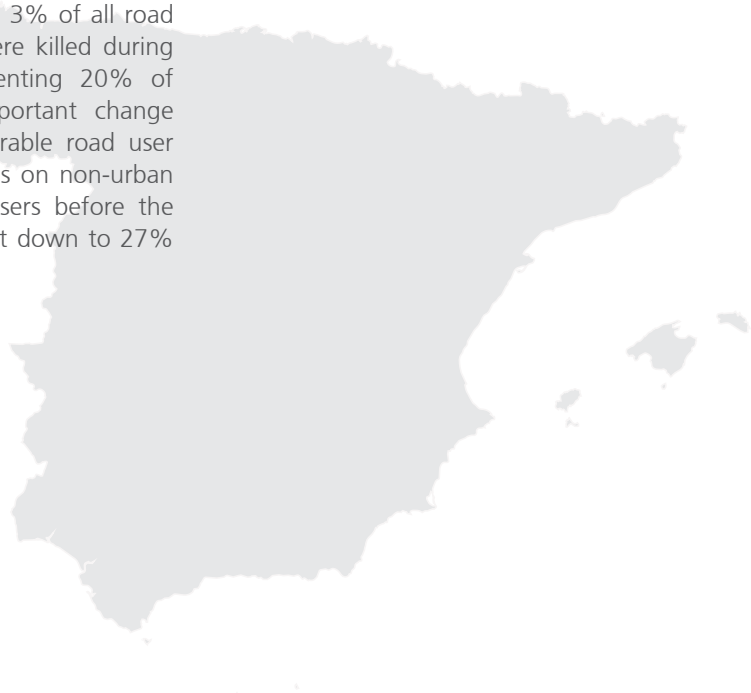
During the lockdown period (15 March - 27 May) a 65% reduction in traffic volume was registered on non-urban roads in Spain compared to the same period in 2019. This reduction would be equal to 74% if HGV traffic was excluded. Reduced traffic volumes undoubtedly had a major effect on road death reductions.

Since the beginning of the year until the lockdown began in mid-March, a 9% increase in road deaths on non-urban roads had been recorded in Spain compared to the same period in 2019. During the lockdown, a reduction of 62% of those deaths was registered compared to the same period in 2019. Data on deaths on urban roads were not available at the time of going to print.

Some notable changes have been observed among road user groups involved in fatal collisions on non-urban roads. There has been an increase in HGV occupant deaths. Six HGV occupants were killed in 2020, before the lockdown started, representing 3% of all road deaths. 16 HGV occupants were killed during the lockdown period, representing 20% of all road deaths. Another important change has been a decrease in vulnerable road user deaths. 37% of all road deaths on non-urban roads were vulnerable road users before the lockdown, this proportion went down to 27% during the lockdown period.

"A worrying fact is that, while during lockdown traffic volumes other than HGVs on non-urban roads have decreased by 74%, speed violations detected on a sample of fixed safety cameras have increased by 39%. Safety cameras have been fully operational during the lockdown. On non-urban roads, the most frequent type of fatal collisions - 63% of all cases (31 out of 49) - were single vehicle collisions that are usually associated with distraction and speeding. Moreover, around 36% (13 out of 36) of those killed in cars and vans on non-urban roads (excluding Catalonia) were not belted compared with 22% before lockdown, indicating more car and van occupants drove unbelted."

Manuel Francisco Aviles Lucas, Directorate General for Traffic (DGT), Spain



ITALY
300 DEATHS AND 700 SERIOUS INJURIES AVOIDED, THANKS TO REDUCED TRAFFIC VOLUMES BUT CONCERNS AS TRAFFIC IS PICKING UP

To contain Covid-19, Italy declared strict lockdown measures that lasted from 10 March until 18 May. Road safety in Italy benefited from the reduced traffic. The first data collected in Italy showed reductions of between 65%-85% in road deaths. The changes seem more pronounced in urban areas compared to suburban areas or motorways, probably also because goods traffic continued throughout the lockdown.

Based on the first data collected, it is estimated that more than 300 deaths and around 700 serious injuries have been prevented thanks to reduced traffic. On the motorway network, average daily traffic decreased since the end of February reaching average reductions of over 80% during the lockdown period. During the lockdown in Rome, car traffic decreased by between 75%-80%. Traffic volumes have started to increase again but are still around 44% lower compared to the pre-pandemic period. In Rome, the proportion of people who make at least one trip during the day (except for journeys on foot of less than five minutes) went from 85% to 32% and the average length of trips decreased by 40%.

The levels of traffic law enforcement increased during the lockdown in Italy. National Police employed a total of 7% more road patrols and the number of fines for speeding and failure to use a helmet increased.

"Unfortunately, with the recovery of mobility, an increase in collisions is expected. People resume traveling and a greater use of private cars in cities is observed. It might be that we will see an increase in cycling and usage of electric mobility which can have negative consequences on road safety if road infrastructure is not adjusted to the needs of these road user groups. More than 20 collisions involving e-scooters have already been recorded."

Lucia Pennisi, Automobie Club d'Italia (ACI)

FINLAND
AN INCREASE IN SERIOUS TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFENCES

"In January – March 2020, serious traffic safety offences increased by as much as 60% in Finland compared to the previous year. In April 2020, the increase was 30%. A serious traffic offence almost always means severe speeding, followed by a driving ban."

Esa Räty, Finnish Crash Data Institute (OTI)

GERMANY
LOCKDOWN HAD A LARGER EFFECT ON ROAD DEATHS IN MARCH THAN APRIL

In Germany, the low traffic volume as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic affected the number of road traffic collisions much more strongly in March than in April 2020.[17] As reported by the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), the provisional number of road collisions fell by 23% in March 2020 compared to March 2019, to 166,000. According to preliminary data, the number of road deaths decreased by 32% - 158 people died in road collisions in March 2020 compared to 234 in March 2019. Since the German unification in 1990, never have fewer road users have been killed in one month than in March 2020. The number of road traffic injuries decreased by 27% in March 2020 compared to the previous month, to around 20,400.

In Berlin, between 6 to 26 April, motorised traffic never reached the volume of the first week of March and the amount of bicycles counted continued to increase. In the week from 20 to 24 April, an average of 165% more bikes were counted compared to the first week in March.[18]

"We need more detailed data on a nationwide basis to get a deeper insight into the impact of Covid-19 not only on the modal shift, but also on road safety. It is too early to draw conclusions, and probably other aspects such as good weather conditions during April had an impact on the safety of German roads."

Jacqueline Lacroix, German Road Safety Council (DVR)

[17] Destatis, Verkehrsunfälle - Fachserie 8 Reihe 7 - März 2020, https://bit.ly/31gJ7IJ
[18] Rbb24 (2020), Wie sich der Berliner Radverkehr in Corona-Zeiten entwickelt, https://bit.ly/3dARK3s

HUNGARY
LESS TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LOWER TRAFFIC VOLUMES LED TO AN INCREASE IN SPEEDING

"A lot of people have chosen the bicycle instead of bus and tram. Additional bicycle lanes appeared in many places. The city of Budapest has used the possibility to make the traffic more sustainable. But police enforcement of traffic offences has been weaker as they were busy enforcing new Covid-19 regulations. With less speed enforcement, and less traffic, the frequency of speeding has increased. Drivers take advantages of empty roads to take more risks."

Prof. Péter Holló, Institute for Transport Sciences (KTI)

THE NETHERLANDS
ROAD DEATHS INCREASED DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN DESPITE A SHARP DROP IN TRAFFIC VOLUMES

In the Netherlands on 16 March 2020 the speed limit on motorways during the daytime (6-19h) changed from 120 or 130 km/h to 100 km/h (a measure taken to reduce NOx-emissions, not Covid-19 related). 16 March was also the date when the first Covid-19 measures came into effect.

During the period implementing Covid-19 containment measures, the total number of collisions registered by the police decreased but the number of road deaths registered by the police increased by 13% in April 2020 compared to April 2017-2019 average. In the first weeks, the number of traffic related injuries decreased but later there was a slight increase in reported injuries. Collisions with injuries were reduced more on the motorway network compared to other road types. Traffic volumes were reduced by around 75% since 16 March.

Adjustments to the driving and resting hours of truck drivers were introduced to assure sufficient supply. The daily driving limit was increased from 9 to 11 hours, weekly from 56 to 60 and bi-weekly from 90 to 96. This was only applicable for road freight transport in crucial sectors (food, agriculture, health, medical, fuel, cleaning, waste). Municipalities were requested to consider expanding delivery window times to ensure supermarkets and other vital business could be sufficiently supplied and serviced.

No other specific Covid-19 measures were introduced for road traffic in the Netherlands, except some general ones, such as keeping 1.5m personal distance which was also applicable to public transport. It is observed that the use of public transport decreased while the use of individual vehicles (cars, bikes) increased.

A study by the Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis (KiM) found that a significant proportion of Dutch people expect their travel behaviour and work situation to change permanently due to the Covid-19 crisis. People rate public transport much more negatively now than in the situation before Covid-19 and at the moment people prefer to use personal transport. A large majority of people (approx. 80%) expect that after the Covid-19 crisis they will go back to the modes of transport they used before the crisis. However, about 20% think they will walk and cycle more.[19]

"Though more thorough research into all the variables touched by Covid-19 is absolutely necessary, one could consider that the drop in road traffic volumes on all roads resulted in overall higher driving speeds/larger speed differences and hence also impacted the severity of collisions. Within urban areas the increase in the number of two-wheelers in traffic, including new, less experienced cyclists, their variation in type and speeds, combined with the relatively limited 'space' on cycle paths might have caused an increase in the number of two-wheeler collisions. For the very first time we had frontal impact collisions between cyclists which might be an indicator that some cycling paths might be too narrow to accommodate two-wheelers going at different speeds. More in-depth studies are foreseen once more and more data become available."

Peter Mak, Ministry of Transport and Water Management

[19] Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, KiM Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis (April 2020), Mobility and the coronavirus crisis, https://bit.ly/2YLxaJr

CZECHIA
INCREASE IN VULNERABLE ROAD USER DEATHS, ESPECIALLY MOTORCYCLES, DURING THE LOCKDOWN

During the lockdown period (13 March – 17 May 2020), total collisions on Czech roads decreased by 28% compared to the same period in 2019. The number of slightly injured decreased by 25%, seriously injured by 23%, and road deaths by 'only' 12%.

In contrast to the overall decrease of road deaths, increases were observed among vulnerable road users. Cyclist deaths went up by 86% and motorcyclist deaths by 50% during the lockdown compared to a 2017-2019 average over the corresponding period.

Vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists) made up to 63% of all road deaths during the lockdown compared to on average 36% during the corresponding period in 2017-2019. Motorcyclists alone accounted for 29% of all road deaths.

During the lockdown, overall speeding-related collisions were reduced by 28%, but the number of seriously injured in such collisions increased by 20%.

Until now, no detailed investigation has been conducted on traffic volumes and road safety during the Covid-19 lockdown in Czechia. However, several sample surveys indicated that traffic volumes dropped significantly (approx. 50% on motorways). The number of public transport passengers during lockdown also dropped and, in turn, public transport operators reduced their operations, city public transport shifted to summer holiday timetables and a number of trains were cancelled. This could have resulted in an increased use of alternative transport, including walking, cycling and motorcycling.

ROMANIA
TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESULTED IN A 50% REDUCTION IN SERIOUS ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

The nationwide state of emergency decree following the Covid-19 pandemic led to several traffic restrictions over the period 16 March - 14 May 2020. These restrictions resulted in a reduction of 50% in serious road traffic collisions and a reduction of 39% in the number of road deaths.

Since the beginning of the year until 15 March, Romania recorded an increase in serious road collisions of 8% and an 11% increase in the number of road deaths compared to the same period the previous year.

"The reduced traffic over the period when restrictions were put in place had, without a doubt, a major impact on reducing the number of serious road collisions and road deaths. As traffic volume was reduced, the leading cause of collisions was excessive speed".

Badea Marian, Director Romanian Road Traffic Police

CROATIA
NO PEDESTRIAN KILLED IN THE MONTH OF APRIL

"Traffic volume in April fell by around 50% compared to April 2018-2019. Road deaths decreased by 35% in April 2020 compared to the average of April 2019-2017. Out of a total of 16 road deaths that occurred in April 2020, 14 were vehicle drivers and two were vehicle passengers. No pedestrians were killed during the whole month (compared to two killed in April 2019) which might be because people, especially the elderly, stayed at home."

Sanja Veic, Ministry of Interior, Croatia

FRANCE

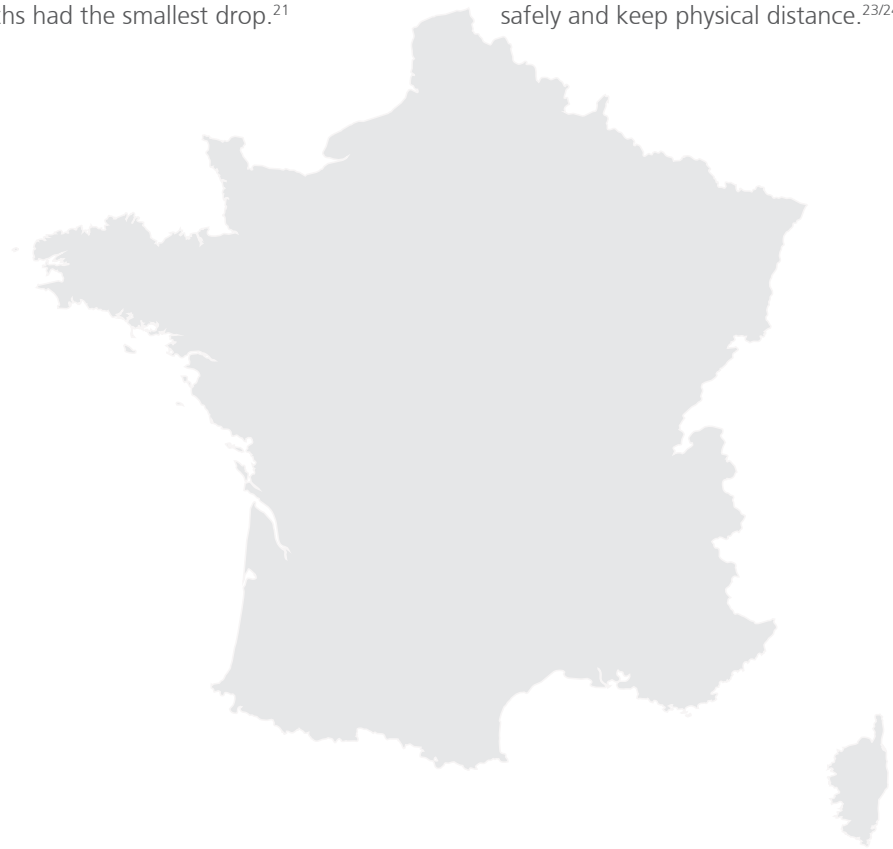
DROP IN ROAD DEATHS AMONG ALL ROAD USER GROUPS, BUT NOT AT THE SAME RATE AS REDUCTION IN OVERALL COLLISIONS

Total collisions on French roads decreased by 74% in April 2020 compared to April 2019. The number of road traffic injuries decreased by 77% and road deaths decreased by 56%.[20]

The fall in road mortality recorded in April 2020 was affected by the lockdown, which has greatly reduced overall travel. The drop in road deaths concerns all categories of users but to a different extent: there was a two-thirds drop among vulnerable users (pedestrians, cyclists, and power-two-wheelers) and less than half among vehicle occupants. Very few users of commercial vehicles or heavy goods vehicles were killed on the road in April 2020. Road deaths of seniors aged 65 or more fell sharply in April 2020 while young adults (18-34 years) deaths had the smallest drop.[21]

While road travel was considerably reduced during the lockdown, law enforcement and speed cameras reported increase in the most serious speeding offences (50% above the legal speed limit) compared to the same period last year. Among the fatal collisions, comparatively fewer frontal impacts were observed as with fewer vehicles on the roads, the probability of them crossing them in front was reduced. However, more fatal single vehicle collisions were registered.[22]

Relaxation of the lockdown measures can turn out to be an opportunity to give enough safe space for vulnerable road users to ensure road safety and health. CEREMA, a French public Agency providing expertise in the fields of planning, regional cohesion, and ecological and energy transition, published several guides to help cities and rural authorities implement temporary infrastructure changes to support vulnerable road users allowing them to travel safely and keep physical distance.[23/24]



[20] Gouvernement (2020), Baisse de la mortalité routière au mois d'avril 2020, https://bit.ly/2YVBO7R
[21] Ibid
[22] Ibid
[23] L'Observatoire national interministériel de la sécurité routière (2020), Aménagements provisoires pour les piétons, https://bit.ly/3dRpWrr
[24] L'Observatoire national interministériel de la sécurité routière (2020), Aménagements cyclables provisoires, https://bit.ly/2YY4CN0

PART II

MEASURES NEEDED TO ENSURE A SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE PATH OUT OF THE CRISIS

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our society.

But the collective response to the crisis has yielded some silver linings, notably in the field of road safety and sustainability.

We have seen in this briefing that there were very substantial reductions in the number of road deaths as a result of the big drops in traffic volumes due to confinement. When business returns to normal, those numbers could creep back up again. ETSC is making the case for measures to be taken to ensure a safe and sustainable path out of the crisis.

A number of cities have made rapid adjustments to infrastructure and speed limits in response to the increases seen in cycling and walking.[25]

ETSC is monitoring with interest efforts by local authorities across Europe to rapidly improve the safety of vulnerable road users.

Cities including Athens, Paris, Berlin, Milan, Madrid, Budapest and Brussels have introduced new or expanded pedestrian and cycling infrastructure with unprecedented speed.[26] The city of Brussels, one of the most congested in Europe, is leading the change – this was unimaginable just a few years ago.

More appropriate speed limits are also being introduced in several cases. These measures will help ease pressure on public transport modes that have been obliged to introduce physical distancing.

As physical distancing rules could overload public transport networks that were already strained before the crisis, public authorities will need to work hard to try to avoid the car being seen as the first and safest option. Large numbers of people will need to be encouraged to walk and cycle. This will take political will and some investment.

2.1 ROAD SAFETY AS A PRIORITY WITHIN THE EU TRANSPORT EXIT PLAN AND URBAN MOBILITY PACKAGE

The European Commission has published a series of recommendations for transport policy as Member States transition out of lockdown following Covid-19.[27] The main focus of the "communication" is to advise on ways of ensuring freight and passenger transport services can operate safely, with appropriate protections and physical distancing requirements.

The EU High Level Group for Road Safety agreed on informal conclusions setting out common principles for the forthcoming transitional post-Covid period.[28] Among the principles - timely data collection, agreement to limit exceptions to road safety rules, reinstation of traffic law enforcement, restoration of public confidence in public transport, consolidation of safe active mobility, safeguarding of road safety investment, flexible governance and public communication on road safety issues.

ETSC wrote to Commissioner Valean in early May pointing out important road safety considerations to be taken into account for the exit strategy.[29]

Several countries have allowed longer driving times for lorry drivers, to enable deliveries of essential products such as medical equipment during the lockdown.[30/31] In its letter to Commissioner Valean, although recognising the unique circumstances of the current lockdowns, ETSC expressed concerns that those relaxation of the driving and resting time regulation could cause additional pressure on hospitals. Fatigue, in particular, is a concern in the transport sector and collisions involving Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) can be catastrophic.[32]

[25] ETSC (2020), COVID-19: Cities adapting road infrastructure and speed limits to enable safer cycling and walking, http://etsc.eu/yLOgf

[26] See for example the European Cyclist Federation Dashboard tracking introduction of measures in cities across Europe during Covid-19 and the Exit, https://bit.ly/3iciydV, https://ecf.com/dashboard and POLIS, Useful resources on Covid-19 and mobility, https://bit.ly/3ihvsqU

[27] European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission, COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity, https://bit.ly/3dG1U2t

[28] European Commission (2020), Road safety measures in the COVID transitional era – common High Level Group principles as we exit the crisis, https://bit.ly/2AHyQKG

[29] ETSC (2020), Letter to Commissioner for Transport Adina-Ioana Valean, Prioritising transport safety during and after the COVID-19 crisis, https://bit.ly/3gdDTBV

[30] European Commission, Driving time and rest periods, https://bit.ly/2ZFzHEh

[31] See table Temporary exceptions submitted by EU and non-EU Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic under Article 14 of Reg. 561/2006, https://bit.ly/3iEdgYz

[32] ETSC (2020), PIN Flash 39, How to improve the safety of goods vehicles in the EU? www.etsc.eu/pinflash39

Full and comparative data should be analysed to see what the impact has been for HGV occupants and other road users from the period where the driving and resting time regulation was suspended. Any future suspensions related to handling the exit from the Covid-19 pandemic should be again proportionate, time-limited and subject to regular review.

Regarding urban mobility, the Commission in its Exit Strategy says: "Many European cities are taking steps to make active mobility (e.g. walking and cycling) a safe and more attractive mobility option during the COVID-19 outbreak. Urban areas could consider temporary enlargements of pavements and increased space on the road for active mobility options to facilitate the needs of the population to move in a safe and efficient way, while reducing speed limits of vehicles in increased active mobility areas."[33] The Commission also, "encourages and supports the development and implementation of new urban mobility solutions and measures to facilitate active, collective and shared mobility in a safe manner, and to ensure trust among citizens."[34/35]

ETSC supports this reprioritisation of transport infrastructure in dense, urban areas away from individual motorised transport towards public transport and sustainable, safer and healthier modes such as walking and cycling and that these changes should last into the long-term.[36]

ETSC welcomes the EC's intended support for such measures in the exit strategy and hopes this will be further expanded with specific funding streams to support the introduction of new infrastructure for both cyclists and pedestrians in the recovery package under the EU's Green Deal package.

Both deaths and serious injuries carry a huge cost to society. In monetary terms alone, the yearly cost of road crashes in the EU has been estimated to be around EUR 280 billion, equivalent to about 2% of GDP.[37] Given the financial difficulties that many EU countries face especially now as they exit from the Covid-19 crisis, the value to society of improving road safety should be taken into account in the policy and budgetary planning process, expressing in monetary terms the moral imperative of reducing road risk. It should be clear to policy-makers that road safety policies are a sound investment.[38]

It is of utmost importance to ensure that road safety remains a priority also within the new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy under preparation by the EC and due for publication this autumn. Key actions from the 'EU Road Safety Framework 2021-2030' must be included. The new Strategy should recommit to the EC's ambitious new road safety targets to reduce deaths and serious injuries as well as applying the "safe system" approach.

[33] Ibid
[34] European Commission, Communication (2020), COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity, https://bit.ly/3dG1U2t
[35] European Commission, Sustainable and Smart Mobility, Strategy, Public consultation, https://bit.ly/3fbDmjO
[36] ETSC PIN Flash 38 (2020), How Safe is Walking and Cycling in Europe, www.etsc.eu/pinflash38,
ETSC PIN Flash 37 (2019), Safer Rods Safer Cities: How to Improve Urban Road Safety, www.etsc.eu/pinflash37
[37] European Commission (2019), Handbook on the External Costs of Transport, https://bit.ly/31Rz7WC
[38] ETSC (July 2020), BRIEFING Road Safety Priorities for the EU in 2020, Memorandum to the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, https://bit.ly/2VRqUy1

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

- Analyse full and comparative data to see what the impact has been for all road user groups from the period where the lockdown measures were introduced.
- Ensure that any future suspensions of road safety related legislation related to handling the exit from the Covid-19 pandemic should be again proportionate, time-limited and subject to regular review.
- Implement an EU safe active mobility strategy which sets out road safety measures and targets to increase the distance travelled by walking and cycling
- Draft guidelines for promoting best practice in traffic calming measures, based upon physical measures and techniques of space-sharing in line with Connected Intelligent Transport System developments, to support area-wide urban safety management, in particular when 30 km/h zones are introduced.
- Develop and adopt a European Commission Recommendation on applying safe speed limits, covering infrastructure, vehicle and enforcement areas.
- Encourage Member States to adopt zones with a speed limit of 30 km/h in residential areas and areas used by many pedestrians and cyclists, and a maximum speed of 50 km/h elsewhere in urban areas. These should be coupled with self-explaining infrastructure measures to support the enforcement of the speed limits.
- Create an EU fund to support priority measures such as for cities to introduce 30 km/h zones supported by traffic calming measures, particularly in residential areas and where there are high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists and on the way to schools.
- Integrate road safety and EU road safety targets into the Guidelines of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs).
- Set up a mechanism to monitor and promote best practice in the take up of road safety as a horizontal issue within SUMPs.
- Create a mechanism for co-operation between the Member State Expert Group on Urban Mobility and the High Level Group on Road Safety.
- Recognise the positive impact that urban access regulations can have to increase road safety and include this in the upcoming EC Recommendation on Urban Access Schemes.
- Support Member States in preparing national enforcement plans with annual targets for compliance in the areas of speeding, drink driving and distraction, especially in urban areas where there are high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Encourage Member States to adopt national level walking and cycling strategies implemented with earmarked funds and including safety targets.

Implementing the new EU Road Infrastructure Safety Management (RISM) Directive[39]:

- Ensure the swift preparation, in light of the revised directive, of the technical guidance on road design quality requirements for vulnerable road users, methodology on road safety assessments and safety ratings, design of forgiving and self-explaining/enforcing roads and reporting of collisions and their severity and the preparation of common specifications for road markings and road signs to support EU Member States.
- Extend application of RISM to all EU-funded roads. The new directive states that EU-funded urban roads are exempt from the legislation.
- Extend the application of the instruments to all main urban and main rural roads. The new directive will cover the entire TEN-T network, all motorways, all EU funded roads outside urban areas and the "primary road network" – as designated by EU Member States.[40]

Implementing new EU vehicle safety standards[41]:

- Deliver on the estimated number of deaths and serious injuries prevented by adopting strong and timely secondary regulation implementing the General Safety Regulation (GSR).
- Insist on the highest possible vehicle regulations standards at UNECE with regards to GSR implementation.
- Require a high level of performance of Intelligent Speed Assistance systems to be fitted in all new vehicles.

[39] 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, https://bit.ly/3ifO3DM

[40] Each Member State will now designate which of its roads are subject to the rules under the new 'primary road' category. This leaves the possibility that some would propose the bare minimum, or only roads that already meet high safety standards. In a further opt-out road authorities will also be able to choose some low-risk roads, or roads with little traffic to be exempt of the legislation.

[41] Regulation (EU) 2019/2144 of the European Parliament and of the Council 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, amending Regulation (EU) 2018/858 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 78/2009, (EC) No 79/2009 and (EC) No 661/2009, https://bit.ly/2CRJWe6

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- Analyse full and comparative data to see what the impact has been for all road user groups from the period where the lockdown measures were introduced.
- Collect travel data for all road users (pedestrians, cyclists, PTWs, cars, vans, HGVs) by road types, especially now to track mobility patterns during the Covid-19 exit period.
- Involve representatives of cities and rural areas in the setting up of national road safety strategies and exit strategies from Covid-19, road safety targets and their implementation.
- Encourage local authorities to adopt zones with a speed limit of 30 km/h supported by traffic calming measures in residential areas, areas used by many pedestrians and cyclists and on the way to schools.
- Develop and encourage cities and rural road authorities through earmarking of urgent funds to apply safe infrastructure design guidelines, especially during this Covid-19 exit period, such as guidelines for traffic calming measures, intersections, pedestrian crossings or cycling infrastructure design. Renew the guidelines regularly based on the latest research and innovation.
- Design and implement walking and cycling safety strategies which include targets and measures to improve safety of cyclists and promote cycling. Nominate ambassadors and set up centres of excellence for knowledge sharing at national level.
- Prepare national enforcement plans with yearly targets for compliance in the areas of speeding, including targets in urban areas, where there are high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Intensify traffic law enforcement, especially for speeding in urban areas, where there are high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Use public procurement to require vehicle safety features such as direct vision, Intelligent Speed Assistance, Automated Emergency Braking with pedestrian and cyclist detection and alcohol interlocks in public sector fleets and fleets providing the public with services until such time as all vehicles on the roads have such features.
- If governments choose to implement subsidies for new car purchases (so-called "scrappage schemes"), ensure these are linked to high safety performance (Euro NCAP 5 star) as well as environmental criteria. Consider offering subsidies to aid with purchases of bicycles instead of, or in addition to, car subsidies.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITIES, TOWNS AND RURAL AUTHORITIES, WHERE APPLICABLE

- Adopt a local road safety strategy based on the Safe System approach, set road safety targets and dedicate appropriate budget.
- Include road safety as an essential component in developing and implementing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs).
- Relate road safety objectives to other policy objectives for the city including its Covid-19 exit strategy.
- Adopt and promote a policy of modal priority for road users, the hierarchy being based on safety, vulnerability and sustainability. Walking should be at the top of the hierarchy, followed by cycling and use of public transport. Reduce motorised traffic and improve access and easier use of public transport.[42]
- Establish clear urban road hierarchies which better match road function to speed limit, layout and design based on the principles of the Safe System approach.
- Adopt 30 km/h zones supported by traffic calming measures in residential areas, areas used by many pedestrians and cyclists and on the way to schools.
- Introduce vehicle safety requirements, such as direct vision, Intelligent Speed Assistance, Automated Emergency Braking with pedestrian and cyclist detection and alcohol interlocks in public procurement requirements for city services (e.g. waste trucks, public transport buses).
- Apply to use funds from the EU's 2021-2027 budget for improving urban road infrastructure safety.

[42] ETSC (2016), Position paper, A Proposal for a strategy to reduce the number of people seriously injured on EU roads, https://goo.gl/DWbTFv

ANNEXES

ISO COUNTRY CODE

COUNTRY	ISO CODE
Austria	AT
Belgium	BE
Bulgaria	BG
Croatia	HR
Cyprus	CY
Czechia	CZ
Denmark	DK
Estonia	EE
Finland	FI
France	FR
Germany	DE
Greece	EL
Hungary	HU
Ireland	IE
Israel	IL
Italy	IT
Latvia	LV
Lithuania	LT
Luxembourg	LU
Malta	MT
The Netherlands	NL
Norway	NO
Poland	PL
Portugal	PT
Romania	RO
Serbia	RS
Slovakia	SK
Slovenia	SI
Spain	ES
Sweden	SE
Switzerland	CH
United Kingdom	UK

BACKGROUND TABLE

	Road deaths	Road deaths April			2017-2019 avera	2020 April vs last	Changes in traffic volume in April 2020
		2017	2018	2019			
CY	0	3	0	1	1	-100%	65% reduction in urban areas and 70% reduction on motorways compared to February 2020
IT[1]	10	73	68	49	63	-84%	80% reduction compared to previous year or month
BE[2]	24	74.0	74.0	74.0	74	-68%	60% reduction in daily distance travelled in sedond half of March 2020 compared to March 2018-2019. Based on annual survey among 1000 citizens.
ES[3]	30	91	77	74	81	-63%	75% reduction compared to April 2017-2019
FR	103	281	284	235	267	-61%	
EL*	21	51	54	50	51.7	-59%	
RO	59	115	147	109	124	-52%	
HU*	21	36	51	37	41	-49%	41% reduction compared to April 2017
PT[4]	16	32	25	32	30	-46%	
SI	7	14	9	12	12	-40%	
FI*	12	21	20	17	19	-38%	
IE*	7	7	17	9	11	-36%	In the week of 27 March (announcement of lockdown) traffic volumes on the national road network reduced by 65-70%. Gradual increases in traffic since 20 April. Source: Transport
HR	16	18	30	26	25	-35%	50% reduction compared to 2018-2019 April
LT	7	8	10	12	10	-30%	34% reduction on main roads compared to April 2017-2019
PL	148	190	202	228	207	-28%	
LV	6	8	7	9	8	-25%	
NO	7	5	8	13	9	-19%	
EE	3	3	4	4	4	-18%	10% reduction compared to April 2018-2019
AT*	30	29	30	40	33	-9%	
DE*	236	234	274	239	249	-5%	
SE	17	17	17	16	17	2%	22% reduction compared to April 2017 and 2019
CZ	47	36	43	55	45	5%	April 2020 data compared with data for February 2020 and before: 65% decrease in urban areas and 70% decrease on the motorways.
DK*	12	8	15	11	11	6%	34% reduction in car and LGV traffic compared to week nine in 2020
NL[5]	52	40	49	49	46	13%	
SK[6]	24	22	22	16	20	20%	
LU	2	1	0	n/a	1	300%	
EU25	**910**	**1412**	**1529**	**1404**	**1448**	**36%**	
BG	n/a						
MT	n/a						
CH	n/a						
IL	n/a						
RS	n/a						
UK	n/a						

Data source: PIN Panellists. Data refer to 30-day road death definition if not indicated otherwise.
Data on traffic volumes are not comparable between countries due to different data collection methodologies and different road coverage.
*HU, *FI, *IE, *AT, *DK, *DE, *EL - provisional data for 2020.
IT[1] - deaths at the location of a collision (provisional data by National Police).
BE[2] - an estimation for the country (15/03 to 30/04) based on a survey by Vias in 13 police zones.
ES[3] - quick indicator on fatal accidents. Killed within 24 hours outside urban areas.
PT[4] - data of road deaths on site of a collision or during transport to hospital.
NL[5] - police records. These numbers are not comparable with Statistic Netherlands data (BRON).
SK[6] - deaths within 24 hours.

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