

PIN Talk – Driver distraction and road safety
Ljubljana, 5 October 2026



www.esranet.eu

International Comparisons of Distracted Driving: ESRA3 Results from 39 Countries

Uta Meesmann, Vias institute, Belgium





ESRA

www.esranet.eu

E-Survey of Road users' Attitudes

International network

Coordinated by Vias institute & ESRA Steering Group

Funding: partners' own resources (or sponsors)

Partner in Slovenia: AVP



Aim & objectives

- ▶ Collect and analyze **comparable data** on road safety performance & traffic safety culture
- ▶ Provide **scientific support** for road safety policy making at national and international levels
- ▶ Develop a series of reliable, cost-effective and comparable road safety performance indicators
- ▶ Develop time series on **road safety performance & traffic safety culture**
- ▶ ESRA data are widely used in road safety monitoring



ESRA3 methodology

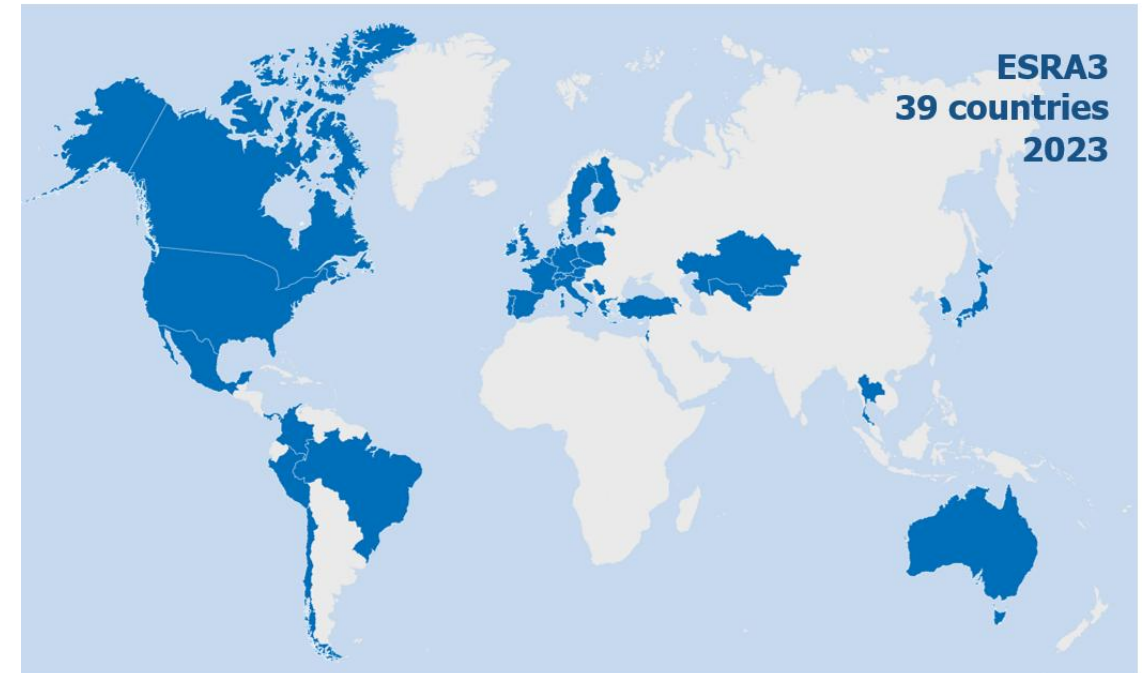


Identical method & questionnaire - Online panel survey

ESRA3: 39 countries

- ▶ Total sample $n = 37000$
 - ▶ Representative sample (18-74y; $\approx 1000/\text{country}$)
- ▶ 49 national language versions
- ▶ 26 questions, >400 variables

Weighted national and regional means



ESRA3 Thematic Report: Distraction (mobile phone use) & fatigue

Areal A., Pires C., Pita R., Marques P., & Trigo J. (2024). Distraction (mobile phone use) & fatigue. ESRA3 Thematic report Nr. 3. ESRA project (E-Survey of Road users' Attitudes). (2024-R-20-EN). Portuguese Road Safety Association.

<https://www.esranet.eu/storage/minisites/esra2023thematicreportno3distractionandfatigue.pdf>



Distraction (mobile phone use) & fatigue

ESRA3 Thematic report Nr. 3



Self-declared behaviour



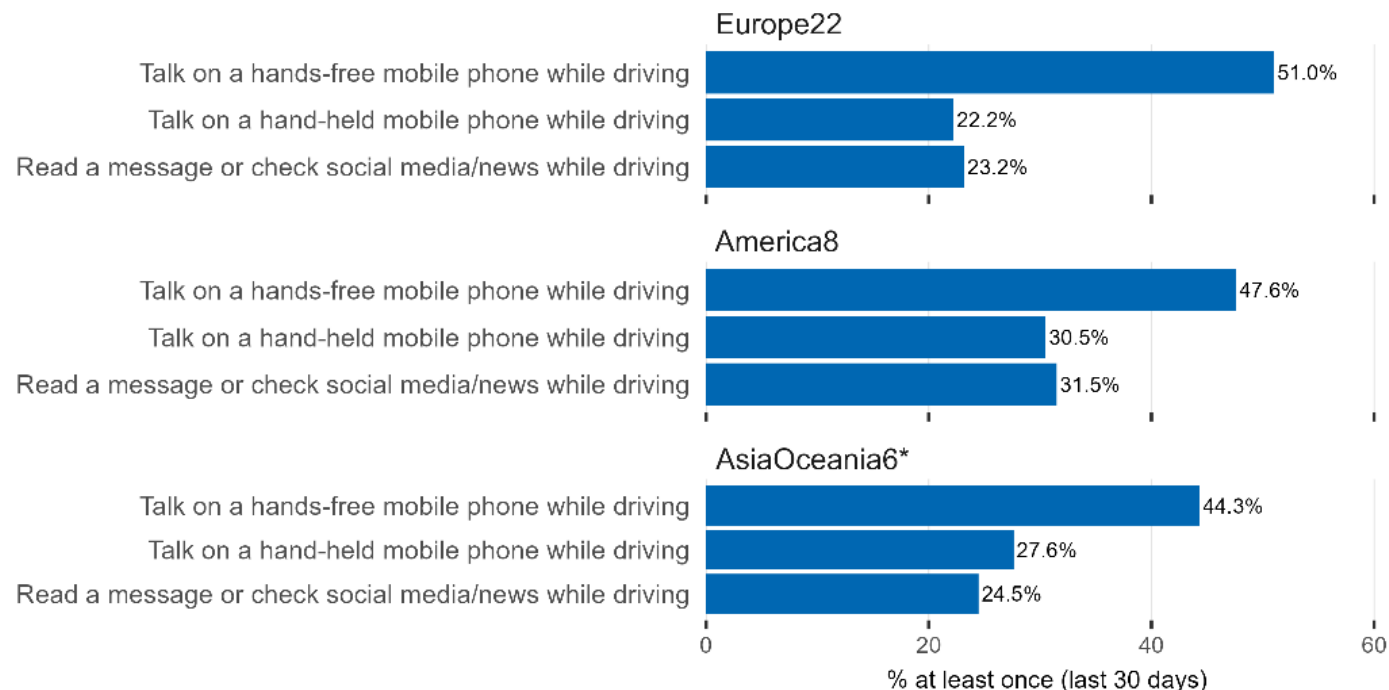
Distraction



Car drivers

- Highest: hands-free phone
- 22–32% of car drivers handled a phone
- Higher in America⁸

SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER



Reference population: car drivers at least a few days a month, *not including Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan (different methodology)

Self-declared behaviour as a car driver, by region.
'Over the last 30 days, how often did you as a car driver ...?'

Self-declared behaviour



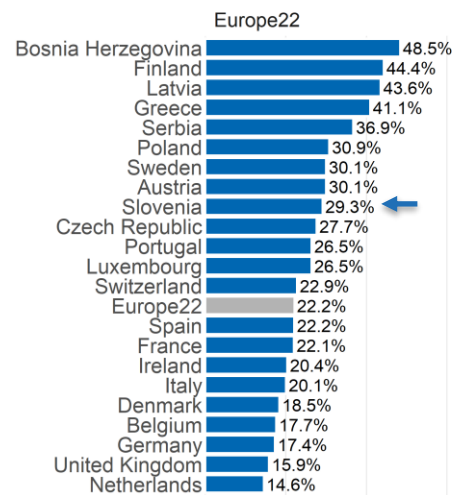
Distraction



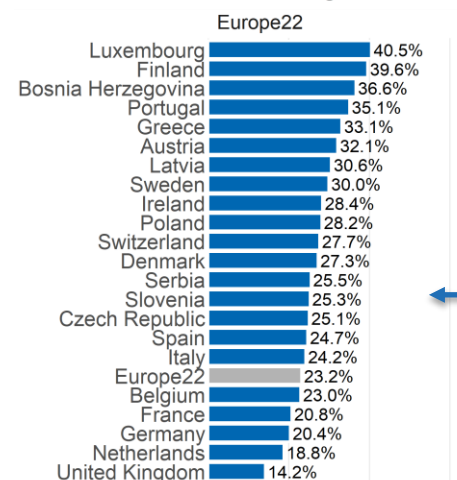
Car drivers

- Highest prevalence: hands-free phone use
- Hand-held use: ~15–49% in Europe
- Reading messages: ~14–41% in Europe
- Large differences between countries
- **Slovenia above Europe22 average on all three**

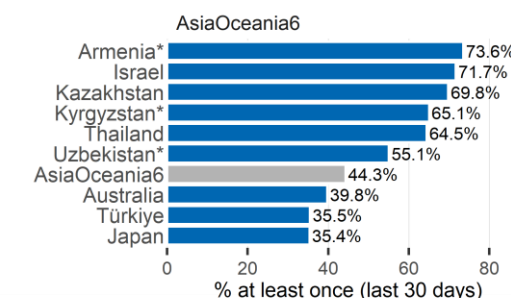
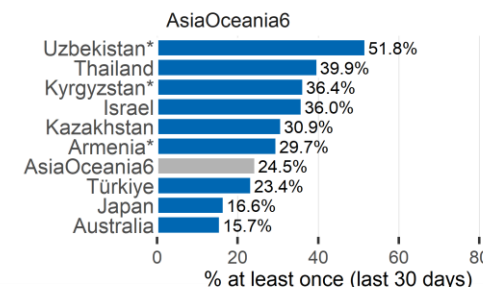
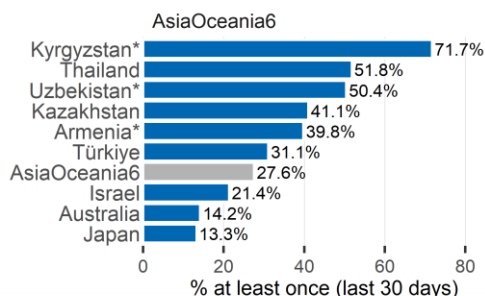
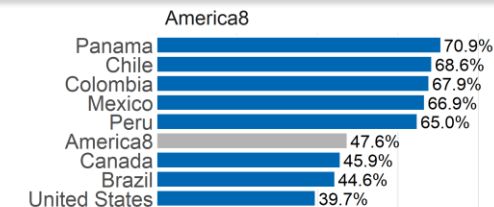
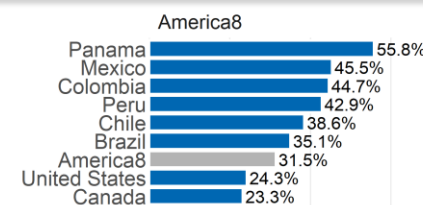
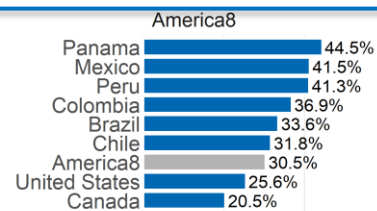
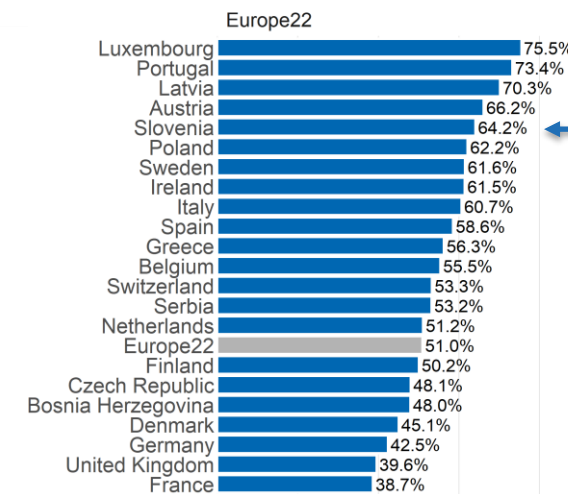
SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER Talk on a hand-held mobile phone while driving



SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER Read a message or check social media/news while driving



SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER Talk on a hands-free mobile phone while driving



Reference population: car drivers at least a few days a month,
*not in regional mean (different methodology)

Reference population: car drivers at least a few days a month,
*not in regional mean (different methodology)

Reference population: car drivers at least a few days a month,
*not in regional mean (different methodology)

Self-declared behaviour as a car driver, by country and region.
'Over the last 30 days, how often did you as a car driver ...?'

Slovenia in the international comparison (ESRA3, 2023)



Distraction



Car drivers



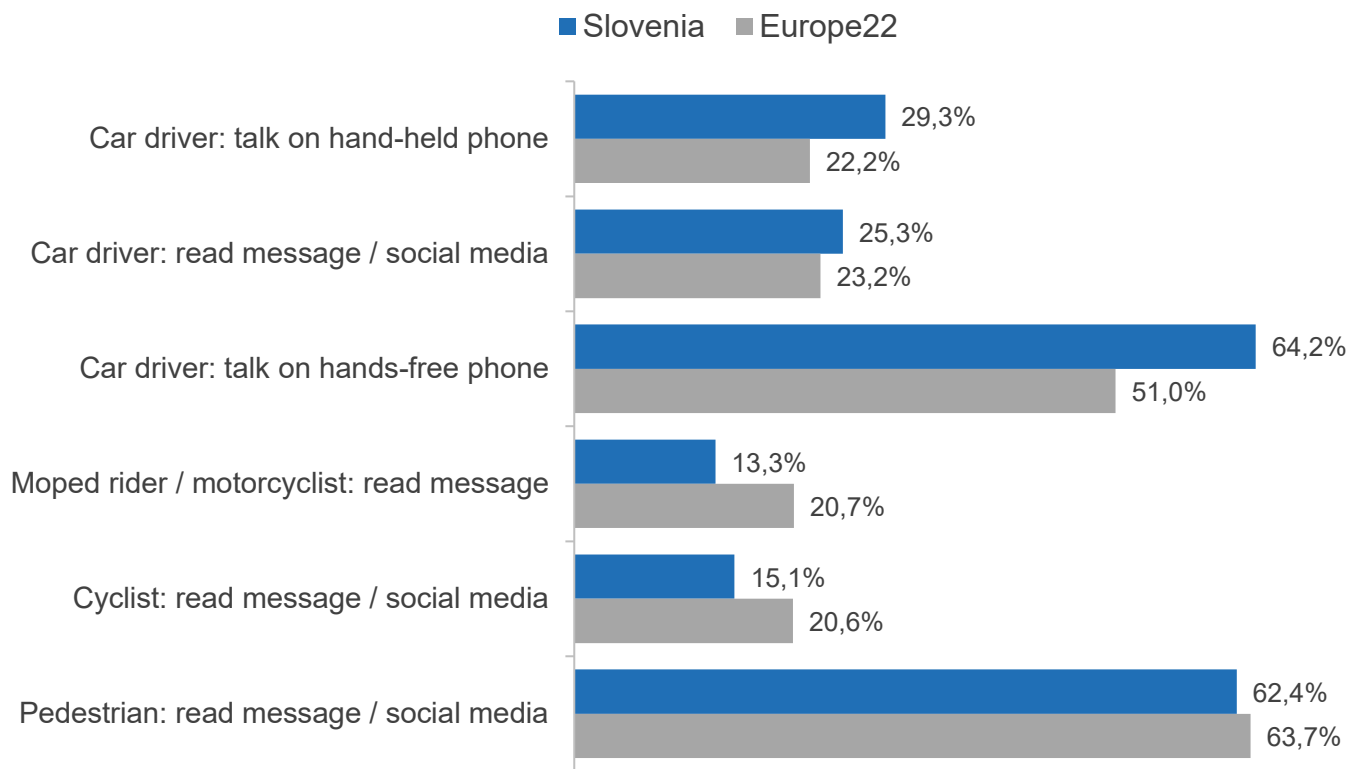
Moped riders /
motorcyclists



Cyclists



Pedestrians



29%

of Slovenian car drivers talked on a hand-held phone (Europe22: 22%) – 9th of 22 European countries

64%

of Slovenian car drivers talked on a hands-free phone (Europe22: 51%) – 5th highest in Europe

82%

support a ban on hand-held phone use for all drivers of motorised vehicles (Europe: 79%)

% at least once in the past 30 days. ESRA3 (2023); Slovenian data in cooperation with AVP. Ban support vs Europe21.

Self-declared behaviour, by age group

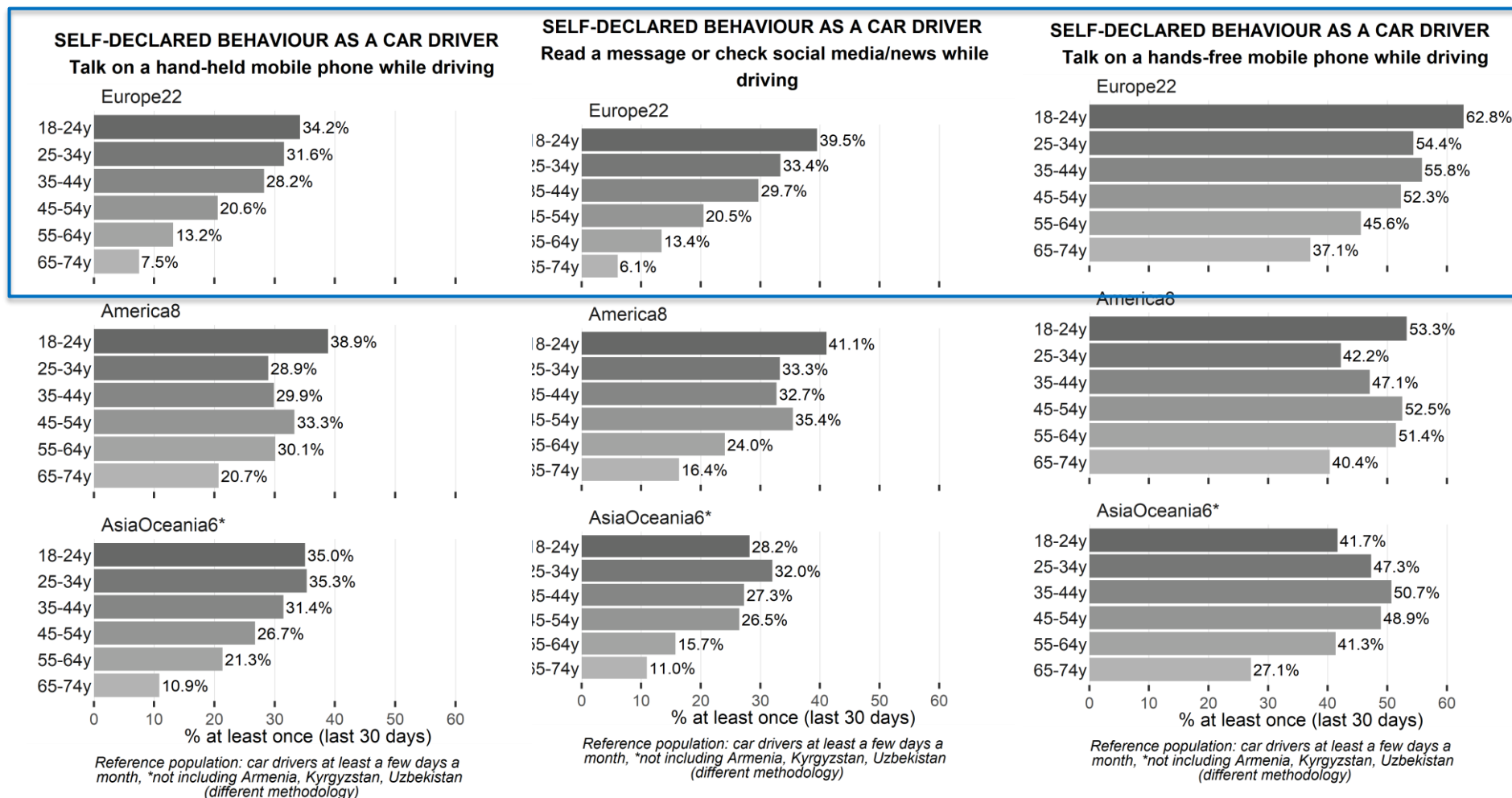


Distraction



Car drivers

- Younger drivers report more
- Males report more than females



Self-declared behaviour as a car driver, by age group.
‘Over the last 30 days, how often did you as a car driver ...?’

Personal acceptability



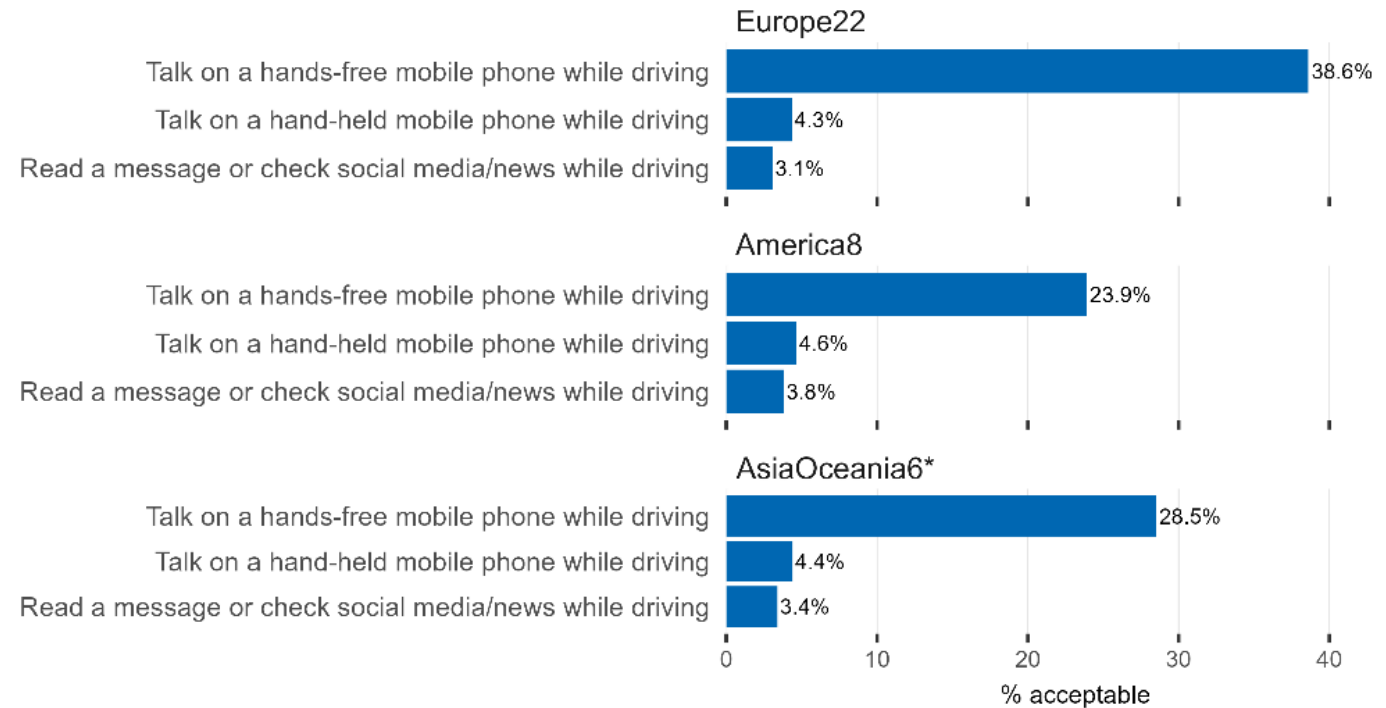
Distraction



Car drivers

- Low acceptability of talking on a hand-held phone and of reading a message or checking social media (<5%).
- Talking on a hands-free phone is much more acceptable than handling the phone, in all regions.

PERSONAL ACCEPTABILITY - CAR DRIVER



Reference population: all road users, *not including Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan (different methodology)

Personal acceptability of unsafe traffic behaviour of car drivers, by region.
'How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a car driver to ...?'

Self-declared behaviour



Distraction



Moped riders /
motorcyclists



Cyclists



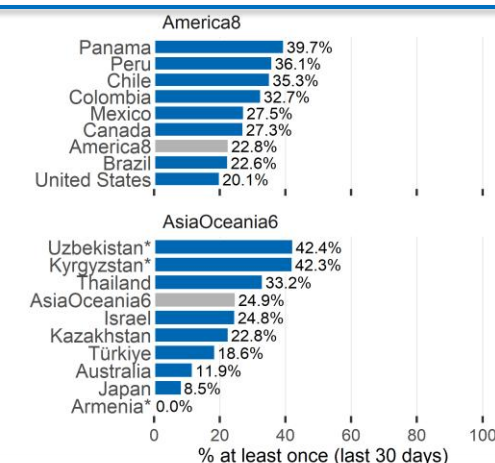
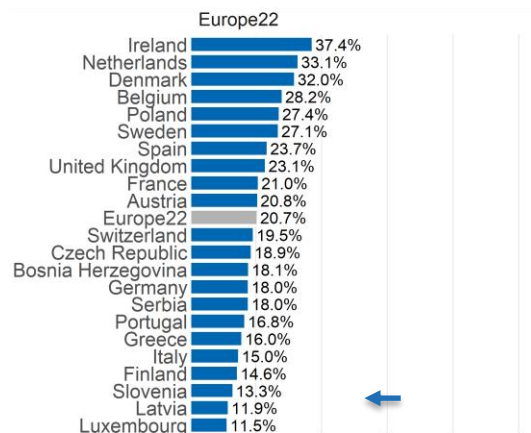
Pedestrians

Read a message or check social media

- Similar percentages for moped riders/motorcyclists and cyclists – about 20–25%.
- More than 50% for pedestrians.
- **Slovenia: among the lowest for riders (13%) and cyclists (15%)**

SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A MOTORCYCLIST OR MOPED RIDER

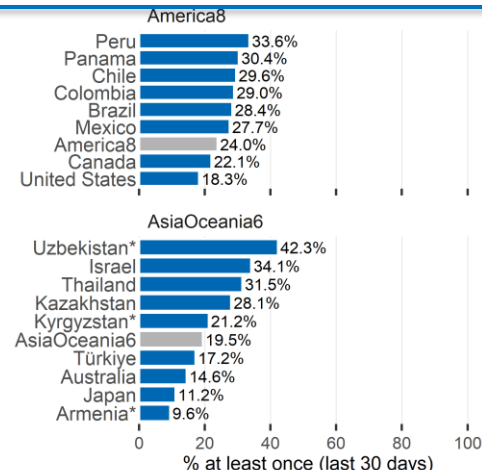
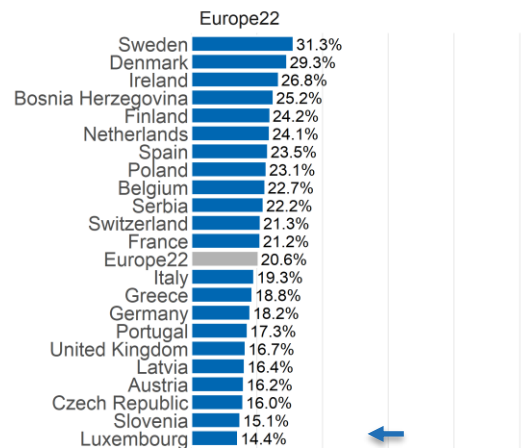
Read a message or check social media/news while riding



Reference population: motorcyclists and moped riders at least a few days a month, *not in regional mean (different methodology)

SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CYCLIST

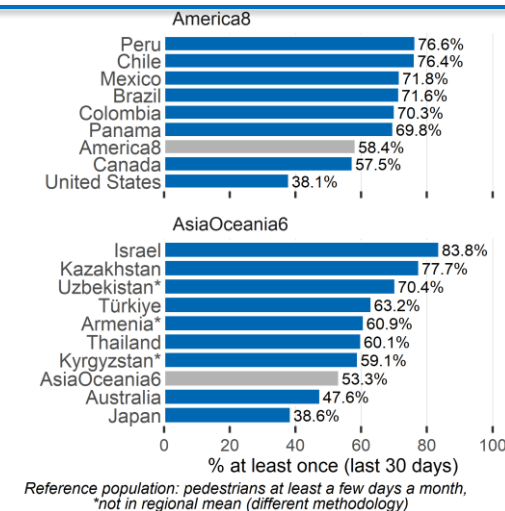
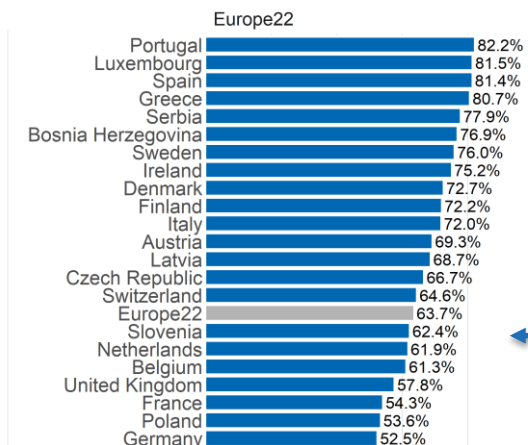
Read a message or check social media/news while cycling



Reference population: cyclists at least a few days a month, *not in regional mean (different methodology)

SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A PEDESTRIAN

Read a message or check social media/news while walking down the street



Reference population: pedestrians at least a few days a month, *not in regional mean (different methodology)

Self-declared behaviour as a moped rider or motorcyclist/ cyclist/ pedestrian, by country and region.

Policy support



Distraction



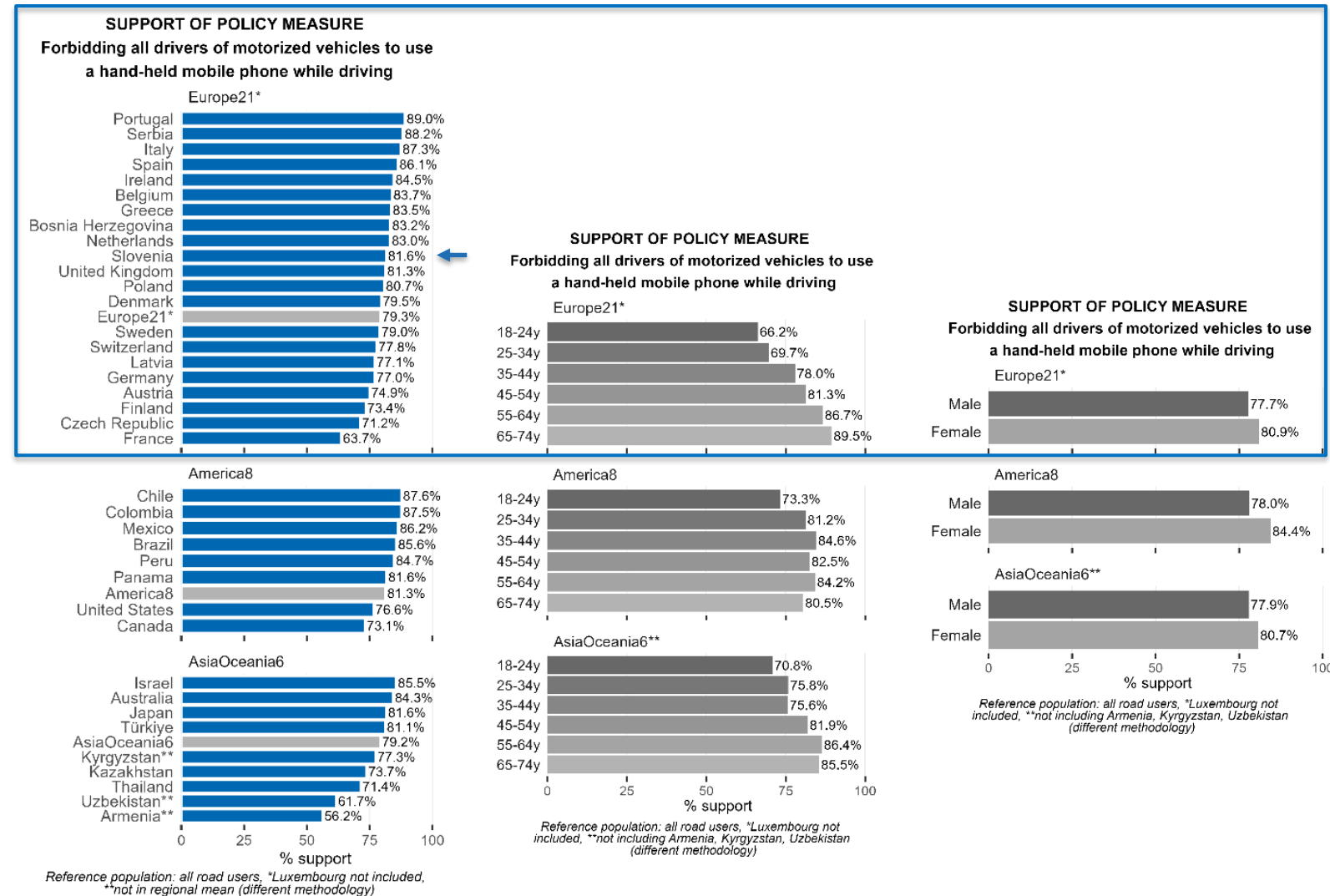
Car drivers



Moped riders /
motorcyclists

Forbidding all drivers of motorized vehicles to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving

- Support very high: ~80% in all regions
- **Slovenia: 81.6% (Europe21: 79.3%)**
- Slightly higher among older and female road users



Support for policy measures, by region, country, age group, and gender (% support)..

Trend 2018–2023



Distraction



Car drivers

Average of 24 countries (car drivers):

Hand-held calls: −4.6 pp

Hands-free calls: +3.8 pp

→ **shift from hand-held to hands-free**

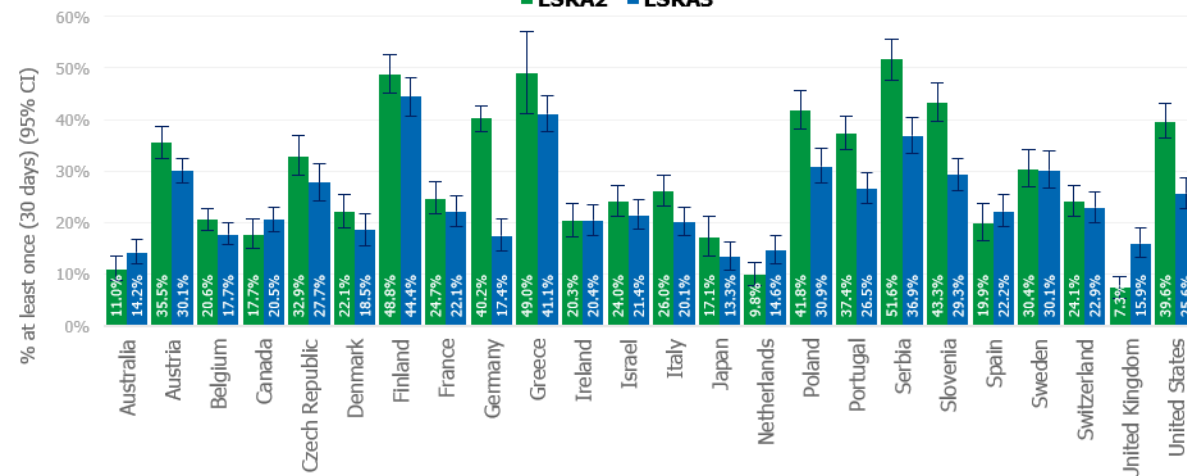
Same shift in Slovenia

Caution: could be influenced by methodological differences – ESRA4 (2027) will show if this trend can be confirmed.

SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER

Talk on a hand-held mobile phone while driving

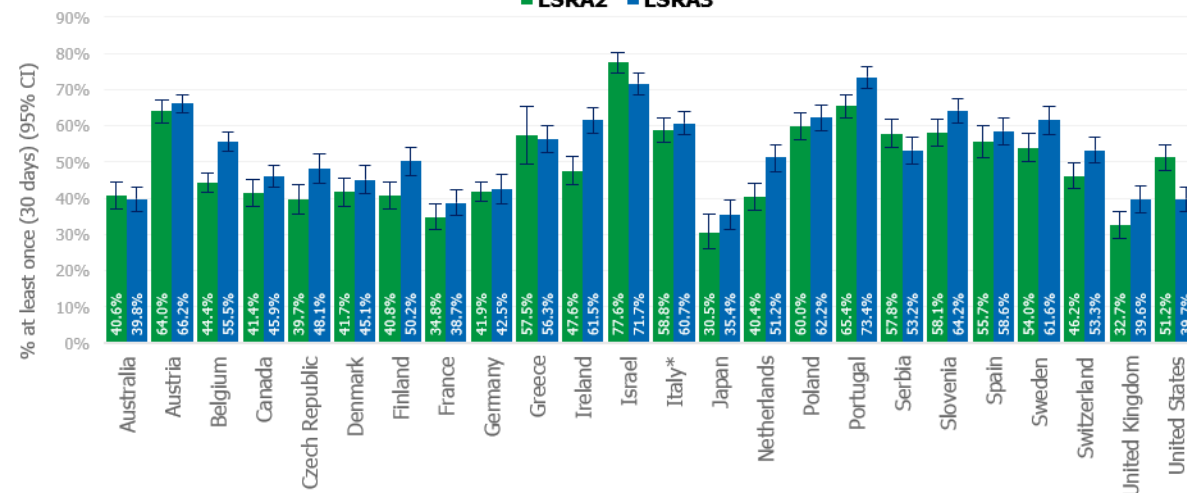
■ ESRA2 ■ ESRA3



SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR AS A CAR DRIVER

Talk on a hands-free mobile phone while driving

■ ESRA2 ■ ESRA3



Self-declared behaviour as a car driver, in ESRA2 and in ESRA3, by country (% at least once in the past 30 days ± 95% Confidence Intervals). ESRA2 results recalculated for comparability.

Main conclusions

- More than 1 in 5 car drivers handled a mobile phone while driving in the past 30 days – in all regions (22–32%).
- Phone use while driving is reported more by males and by younger drivers.
- Almost nobody finds handling the phone acceptable (<5%) – yet many do it: a gap between attitude and behaviour.
- Distraction concerns all road users – almost 2 out of 3 pedestrians read messages while walking.
- Strong public support (~80%) for a ban on hand-held phone use while driving.
- **Slovenia: above the European average for car drivers (hand-held 29% vs 22%; hands-free 64% vs 51%).**
- **First signs of a decrease in hand-held phone use – ESRA4, will show whether this trend is confirmed.**

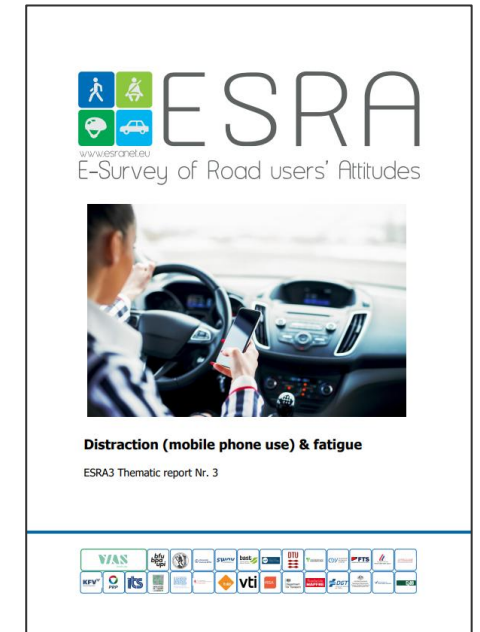
Key recommendations

Policy recommendations at national and regional level

- Define indicators and set targets, e.g. the prevalence of distracted driving and the number of checks on mobile phone use.
- Include the risks of distraction in traffic in education programmes and in driver training.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of distraction in traffic.
- Increase enforcement and the perceived risk of being caught; find new enforcement methods for mobile phone use while driving; ensure that penalties are applied.

Specific recommendations to stakeholders

- NGOs: contribute to education and awareness-raising campaigns and events on distraction in traffic.
- Vehicle manufacturers, companies and research organisations: develop low-cost in-vehicle solutions that detect and prevent distraction.
- Private and public companies: include rules on mobile phone use in their road safety plans.



Stay tuned on ESRA via www.esranet.eu

ESRA
E-Survey of Road users' Attitudes

HOME ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS DASHBOARD PUBLICATIONS NEWS & EVENTS CONTACT

40 Partners engaged in the project
68 Participating countries
6 Continents covered
5 Target road users
10 Main themes

ESRA 10 years event
ESRA: 10 years of global road safety insights and impact
Register here!

ESRA, Who are we and what do we do?
ESRA is a joint international initiative of research organisations and road safety institutes coordinated by Vias institute, and the acronym stands for E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes.
It is an extensive survey undertaken with a representative sample of the adult population in participating countries (using online access panels), carried out in 68 participating countries and covering 6 continents.
The 20-min survey addresses over **400 items**, focusing on 5 topics;

Speeding
DUI
Distraction
Protective systems
Fatigue

Results on ESRA3

- 39 country fact sheets
- ESRA dashboard
- 13 Thematic reports
- Final report
- ESRA 10 years event - presentations

Coming soon ESRA4

- 30 countries
- Fieldwork 2026
- Start dissemination 2027

Contact

- ESRA contact: esra@vias.be
- Sign up for ESRA newsletter www.esranet.eu/en/contact/

Webinar on ESRA3 – coming soon!
Free online webinar organized by WHO EURO & Vias institute
3rd E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes (ESRA3)
Supporting road safety insights, policies and practices

Date: 7th of May 2025
Timing: 13:00-14:30 CEST
Chair: Jonathan Passmore (WHO European Region)

Speakers:

- Jonathan Passmore (WHO European Region) - Linking ESRA and the WHO Global Status Report
- Uta Meesmann (Vias institute, Belgium) - ESRA Initiative: Overview, Key Insights, and the Road Ahead
- George Yannis (National University of Athens, Greece) - Speeding Behaviour and Support for 30km/h Zones
- Marie-Alexie Grané (Université Gustave Eiffel, France) - Gender-Specific Risk and Policy in Road Safety
- Jesús Morales González (Fundación MAPFRE, Spain) - ESRA3 Insights from Latin America
- Milad Delavary (Traffic Injury Research Foundation, Canada) - Age and Impaired Driving: Insights from ESRA3 and North America

FREE Online webinar – registration is required

Register here for the webinar

3rd E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes
Supporting road safety insights, policies and practices
7th May 13:00-14:30 (CEST)

Preparations for the next edition, ESRA4, have begun. If you'd like to join the ESRA community and ensure your country is included in the upcoming data collection, do not hesitate to contact esra@vias.be.
Let's improve road safety together!

ESRA (E-Survey of Road users' Attitudes) is a joint initiative of road safety organisations all over the world. The aim is to collect and analyse comparable data on road safety performance, in particular road safety culture and behaviour.

Any questions? Contact the ESRA Coordination Team via esra@vias.be.

Thank you very much for your attention!



Uta Meesmann
ESRA Project Manager, Vias institute, Belgium

✉ uta.meesmann@vias.be & esra@vias.be

 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/uta-meesmann-1b00a2250/>

 www.esranet.eu

