

A stylized graphic of a road with multiple parallel lines in white, blue, and orange, curving from the bottom left towards the center. The background is a solid orange color with abstract shapes: a light grey semi-circle on the left, a dark blue semi-circle and a light grey semi-circle on the right.

ETSC
ANNUAL
REPORT
2024

The independent voice for road safety in Europe.

European Transport Safety Council – Annual Report 2024

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Our mission

The European Transport Safety Council is the independent voice for road safety in Europe.

We are a non-profit international organisation, with members from across Europe, dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries in transport.

Founded in 1993 in Brussels, we provide an impartial source of expert advice on transport safety matters to the European Commission, the European Parliament, international organisations, and national governments.



Vision

Underpinning our work are two concepts. Firstly, 'Vision Zero' i.e., that we should end road deaths and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, sustainable and equitable mobility for all.

Secondly, the 'Safe System' approach: a widely accepted strategy for road injury prevention that acknowledges that, while human error on the road is inevitable, death or serious injuries resulting from a crash are not. Many crashes involving driver error also involve other critical factors such as design-induced weaknesses in vehicles and infrastructure.

The Safe System approach is based on the understanding that effective road injury prevention is achieved through the interdependence and multiplier effects of various policy measures and a well-balanced set of effective interventions. The six 'road-safety pillars' of the Safe System approach are road safety management, safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe road-user behaviour and post-crash care.



What we do

We identify and promote effective safety strategies, measures and policies that are science and evidence-based, and that offer the greatest potential for reducing death and injury. We publish reports and briefings, organise events, talk directly to policymakers and stakeholders and share news and best practices through our website, newsletters and social media.



Expertise

We bring together hundreds of internationally renowned transport safety experts from across Europe and beyond. We work with a diverse membership of European and international organisations that include road safety agencies, NGOs, universities and victim advocacy groups.

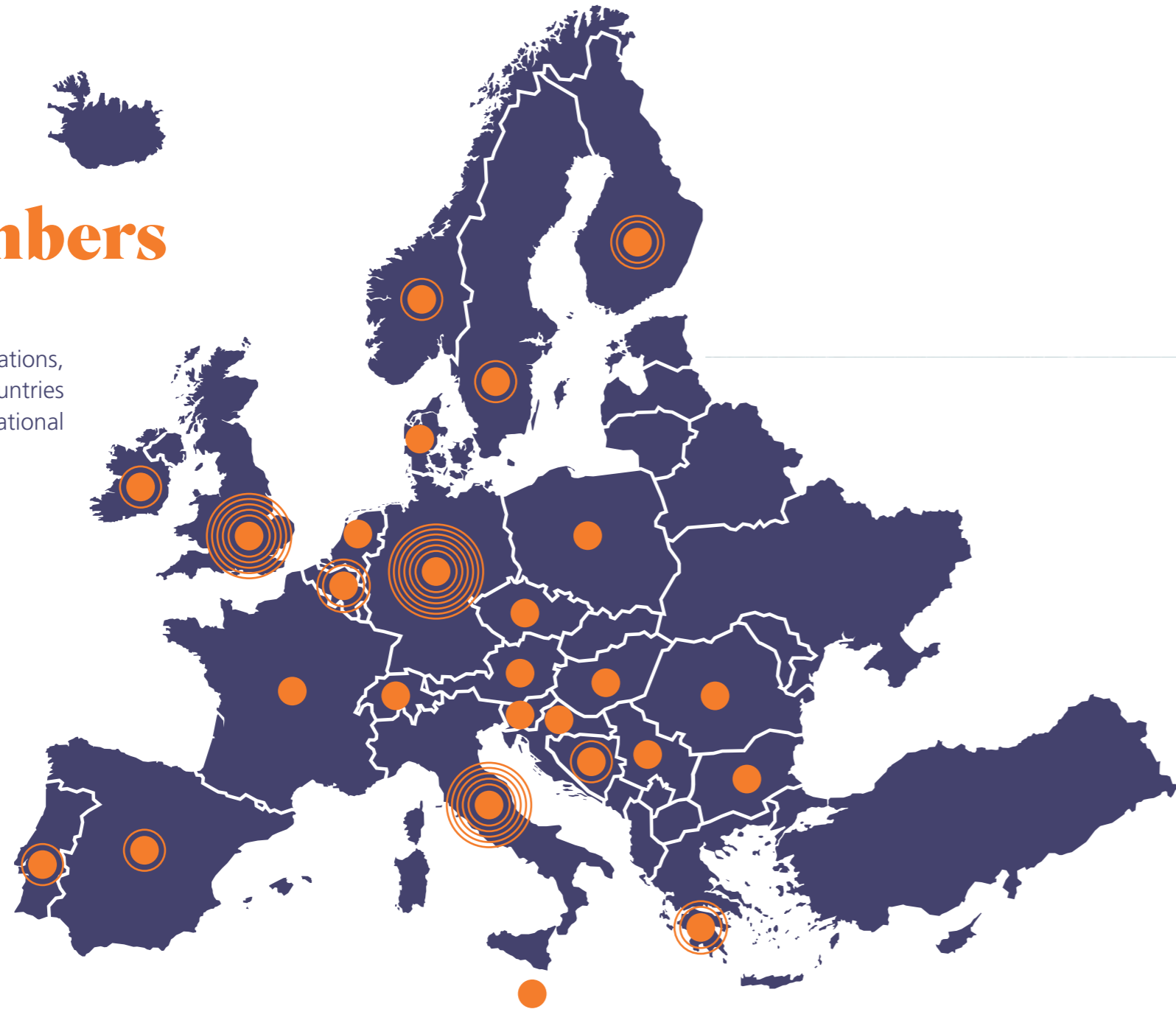


Funding

To maintain its independence, ETSC is funded from a variety of sources including membership subscriptions, the European Union and public and private sector support.

Our members

ETSC has 61 member organisations, from 26 European countries and including six international organisations.



Austria

- Austrian Road Safety Board (KFV)

Belgium

- Agence Wallonne pour la Sécurité Routière (AWSR)
- Flemish Foundation for Traffic Knowledge (VSV)
- Vias Institute

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Traffic Safety Agency of Republika Srpska
- University of Sarajevo Faculty of Traffic and Communications

Bulgaria

- Bulgarian State Agency for Road Safety

Croatia

- University of Zagreb, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences

Czech Republic

- Czech Transport Research Center

Denmark

- Danish Road Safety Council

Finland

- Finnish Crash Data Institute (OTI)
- Finnish Transport and Communications Agency (TRAFICOM)
- Liikenneturva

France

- Association Prévention Routière

Germany

- Automobile and Travel Club Germany (ARCD)
- Björn Steiger Stiftung
- DEKRA
- FSD – The Central Agency for Periodic Technical Inspection
- German Road Safety Council (DVR)
- TÜV-Verband
- Verkehrsunfall-Opferhilfe Deutschland (VOD)

Greece

- Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT)
- National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Department of Transportation Planning and Engineering
- Road Safety Institute Panos Mylonas

Hungary

- Hungarian Institute for Transport Sciences and Logistics (KTI)

Ireland

- Health and Safety Authority
- Road Safety Authority

Italy

- Automobile Club d'Italia
- Centro Studi Città Amica per la Sicurezza nella Mobilità – CeSCAM, University of Brescia

- CTL – Research Center for Transport and Logistics, Sapienza University of Rome
- Fondazione Ania
- Fondazione Unipolis
- UNASCA

Malta

- Malta Road Safety Council

Netherlands

- Dutch Safety Board

Norway

- MA – The Norwegian Motorists Association
- Trygg Trafikk – The Norwegian Council for Road Safety

Poland

- Motor Transport Institute (ITS)

Portugal

- National Road Safety Authority (ANSR)
- Prevenção Rodoviária Portuguesa (PRP)

Romania

- The Children's Car Safety Foundation

Serbia

- Road Traffic Safety Agency, Republic of Serbia

Slovenia

- Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency

Spain

- Catalan Traffic Service – Servei Català de Trànsit;
- Fundación MAPFRE

Sweden

- Folksam Research
- Swedish Abstaining Motorists' Association (MHF)

Switzerland

- Swiss Council for Accident Prevention (bfu)

United Kingdom

- Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds
- Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)
- Road Safety Support
- The Road Safety Trust
- Safer Roads Foundation
- Transport Scotland

International organisations

- European Driving Schools Association (EFA)
- European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR)
- Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM)
- Global NCAP
- Global Road Safety Partnership
- International Road Victims' Partnership (IRVP)
- MOVING International Road Safety Association

Safety in numbers



Antonio Avenoso, ETSC's Executive Director received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the UK organisation Road Safety Support

ETSC in 2024

The EU has spent the last two years debating a ‘road safety package’ with changes to rules on driving licences and traffic law enforcement across borders. While there are some good ideas, such as ensuring that driver disqualifications apply across the EU, there are also changes that could worsen road safety, such as allowing 15-year-olds to drive SUVs, and 17-year-olds to drive lorries. While ETSC was able to gain support for putting road safety first, as we saw at a European Parliament event in December, the final political deal was not all that we had hoped for. In 2025 and onwards, ETSC will work with Member States to implement the rules in a way which helps rather than hinders road safety.

In addition to our policy work at the EU level, ETSC participates in working groups at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Geneva, which play a key role in setting vehicle safety standards in markets including the EU, UK and Japan. In recent years, there has been considerable pressure to allow cars to change lanes by themselves and be operated hands-free. The key issue is that these features would be enabled on vehicles fitted with ‘Level 2’ assistance systems where the driver remains fully responsible for any mistakes. ETSC says these features must be proven safe before they are permitted and is strongly against blurring the lines between vehicle and human control.

It’s bad enough when legislation goes in the wrong direction, but things get even worse when regulatory loopholes allow safety rules to be avoided altogether. That is what is happening as thousands of American-market pick-up trucks are being allowed onto EU roads via ‘Individual Vehicle Approval’ - rules originally designed to enable modifications for specialist vehicles such as those used by drivers in wheelchairs. These non-type-approved vehicles such as the RAM pickup, which saw EU sales increase 20% in 2023 to 5000 vehicles, do not need to apply the latest EU vehicle safety standards which have been in place since July 2024. The Commission says it wants “to strengthen the IVA rules, to bring them to a level of protection comparable with that guaranteed by the (EU) type approval rules.” We hope to see action from the new Commission in 2025.



We awarded Finland for its long-term commitment to road safety. The country reduced road deaths by a substantial

29%

over the decade to 2023, while the average decline in the EU was just 16%.

On the opposite end of the vehicle weight spectrum, ETSC published a new report in November 2024 on how to improve the safety of e-scooters. We would like to see harmonised rules for usage (minimum age of 16, helmets, a drink-riding ban...) as well as common EU technical standards on criteria such as acceleration, braking, maximum speed and measures to prevent tampering. In a positive development, the European Commission has published a study on regulatory options for e-scooters and other micro-mobility vehicles, so action should be on the cards soon.

Last summer's European Parliamentary elections brought about a changing of the guard in Brussels, with new MEPs and a new college of European Commissioners. The new transport commissioner has said safety will be his number one priority.

What better way to welcome policymakers to Brussels than ETSC's #IWILLBeALifesaver campaign? We've been meeting policymakers and stakeholders in Brussels and across Europe and urging them to recommit to the EU target to cut road deaths by half by 2030 (and of course to introduce measures to achieve that target).

Things got off to a good start. In December 2024, the European Parliament and EU Member States signed off officially on a final agreement on improvements to a directive on cross-border enforcement of road traffic rules. As we said in March when the provisional deal was hammered out, the changes will be a step forward for road safety.

In other positive news, ETSC has the privilege of running the EU-funded #RoadSafetyExchange project on behalf of the European Commission. It's a genuine thrill to take national policymakers and practitioners from across the continent to learn from other countries how to tackle some of the key challenges in road safety. We've been to Denmark with Polish and Greek colleagues to learn about urban road safety, to Sweden with Croatian colleagues to see urban cycling infrastructure, and to Spain with Romanian colleagues to see best practices on automated enforcement. These study visits are followed up with workshops which will continue into 2025 to enable further progress.

Rewarding progress has always been an important part of ETSC's work and that continued in 2024 when we awarded Finland for its long-term commitment to road safety. The country reduced road deaths by a substantial 29% over the decade to 2023, while the average decline in the EU was just 16%.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in 2024. We look forward to working with you to make the roads safer in 2025.

Walter Echeverría

President

#IWILLBEALIFESAVER

Following the EU elections in June 2024, ETSC asked MEPs, transport ministers and other high-profile stakeholders to recommit to:

- The EU's 2030 targets to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 50% by 2030
- Implementation of EU and national measures to help achieve those targets

See who joined the campaign at etsc.eu/life-saver



Sharing knowledge – EU Road Safety Exchange



A Lithuanian delegation on a study visit to learn about cycling policy in the Netherlands.

EU Road Safety Exchange is an EU-funded project managed by ETSC on behalf of the European Commission. Over three years, the programme is supporting the exchange of knowledge and best practices on road safety topics between EU Member States.

At the core of the new project there is a series of twinning activities whereby leading EU road safety professionals exchange effective road safety strategies and policies with their counterparts from the selected Member States.

In 2024 we organised 11 study visits, 2 national workshops and an international event gathering all participating countries.

Find out more at roadsafetyexchange.eu

“...In an EU-funded project called Road Safety Exchange, we have taken Lithuanian policymakers to see the Dutch cycling infrastructure that so impressed your correspondent. Polish experts came with us to look at France’s ultra-efficient traffic-fine processing centre, and Portuguese specialists got a hands-on look at how the Irish do roadside drug-driving checks. The “sharing of best practice” may be awful Brussels jargon, but the EU can be genuinely good at it and, in our case, the results can even save lives.”

The Economist – a letter to the editor from ETSC



Examples of the impact of the EU Road Safety Exchange programme:

Poland plans to update its road safety education system based on the Danish model.



Portugal started the process to pilot the mono-cam, whereby fixed cameras detect the use of mobile devices at the wheel, based on work pioneered in the Netherlands.



Czechia is seeking to improve the way they upgrade safety at high-risk sites, following the German model.



Latvia is keen to introduce in-depth collision investigation, inspired by the Finnish model.



Lithuania is adopting the Vision Zero principles in their road safety work, including 2+1 roads, following their partnership with Sweden.



Romania will implement a fixed speed camera system in 2026, having benefited from the Spanish experience.



Greece is planning to reduce speed limits in urban areas to 30km/h and will implement measures to improve the safety of motorcyclists, such as advanced stop areas.

Following the evidence – The ETSC Road Safety Performance Index (PIN)

The ETSC Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) is a policy tool to help national governments and the European Union improve road safety.

National research organisations and independent researchers participate in the programme and ensure that any assessment carried out within the programme is based on scientific evidence.

“**Children aged under 16 will be banned from using electric scooters in public spaces from next Monday under regulations signed into law by Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan.**

However, adults will be able to legally use them on the roads as long as their electric scooter complies with certain specifications. The regulations set a speed limit of 20km/h and place a ban on them being used for carrying a passenger or goods...

The European Transport Safety Council, which the Irish Road Safety Authority is a member of, last year recommended the use of helmets and a minimum age of 16 for piloting an e-scooter, as well as a 20km/h speed limit being set in factories by manufacturers.”

The Irish Times



In focus: E-scooters

A new PIN report by ETSC has called for the development of mandatory technical requirements for all e-scooters sold in the European Union to replace the current patchwork of national requirements, and voluntary standards. The standards should include a speed limiter set at 20 km/h as well as stability, minimum braking and maximum acceleration requirements, according to ETSC.

We recommend that national governments set a minimum age of 16 for e-scooter riders, a requirement for mandatory helmets, as well as a ban on riding after consuming alcohol or drugs or riding with passengers.

Around
10,000
people died on rural,
non-motorway roads
in the EU in 2022



In focus: Rural roads

National governments will need to invest significantly to improve the safety of rural roads in order to hit a collective EU target to cut road deaths by half by 2030, according to a new PIN report by ETSC. The report shows that around 10,000 people died on rural, non-motorway roads in the EU in 2022 – accounting for around half of all road deaths. Rural roads can be dangerous, compared to other road types. They often lack central and side barriers and allow for large speed and weight differences between the vehicles that use them, from lorries to vulnerable cyclists as well as pedestrians. Single-vehicle crashes, where, for instance, a fatigued driver misjudges a turn and runs off the road, are common. Head-on collisions frequently occur, and are often lethal.

“**Rural roads are the deadliest traffic routes in Germany. This is according to the report “Reducing Road Deaths on Rural Roads” by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC).”**

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

EU policy

The European Union's proposed new rules for driver licences in the EU will have severe negative consequences for road safety. ETSC worked throughout 2024 to convince policymakers not to go ahead with aspects of the legislation that could lead to severe unintended consequences.

ETSC was most concerned about the proposal to require all EU Member States to introduce an accompanied driving scheme for 17-year-old lorry drivers. The current recommended minimum age for this category of vehicle in the EU is 21, though several countries allow 18-year-olds to drive HGVs under certain conditions. Research by the German Insurance Association (GDV) shows that HGV drivers aged 18-20 caused a much higher proportion of collisions resulting in personal injury than older HGV driver age groups. In the final political deal reached in early 2025, it was agreed that Member States could introduce such a scheme, but that it would not be mandatory.

Also concerning was the concept of allowing 15-year-olds to drive speed-limited cars, including large SUVs, when fitted with a speed limiter. The European Commission's impact assessment on the proposal said "the measure may pose an additional road safety risk, notably for vulnerable road users".

ETSC has backed several other aspects of the proposed legislation, including the requirement for a probationary period for young drivers with a zero-tolerance rule for alcohol when they first start to drive alone. In the end, the final text said Member States should put in place probationary periods, but did not specify which measures should be imposed.

ETSC has also been advocating in favour of updated rules on cross-border enforcement of traffic penalties, finalised in December, and driving bans.

“Encouraging some 13,500 teenagers to start driving lorries would be a dangerous experiment, leading to many more of the highest-risk group of drivers behind the wheel of vehicles that cause the most devastation when crashed.”

ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso in an opinion article published on Euronews

Speed - Cities@30

30 km/h speed limits work. From Brussels to Bologna, recent evidence suggest that they work best at their simplest, when the limit applies across a whole city. In Bologna, road deaths have dropped by half. In Wales, where they have set the default limit to 20 mph on urban roads across the whole nation, deaths and serious injuries have fallen by more than a third.

These deaths and serious injuries prevented are a good enough reason to implement 30 km/h speed limits in all our towns and cities. But the benefits don't end there. In Brussels, noise pollution was cut by half on some roads that went from 50 km/h to 30 km/h. A British insurance company recently said that those living in an area with 20 mph limits would save around £50 on their annual car insurance.

When speeds in urban areas are set at 30 km/h people walk and cycle more. The usage of shared mobility schemes increases. Air pollution can go down.

ETSC advocates for 30 km/h to be the default limit in towns and cities, while national governments such as Greece have been able to discuss other country experiences through the EU Road Safety Exchange project.



“A speed of 30 kilometres per hour in urban centres is the only acceptable speed for a pedestrian to survive a collision with a car,” according to Robert Vehovec from the General Police Administration (GPU)

Dnevnik (Daily News, Slovenia) report on an ETSC PIN event in Ljubljana



“More than 70 per cent of Europeans live in cities, towns and suburbs. Urban areas face many challenges to the health and environment of their populations. Taking away the ability of local leaders to introduce simple, effective ways of reducing harm and improving lives cannot be justified.”

13 European city mayors signed a letter to the Financial Times, co-ordinated by ETSC, calling for their right to set local speed limits to be upheld.

Drink-Driving – Safe & Sober

ETSC aims to contribute to the reduction of alcohol-related road deaths and injuries by advocating for appropriate regulatory measures at the EU and national level, and through the identification and promotion of best practices. The reduction of the blood alcohol concentration limit value for drink-driving is one of our key aims, along with the promotion of alcohol interlocks for prevention and as an alternative to a driving ban.

Thanks in part to ETSC advocacy, Spain has announced it will reduce the general alcohol limit to 0.2 g/l from 2025, and Italy will introduce an alcohol interlock programme as an alternative to a driving ban.

25%

of all road deaths
across the EU are
alcohol-related.



“A general limit of 0.2 g/l puts Spain on a par with Norway and Sweden, two of the safest countries in Europe in terms of road safety. It also means that Spain is taking a leading role in Europe, and with proper implementation, this measure will prevent many lives from being destroyed.”

ETSC’s Antonio Avenoso quoted in Spain’s ABC newspaper





Road Safety at Work – PANACEA Fitness to Drive

Fatigue, distraction, drink-driving, drug driving, and stress are major safety risks for professional drivers. For the last three years ETSC has partnered with 15 organisations to develop a holistic fitness-to-drive system that uses sensors and direct driver feedback to better manage professional fitness to drive. This major EU-funded research project has helped advance the state-of-the-art by developing a one-of-a-kind system that can track multiple risk factors and promote intervention before problems become unmanageable. Find out more, listen to the podcasts and watch an explanatory video on the project website at: panacea-project.eu



The PANACEA project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 953426.



Educating the Youngest Road Users - LEARN!

Children and youngsters have a right to grow up safely. Traffic safety should be an important and natural part of their everyday life. Since 2018, ETSC's LEARN! project has been providing information, tools and resources to education experts as well as policy recommendations to decision makers to improve the quality and provision of traffic safety and mobility education in Europe.

In 2024, the annual European Traffic Education Seminar provided a platform to 11 experts to share best practices and innovative projects to an international audience from across the globe.

The European Commission awarded the LEARN! project with the Excellence in Road Safety Award 2024, recognising it as a very impactful project that addresses the needs of the road safety education community at a European scale.



Find out more at www.trafficsafetyeducation.eu



“The LEARN! project was awarded for being a very impactful project, addressing the needs of the road safety education community across a European scale.”

Kristian Schmidt, Director for Land Transport and European Road Safety Coordinator, European Commission



Vehicle safety – Fitting safety as standard

Vehicle automation – Working for safety first in EU and UNECE regulations

The UNECE sets certain vehicle safety standards that are applied in several markets, including the European Union, the UK and Japan (but not the United States in the case of assisted driving). Carmakers have been putting considerable pressure to allow hands-off operation, first only on motorways, and fully automated lane changes on all types of roads for Level 2 vehicles, despite a lack of evidence that this will improve safety.

ETSC has raised concerns in key UNECE meetings about the danger of blurred lines between human and computer control of cars for several years. Drivers remain fully responsible for crashes in Level 2 vehicles as they are considered to ultimately be in control of the vehicle, even though such systems often result in disengagement with the driving task, with lethal consequences when the systems fail.

It would be highly irresponsible for Europe to allow this technology, without evidence that it is safe. As of today, we have no data on European crashes involving assisted driving features, and there is no mandatory reporting for vehicles with such systems already on the road, so we do not even have a clear picture of the current situation let alone allowing more features that blur the lines between human and computer driving. Europe urgently needs an agency along the lines of NHTSA in the United States – with the power to require incident reporting, investigate crashes and issue recalls.

“...carmakers are packing many of their new models with so-called “Level 2” partial automation features instead, which can do a certain amount of driving in some circumstances, but require the human driver to pay attention and take over when necessary. Yet this halfway-house, which relies on humans and machines, is proving troublesome.”

A Financial Times editorial linked to ETSC’s concerns about new features on Level 2 assisted driving systems.

Protecting the EU’s high standards – closing the IVA loophole

A coalition of consumer, safety and environmental groups, including ETSC, is urging the European Commission to close the loophole that allows dangerous and heavily polluting US-market pickups onto European roads.

Nearly 5,000 US-market RAM pickups were brought into Europe in 2023, up 20% compared to 2022, according to data from the European Environment Agency.

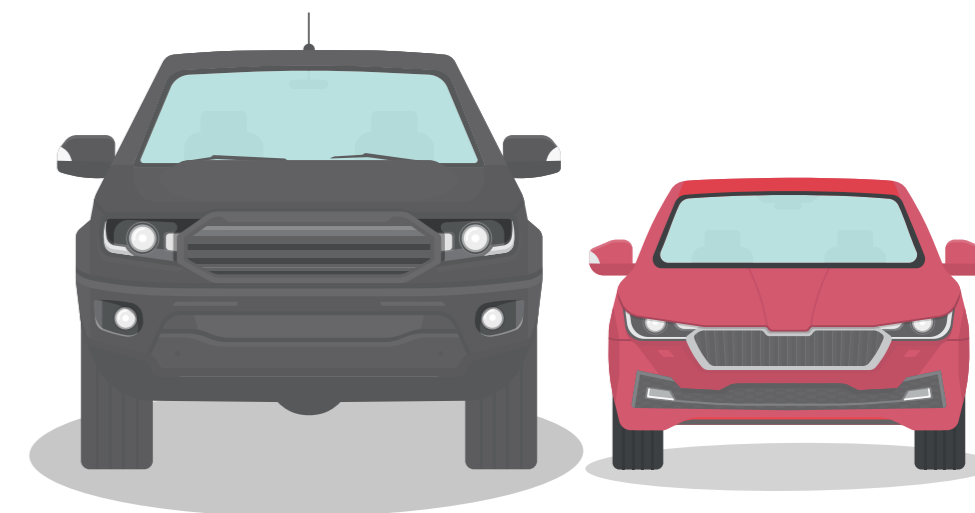
US pickup trucks, such as the RAM, are not required to comply with all EU safety and environmental standards as they are imported through a back-door channel called “Individual Vehicle Approval”.

Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) allows vehicles to bypass certain EU environmental and safety regulations. Originally this was intended for truly ‘one-off’ adapted or specialised vehicles such as those for the mobility impaired or for emergency services. The system is now being exploited to import large numbers of US pick-up trucks. Notably, these vehicles are not required to comply with the 2019 EU General Safety Regulation (GSR), on-road tests for air pollution or the EU car and van CO2 standards.

The European Commission has said that it will propose changes to the rules in 2025.

“Pickup trucks are quintessentially American; they’ve barely played a role in Europe until now. But now even monsters like the Ram 1500 are coming here more and more frequently – via a legal loophole. Experts are appalled.”

Der Spiegel featured ETSC’s concerns on imports of US-market pickups



Meet the team



Antonio Avenoso
Executive Director

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Policy Director

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President

Professor Herman De Croo
Honorary President

Manfred Wirsch
German Road Safety Council (DVR)

Barry Sheerman
PACTS, UK

Christian Schimanofsky
KFV, Austria

Jindřich Frič
CDV, Czechia

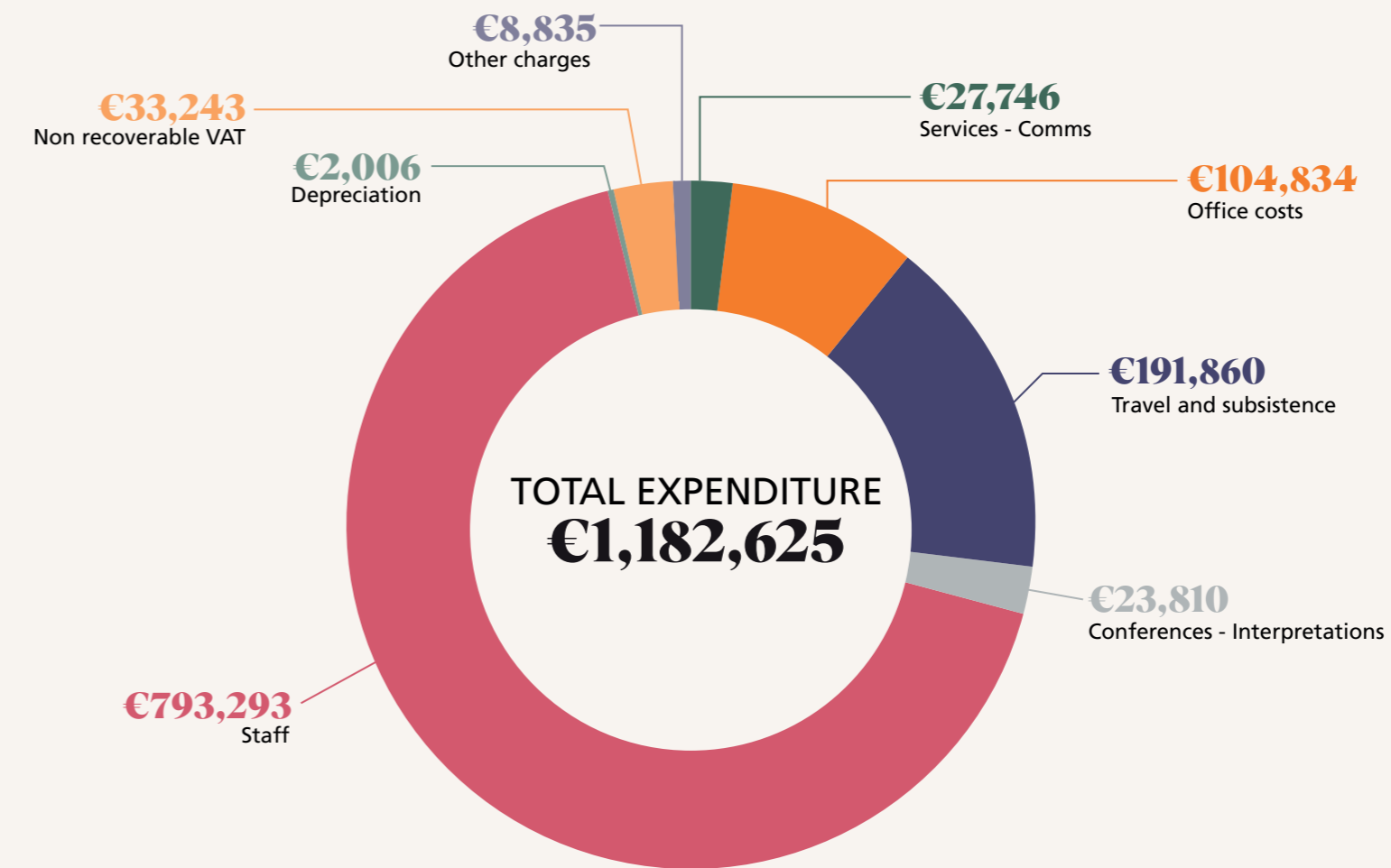
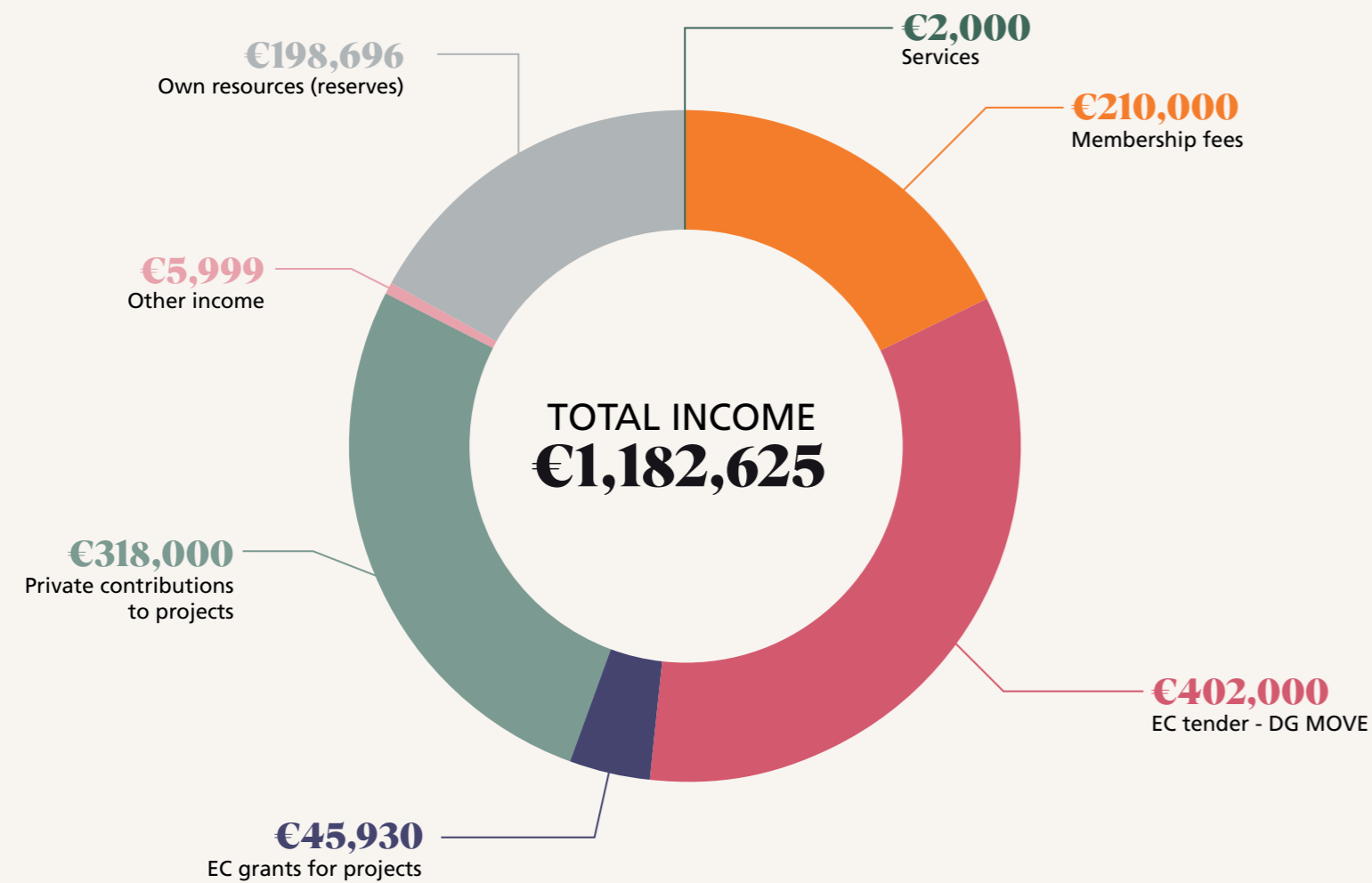
Pasi Anteroinen
Liikenneturva, Finland

Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (Observer)
Former Member of the European Parliament

Professor Pieter van Vollenhoven (Observer)

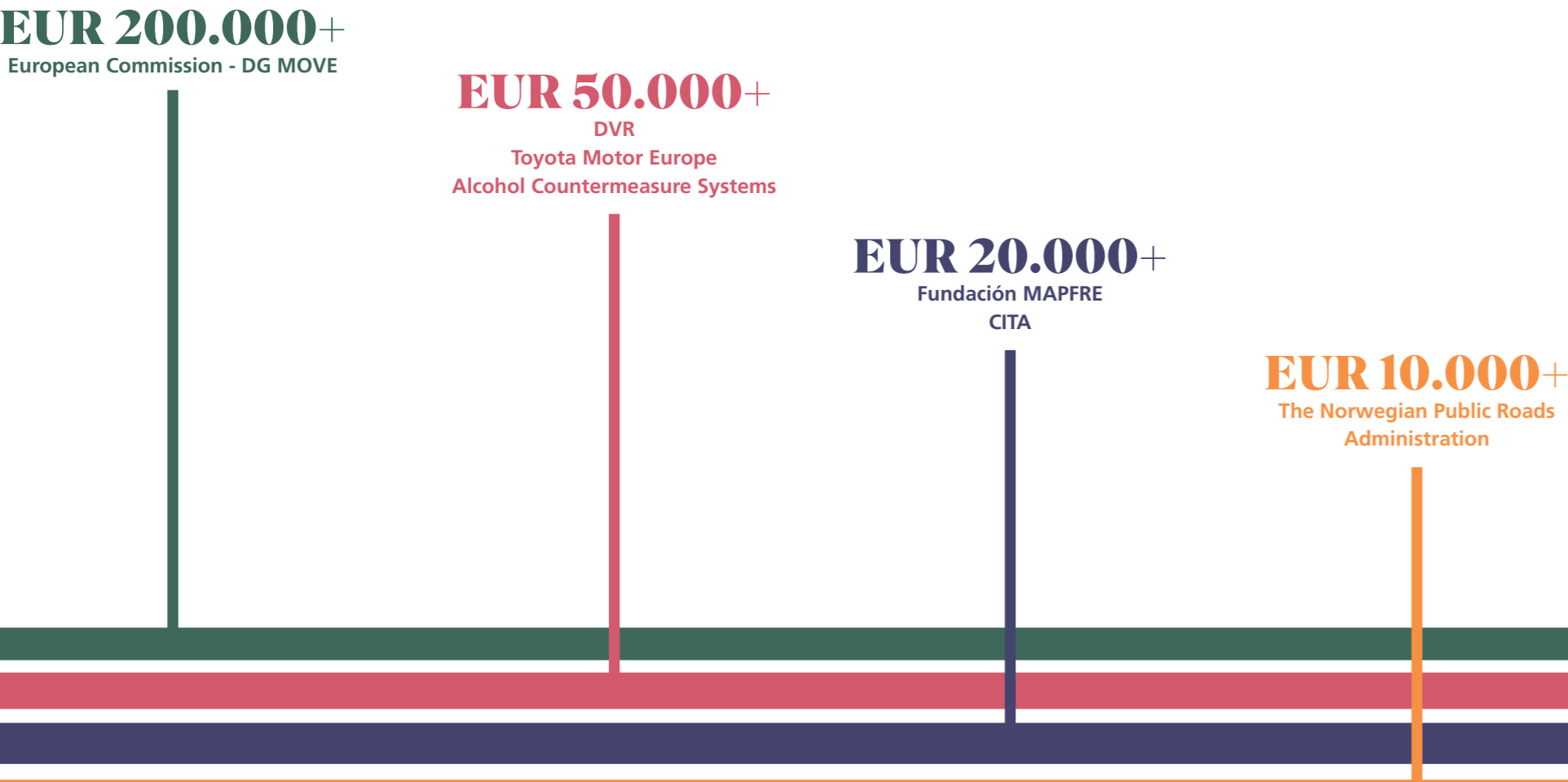


Income and expenditure 2024



Our funders in 2024

ETSC gratefully acknowledge funding support from the following Institutions



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