



DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

September 2021



GREECE



INTRODUCTION

There were 579 road deaths in Greece in 2020, a reduction of 54% since 2010. During the pandemic period in 2020, road deaths went down by 16% compared to the previous year. Greece was the only country in the EU to reach the EU target to reduce road deaths by 50% in the ten years to 2020. In fact Greece exceeded the target. Greece's long-term performance in improving road safety was recognised with the 2020 ETSC Road Safety PIN Award. But there are still 54 deaths per million population in Greece, higher than the EU average of 42.

Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2020. *National provisional estimates used for 2020, as final figures for 2020 are not yet available at the time this report went to print.

**UK data for 2020 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2020.

The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. The annual numbers of deaths in CY and EE are also relatively small and may be subject to annual fluctuations.

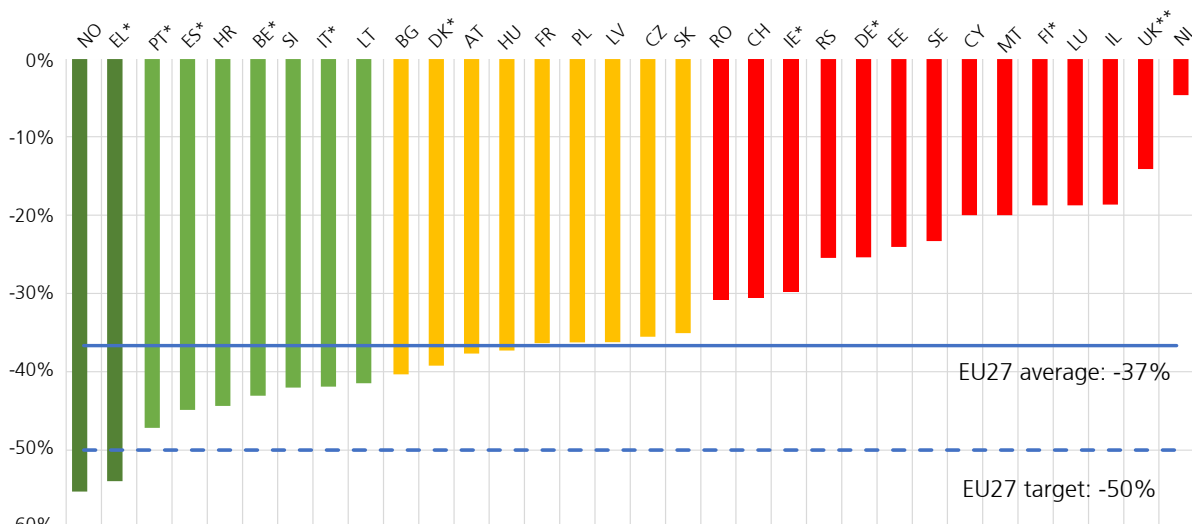
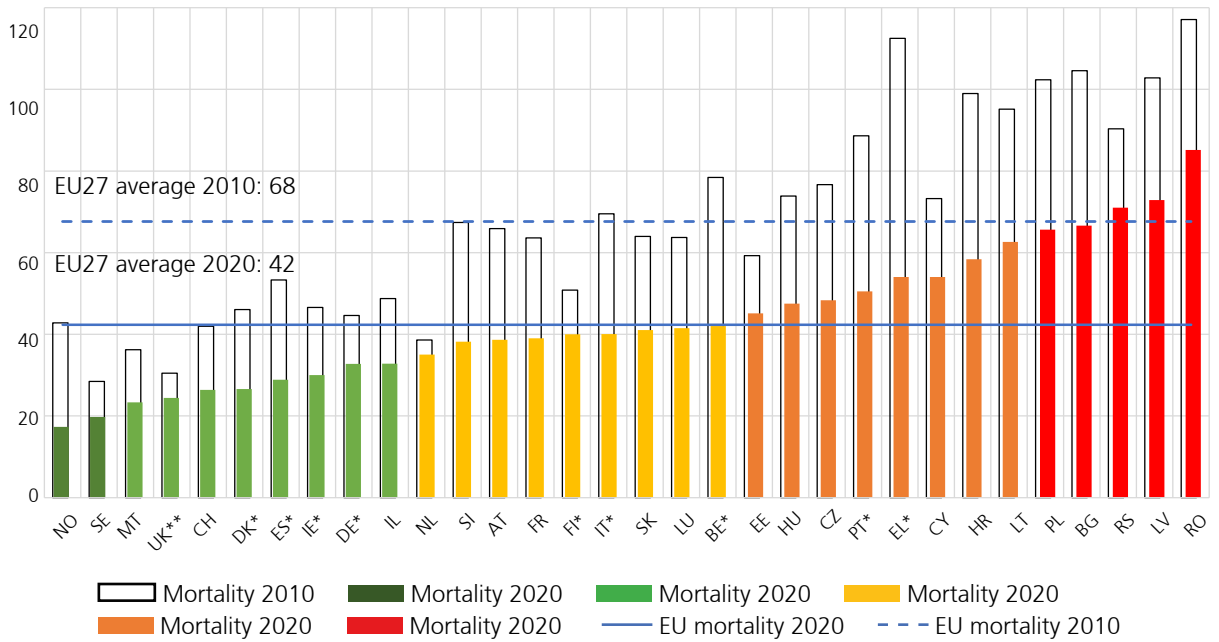


Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2020 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison).

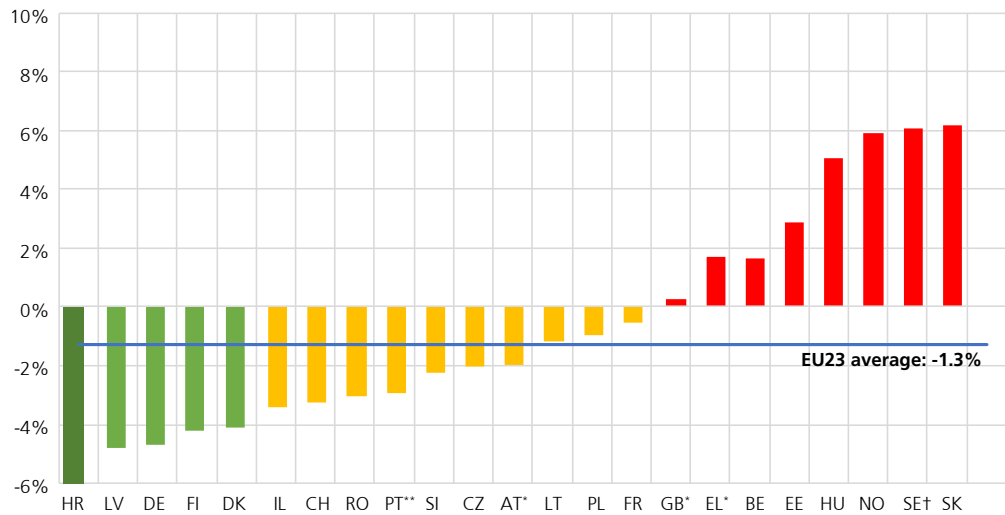
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Progress in reducing drink-driving deaths in Greece was slower than overall reductions in road deaths over the period 2010-2017. As shown in the graph below, road deaths attributed to drink-driving went down almost 2% slower than other road deaths.

Figure 3. Difference between the average annual (%) changes in the number of road deaths attributed to alcohol and the corresponding reduction for other road deaths over the period 2010-2018

*2010-2017 **2010-2015
 SE† - driver deaths only
 BG excluded from fig.3 due to insufficient data. LU and CY excluded from fig.3 as numbers of road deaths are relatively small and are subject of substantial annual fluctuations. IE is excluded as the methodology changed in 2013. RS excluded from fig.3 as the methodology changed in 2016. But BG, LU and CY data are included in the EU23 average.
 EU23 average: EU28 average excluding ES, IT, MT and NL as data on alcohol-related road deaths were not available in these countries.
 GB data used instead of the UK.



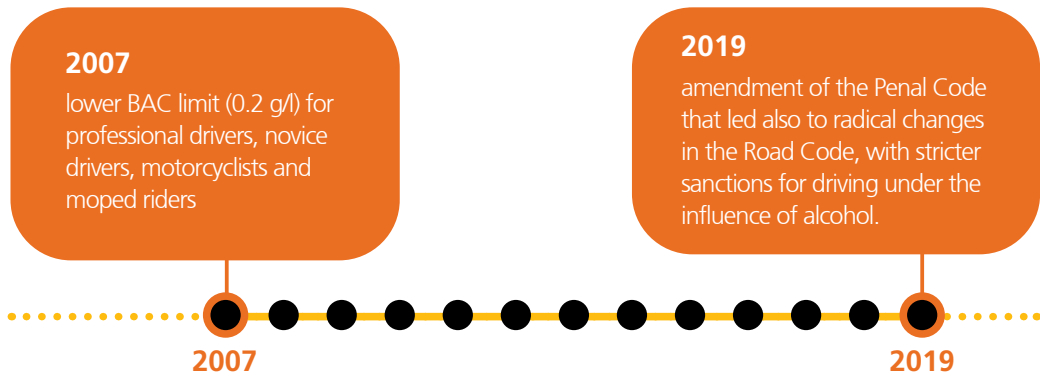
The actual number of alcohol-related deaths in Greece remains unknown due to the lack of systematic testing at collision sites. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority, 36 alcohol-related road deaths were recorded in 2018 out of 700 road deaths. Figures for 2019 were very similar: out of 688 road deaths, 34 were due to alcohol. These data refer to deaths in collisions where a driver was found with a blood alcohol level above the legal limit.

It is estimated that, as in the majority of countries, about 23-25% of fatal road crashes are related to drink-driving. Data on alcohol-related road deaths for the year 2020 are not yet available.



NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of national measures to tackle drink-driving:



The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport is preparing the National Strategic Plan for Road Safety, announced in March 2021 and expected to be published by the end of 2021. The new strategy has adopted the Safe System Approach and the long-term Vision Zero by 2050. In addition, the quantitative targets of the Greek Road Safety Strategy are aligned with the EU targets for reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries in crashes by 50% by 2030.

Several actions are foreseen in the new Road Safety Strategic Plan for tackling drink-driving, including targeted enforcement and awareness campaigns in touristic areas. Alcohol interlocks are under consideration. Concerning traffic violations, the plan foresees a revision of the Traffic Code based on certain principles. One of them is the categorisation of the violations based on the degree of danger and frequency. Special focus will be put on the five most frequent violations that result in serious or fatal injuries, drink-driving included. It is still unknown what specific measures the plan will introduce, but the issue of drink-driving will be addressed and will be set at high priority, according to national experts.



BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

The legal limit for **standard drivers** is:

0.5g/l



The legal limit for **novice drivers**, (less than 2-year experience)

professional drivers,

(heavy goods vehicles, school buses and coaches)

motorcyclists and moped riders is:

0.2g/l

Below is a table with detailed sanctions in force for drink-driving offences, according to the Greek Road Traffic Code.



BAC level (g/L)



Fines in €



Driving ban



Min. prison sentence

0.50 g/l to 0.80 g/l	200 €	-	-
0.80 g/l to 1.10 g/l	700 €	90 days	-
over 1.10 g/l	1,200 €	180 days	2 months
over 1.10 g/l during 2 years after the previous violation	2,000 €	5 years	6 months



ENFORCEMENT

Police do not systematically test road users for alcohol and, unfortunately, the number of police alcohol checks is not available. The Greek traffic police conduct random breath testing but publish only the number of drink-driving offences. There were 31,557 drink-driving offences registered in 2019 and 19,096 in 2020 (39.5% reduction). Only drivers are tested for alcohol.

According to the statistical data for 2019 provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, out of the 18,153 drivers involved in road crashes, 1,954 (10%) were tested by blood alcohol test and 13,389 (73%) were tested by breath alcohol test. However, 2,810 drivers (15%) were not tested at all.

The Hellenic Traffic Police dedicate a week to a specific traffic violation in order to conduct road checks throughout the country, the so called "Violation of the week". Concerning drink-driving, around 2.4 – 4.4% of breath alcohol tests were found to be above the legal BAC limit during the checks that took place from May to July 2020. Around 13-17% of the offenders were found to be above 0.6g/l. However, it should be noted that, as the interest of the Police shifted to the enforcement of the measures for the prevention of COVID-19, the number of checks for this programme was reduced during 2020.

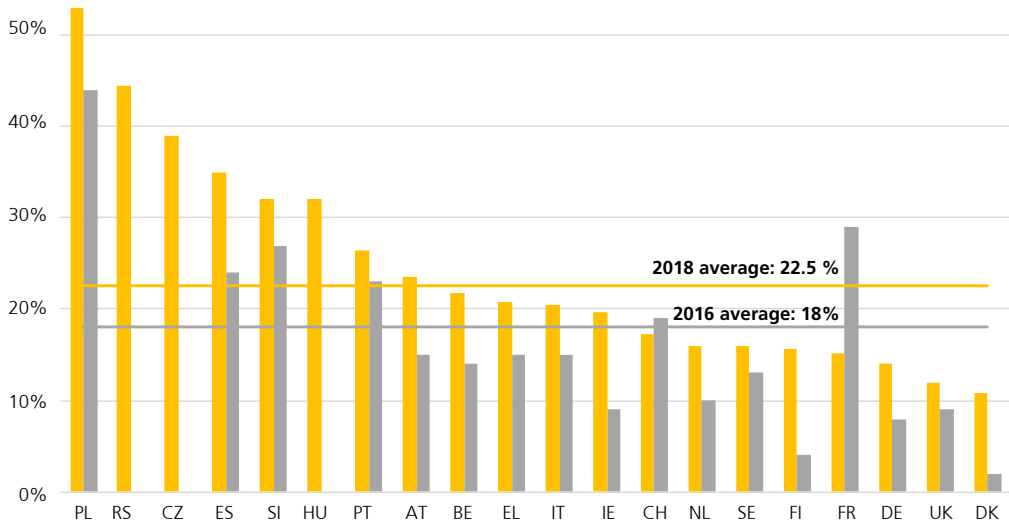


DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

The E-Survey on Road Attitudes published in 2019 showed that the perceived likelihood of a police drink-driving check in Greece was almost 21%, very close to the EU average of 22.5%.

Figure 4. Proportion (%) of car drivers who considered themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving.

Source: ESRA survey (2015 and 2018)



Greece ranks among those EU countries where drink-driving is more frequent. According to the same survey, almost 28% reported that they had driven after having drunk alcohol at least once during the past 30 days and 19% admitted they had driven while being over the legal BAC limit. This prevalence was higher than the average of the 20 European countries included in the study (respectively 20.6% and 13%).





REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

No alcohol Interlock programme is in place in Greece. However, it seems likely that, in the new Road Safety Strategic Plan, alcohol interlock rehabilitation programmes will be taken into consideration while drafting new measures to tackle specific categories of drink-driving offenders, such as recidivists.



CAMPAIGNS



The Road Safety Institute (RSI) “Panos Mylonas”, in collaboration with Greek Traffic Police, have coordinated the European Night Without Accidents (ENWA) campaign for 14 consecutive years in Greece. The campaign is run on the third Saturday of October; an important initiative that aims at raising awareness about drink-driving and promoting the “designated driver” concept. Every year, ENWA brings together hundreds of participating citizens, volunteers, institutional bodies, organisations, companies and an increasing number of cities and night clubs. In 2020, despite the pandemic restrictions, the event received an enormous response from entities all over Greece, with the participation of 41 night clubs in 35 cities. During the campaign, from the preparation till the night of the event, more than one million citizens received the message “Everyone is having fun, one is not drinking... the designated driver”. The message was spread broadly through the help of 500 volunteers of the RSI network who inspired mainly young drivers to become the designated driver and stay sober.



Drink-driving is also a major part of RSI’s Traffic Safety and Mobility Education programmes for secondary school students. RSI’s “Do it Right” programme has been attended by more than 120,000 teenagers during the last 10 years who were trained both theoretically and practically with simulator equipment on the risks of driving under the influence of alcohol. Attendees learnt about how alcohol affects the brain and the driver’s performance, learnt to say “no” when a drunk driver offers to drive you home and were given an opportunity to try on ‘alcohol goggles’, which simulate the effects of being intoxicated.



SOURCES

Figures:

<https://www.statistics.gr/en/home/>

National Road Safety Strategy announcement:

https://www.nrso.ntua.gr/wp-content/uploads/NATIONAL_ACTION_PLAN-eng.pdf

ETSC, 15th PIN Annual Report (2021): <https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/15-PIN-annual-report-FINAL.pdf>

ETSC, Progress in Reducing Drink-Driving and other Alcohol-Related Road Deaths in Europe (2019) https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/reducingdrinkdriving_031219_design_final.pdf

Drivers' perception:

ESRA survey 2018 <https://www.esranet.eu/en/publications/>



European Transport Safety Council

ETSC would like to thank George Yannis and Dimitris Nikolaou from the Technical University of Athens and Vassiliki Danelli-Mylona and Vangelis Makris from the Road Safety Institute Panos-Mylonas for contributing to this report.

The SMART project receives financial support from The Brewers of Europe.