



DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

December 2022



LATVIA



INTRODUCTION

Latvia reduced the number of road deaths by 18% between 2011 and 2021, a reduction well below the EU average of 31%. With 77 road deaths per million population recorded in 2021, Latvia ranks among the least safe countries in Europe in terms of road safety, just ahead of Bulgaria and Romania.

Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2011 and 2021. *National provisional estimates used for 2021, as final figures for 2021 are not yet available at the time this report went to print.

**UK data for 2021 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2021 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2021. 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.

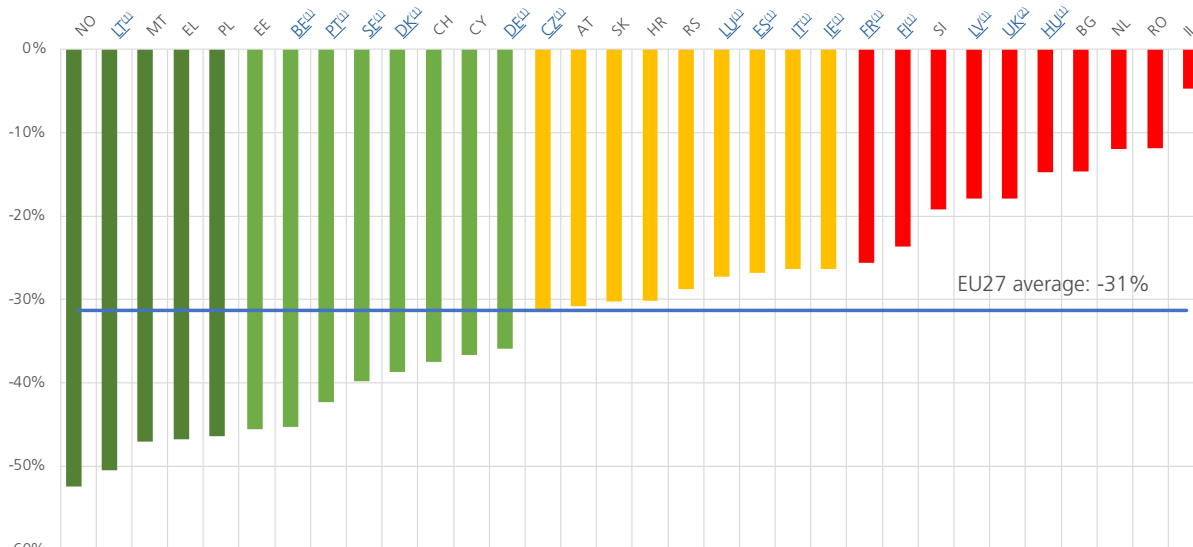
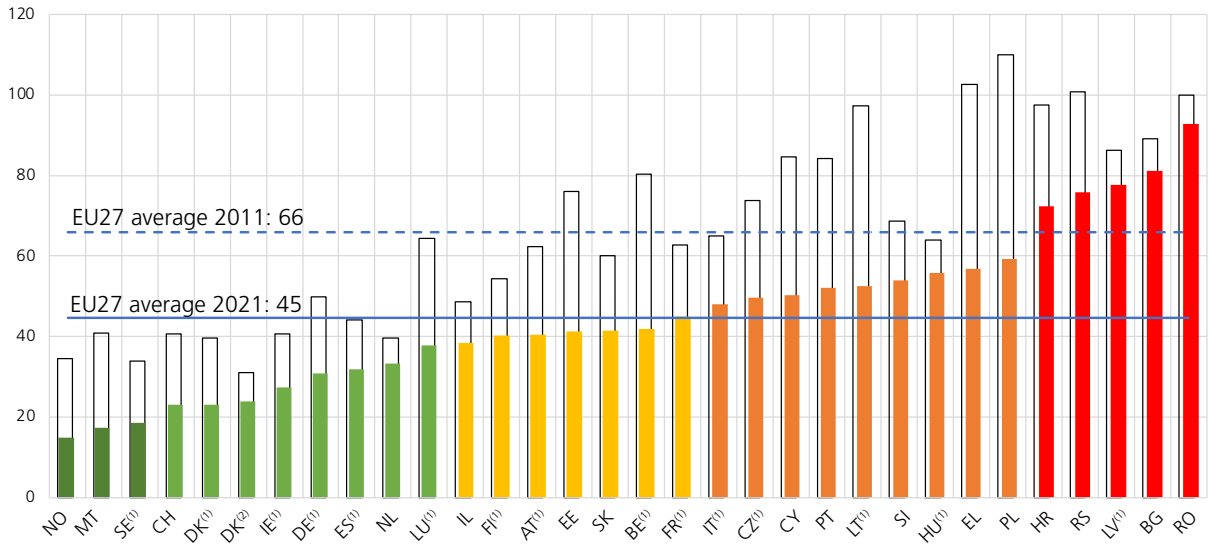


Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2021 (with mortality in 2011 for comparison).

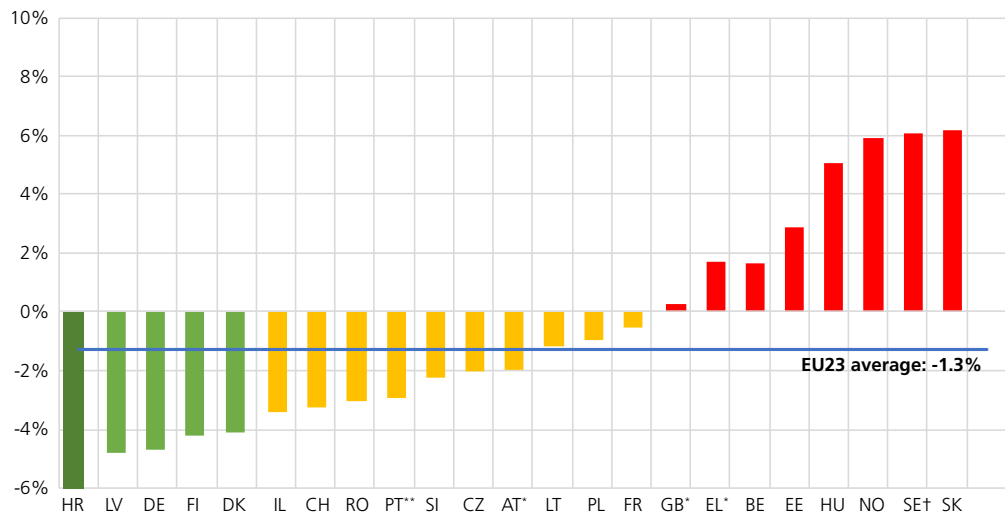
(1) National provisional estimates used for 2021, as final figures for 2021 were not available at the time this report went to print. The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. (2) UK 2021 estimate is based on GB provisional total for the year 2021 and the provisional data for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2021, population data is an estimate for the year 2021.



Between 2010 and 2019, road deaths related to alcohol decreased more quickly in Latvia than the rate for all other road deaths. An exceptional reduction of 65% was recorded between 2019 and 2020, from 25 to 13 road deaths attributed to alcohol, most likely due to COVID-19 restrictions. In 2021 there were 20 fatal road crashes due to alcohol.

Figure 3. Difference between the average annual change in the number of road deaths attributed to alcohol and the corresponding change for other road deaths over the period 2010–2019

(1) PT: Number of road deaths attributed to alcohol are not available, so numbers of positive forensic post-mortem tests of drivers, passengers and pedestrians were used instead.
 (2) ES: data for Catalonia and the Basque Country are not available.
 (3) RS: data collection methodology changed in 2016. Serbia is working to improve alcohol-related fatal collision data collection according to the EU guidelines on the Common Accident and Injury Database (CaDas).
 EU 23: EU 27 Member States minus Ireland, Italy, Malta and the Netherlands due to insufficient data.





NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of national measures to tackle drink-driving:

2004

The Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit was reduced from 0.5 to 0.2g/l for novice drivers (with less than 2 years' experience)

2006

Higher penalties for bus drivers; penalties were introduced for cyclists and moped riders under the influence (above 0.5g/l)

2016

The BAC limit was reduced to 0.2g/l for bus and tram drivers

2005

2005

Administrative arrest (from 5 to 15 days) applied for drink-driving offenders with a BAC limit above 1.0g/l. As from 2020, the measure was suspended, due to several problems in the application of the law.

2021

2021

Drink-driving penalties applied to e-scooters riders (above 0.5g/l)

The Latvian road traffic safety plan was published for the period 2021-2027.

A general target was set, aiming at reducing the number of road deaths by 35% by 2027, and 50% by 2030. Concerning drink-driving, the plan mentions the possibility of introducing a new service that will ensure drivers punished for driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or narcotic (and who are not found to have excessive, harmful use or addiction to alcohol during a preliminary medical examination), may regain their right to drive through attendance of special classes aimed at correcting the person's behaviour.



BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

The legal limit for
all drivers
is:

0.5g/l



The legal limit for
novice drivers
+ bus and tram drivers
is:

0.2g/l

Detailed sanctions are listed in the table below:



BAC level (g/L)



Fine



Driving ban



Penalty Points

BAC level (g/L)	Fine	Driving ban	Penalty Points
From 0.2 to 0.5g/l (only for novice drivers with less than two years' experience)	€ 200 - € 430	Six months	6
From 0.5 to 1.0g/l	€ 430 - € 640	One year	8
From 1.0 to 1.5g/l	€ 850 - € 1400	Three years	8
Above 1.5g/l	€ 1200 - € 2000	Five years	8

If the driver refuses the medical examination in order to determine the level of blood alcohol concentration, a fine of €1200 - €2000 applies, along with eight penalty points and driving license suspension for five years.



ENFORCEMENT

Alcohol tests are done systematically in practice for all active participants in a road collision, either alive or dead. Latvia however does not collect data on the total number of roadside alcohol checks.

In 2020 there were 3 422 drivers tested and found with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) above the legal limit while in 2021 this number rose to 3 908.



REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

No Alcohol Interlock rehabilitation programme is in place in Latvia.

A driver who has been punished for driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or narcotic or other intoxicating substances may re-obtain the right to drive vehicles only after participation in a behavioural correction programme. The program is not specifically an alcohol rehabilitation course but it is offered when eight penalty points have been reached by the offender. If the driver does not take the program within 6 months, two penalty points are added. The content of the program depends on how the eight point level has been reached. Driving under the influence is the fastest way to reach eight points. The duration of the course is ten hours, delivered as 2.5 hours per week, therefore four weeks at least are needed.



CAMPAIGNS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpOOKpEH72A&t=20s>

Traditionally in Latvia drink-driving campaigns are launched at the beginning of summer due to midsummer festivals, associated with higher beer and alcohol consumption in general, as well as during the Christmas holidays.

One of the latest campaigns was launched in June 2022 and is called "Nebrauc reibumā - dārgs prieks" (Expensive joy – the real cost of drink-driving). The campaign website shows, in an interactive way, the economic and social consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Earlier in 2020, the Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD) and the national police carried out another national campaign on drink-driving called "Angry but alive" to discourage people from driving under the influence through a series of videos published on different media channels.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrCeMcOMAHE>



SOURCES

National Road Safety Strategy:

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640-par-celu-satiksmes-drosibas-planu-2021-2027-gadam>

Sanctions:

<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/45467-road-traffic-law>

ETSC, 16th PIN Annual Report (2022):

https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/16-PIN-annual-report_FINAL_WEB_1506_2.pdf

ETSC, How traffic law enforcement can contribute to safer roads (2022):

https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/ETSC_PINFLASH42_v2TH_JC_FINAL_corrected-060522.pdf

Campaigns:

<https://dargsprieks.lv/>

<https://www.csdd.lv/socialas-kampanas/dusmigs-toties-dzivs-2020>