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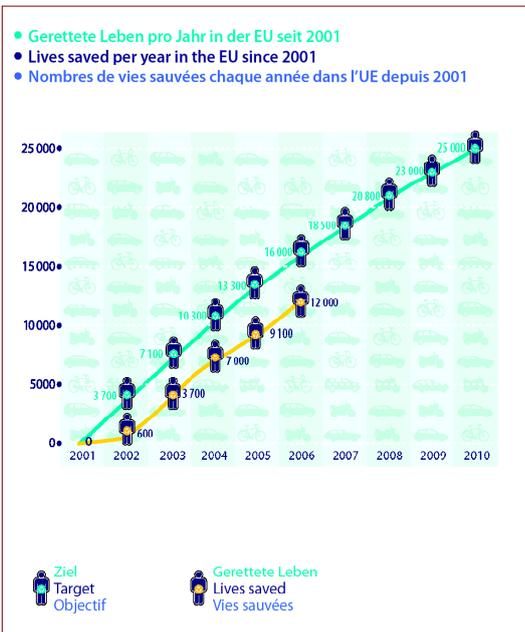
Encouraging trends

Two reports show encouraging trends this month; in the realm of reducing drink driving fatalities throughout Europe and a reduction in drinking trends among 11 to 15 year olds in the UK.

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) has released the latest figures covering 2001 to 2007 regarding drink drive related deaths and overall fatalities in the EU.

ETSC estimates 12,000 lives have been saved since 2001 due to better safety campaigns and enforcement, this is below their goal of 16,000 within the time frame, but represents a 22% fall in road fatalities across Europe. Their objective is to save 25,000 lives by 2010.

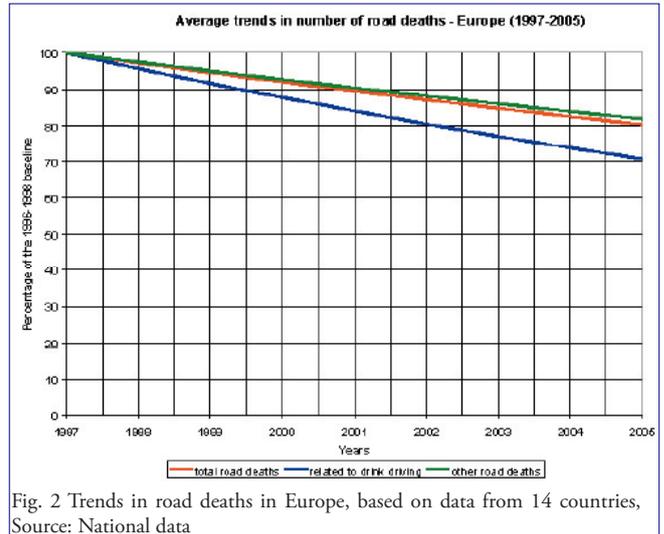
Total crash fatalities figures for 2006 place the UK & Sweden at 56 and 49 fatalities per million inhabitants (3rd and 4th lowest deaths) compared to 86 per million as a European average with the worst record in Lithuania at 223 deaths per million (see below).



The number of lives saved per country between 2001 and 2006 were France: 3500, the UK: 300 and Sweden: 100, this is because the UK and Sweden have good records and enforcement already (209 road deaths 2005 with 71 drink drive deaths in Sweden, UK 3201 fatalities with 560 drink drive deaths, compared with 5318 fatalities in France and 1532 drink drive related deaths for example - see table 1).

The percentage of all fatalities aged between 18 and 25 are Sweden: 19%, EU: 21%, UK: 26% and Ireland: 30%.

Using the baseline of 1996 as the starting point, deaths from drink drive across Europe have fallen by 30%.



The Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Poland have the lowest proportions of drink drive deaths as a percentage of total deaths on the road, although Germany, Italy and Poland have extremely high total road deaths in comparison with their populations and with other European countries.

Country	Total road traffic deaths	Deaths in crashes related to drink driving	Proportion of drink driving deaths in total deaths
Austria	768	46	6.0
Belgium	1089	n/a	n/a
Cyprus	102	23	22.5
Czech Republic	1286	71	5.5
Denmark	331	76	23.0
Estonia	169	48	28.4
Finland	379	89	23.5
France	5318	1532	28.8
Germany*	7863	399	5.1
Greece	1658	177	10.7
Hungary	1278	112	8.8
Ireland (2003)**	301	85	28.2
Italy (2004)**	5082	93	1.8
Latvia	442	96	21.7
Lithuania	760	90	11.8
Luxembourg	46	0	0.0
Malta	17	n/a	n/a
Netherlands	817	115	14.0
Norway**	202	50	24.7
Poland	5444	458	8.4
Portugal	1247	n/a	n/a
Slovakia	560	67	12.0
Slovenia	258	83	32.2
Spain (2004)***	2861	398	13.9
Sweden***	209	71	34.0
Switzerland	409	79	19.3
Great Britain	3201	560	17.5

Countries included in the ranking
 * Number of drivers of motor vehicles involved in fatal accidents.
 ** Number of fatal crashes. The figure for Norway refers to the suspected use of both alcohol or drugs.
 *** Number of killed drivers.
 Table 1. Proportion of drink driving deaths in the total of traffic deaths, based on each country's own procedure (2005). These values cannot be compared between countries. Source: National data

The authors of the report cite the following problems with comparisons between countries

The extracts below are taken from the report:

‘Comparison between Countries

This ranking uses as a starting point developments over time in deaths resulting from drink driving crashes. There are however large differences in the way in which countries define and record a ‘crash related to drink driving’. In Great Britain, these are crashes in which at least one driver or rider involved tested positive in a breath or blood test or refused to give a breath test specimen when requested to do so by the police. In Switzerland, drink driving crashes are those for which police reports show that drink driving was involved, based on breath test results.

In Hungary, the driver responsible for the crash must have tested positive. In France, Great Britain and the Netherlands numbers of drink driving crashes and victims are estimated using different methods of calculation.

Moreover, the definition of ‘impaired’ is different for each country. It ranges from 0.1g/l in our data from Sweden over 0.2g/l in Hungary and Denmark and 0.3g/l in Germany (in accidents) to 0.8g/l in Great Britain. A comparison of countries based on numbers of deaths from drink driving crashes is therefore impossible at this moment.

An incomplete picture

From 7 out of 27 countries, insufficient data, in some cases no data, are available at this point to measure from year to year the changes in drink driving deaths. These countries are Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Sweden.

In these countries, the numbers of deaths attributed to drink driving are not usually published, and where numbers are shown in Table 1 they are available only for 2005. For Cyprus and Luxembourg the numbers of drink driving deaths are available for the relevant years but cannot be used in this ranking because the numbers are too small, and therefore too variable, for the percentage changes to be estimated reliably.

In Germany and Spain, numbers of drink driving deaths are not available in official statistics. For these countries we used in place of the number of deaths the number of drivers involved in fatal accidents (Germany) and the number of drivers killed in fatal accidents (Spain).

But also in many of the countries included in the ranking, there are serious gaps in the reporting of crashes related to drink driving.

The extent to which testing is done and results re known varies considerably among countries.

While authorities in Latvia and Poland say they have test results for all drivers involved in fatal crashes, results are available for all drivers involved in fatal crashes in about 3/4 of cases in France, Hungary, Denmark and Slovenia, and in about 1/4 of fatal crashes in the Netherlands. Authorities in Austria, Germany and Switzerland do not actually know how many drivers involved in fatal accidents have been tested as only positive test results are retained.

The reasons for this lack of knowledge are manifold, including legal conditions. In Spain, only results of autopsies are used in the statistics. In Sweden, results of autopsies do not appear in the statistics. In the Netherlands and Germany, drivers killed on the spot in single vehicle accidents are not generally tested as they are beyond legal reach. In Austria, Estonia, Germany and Switzerland, testing will only occur when police suspect the presence of alcohol’.

This means that accident reports in many countries fail to give a realistic picture of the drink driving situation, and numbers of deaths from drink driving related crashes cannot be taken at face value (see table 1).

In Ireland where no official data on numbers of drink driving crashes are available, but an in-depth study of 2003 accident reports found that drink driving was a factor in 28% of all fatal crashes.

France, Great Britain and the Netherlands publish yearly estimates of crashes and casualties linked to drink driving. These estimated numbers of deaths from drink driving accidents are in the order of 14% (Netherlands), 17.5% (Great Britain) or 29% (France) of all road traffic deaths in 2005.’

The Report suggests a European standard blood alcohol limit for drivers of 0.5g/l and 0.2g/l for novice and truck drivers.

To view the full report please visit http://www.etsc.be/documents/copy_of_copy_of_PIN%20Flash%205.pdf