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Monitoring Road Safety Progress in the EU - Finland

Accompanying the document

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Report on the Implementation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework at the Mid-
Point**

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1. Summary

In 2024, Finland was **among the best performing countries** in the EU with 32 fatalities per million inhabitants, while the EU average was 45. Compared to 2019, a decrease of 15% in road fatalities was achieved. In 2023, 872 people were seriously injured, which is only slightly lower than the respective figure in 2019.

Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Finland showed a high proportion of **car occupants** and fatalities on **roads outside urban areas**. Also, the share of serious injuries on urban roads is higher than the respective share of fatalities.

In the Finnish Traffic Safety Strategy 2022-2026, the **targets of halving the numbers of road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030** compared to 2020 have been set. These interim goals also guide the implementation of the traffic safety strategy and the traffic safety work towards close to zero road deaths by 2050 (Vision Zero).

In the action plan included in the traffic safety strategy 2022-2026, a total of **103 traffic safety measures** have been defined. The measures are grouped under seven strategic guidelines, and each has a responsible party. 67 out of the 103 traffic safety measures concern road safety. An impact assessment of some of the interventions of the action plan was carried out during the preparation of the Strategy.

Based on the latest available data, Finland has made reasonable progress and is broadly **on track to meet the 2030 target of halving the number of road fatalities**.

Regarding the progress of the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the national strategy for the period 2022-2024, there is **smooth implementation flow without any particular gaps** being reported. Nearly all measures planned for the examined period are on track. A few are on hold, i.e. speed limit guidelines and responsibility models for transport companies.

According to the self-reported assessment, among the main **challenges** in implementing the traffic safety strategy is the lack of special funding for the implementation of the actions included in the strategy. Additionally, the lack of clear interim targets and indicators has been identified as a challenge.

Finally, the implementation progress of the foreseen actions appears to be **well on track in Finland**, which is also partially reflected in the progress made in terms of road safety outcomes. Finland is making reasonably good progress towards meeting the 2030 fatality target. For serious injuries, little progress has been achieved. Possible actions include:

- setting up a dedicated road safety fund to accelerate the implementation of specific actions,
- exploring any other relevant activities, with special emphasis on those preventing serious injuries.

2. Road Safety Strategy and Measures

2.1 Road Safety Strategy

The **Finnish Traffic Safety Strategy 2022-2026**, including an Action Plan, was adopted by Finland's Ministry of Transport and Communications, with contributions from various government agencies, experts, and stakeholders. This strategy, published in 2022, outlines Finland's objectives for enhancing road safety over the coming years.

This is the first time that the Traffic Safety Strategy includes all modes of transport: road, rail, water and air traffic. According to the **Vision Zero of the Strategy**, by 2050 nobody shall die or be seriously injured in traffic, regardless of the mode of transport.

Table 10.1: National traffic safety strategy

Finland	
Timeframe	2022-2026
Lead Authority	Ministry of transport and communication
Link	https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163951/LVM_2022_3.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

2.2 Road Safety Governance

The Traffic Safety Strategy has been prepared through extensive, cross-sectoral stakeholder cooperation. The steering group and working groups have included representatives from key ministries, authorities, municipalities, associations, organizations, and other stakeholders from the perspective of traffic safety.

The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, Statistics Finland, Police, Liikenneturva (Finnish Road Safety Council), the Finnish Crash Data Institute (OTI) and the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency are responsible for the **monitoring of road safety developments** in the country.

2.3 Main Safety Issues

Based on the progress achieved and the future challenges, a **series of challenges** have been highlighted in the Traffic Safety Strategy of Finland¹:

- Large share of **killed passenger car occupants** in road crashes (58% during the period 2016–2020).
- **Young drivers** are over-represented in crashes, and between 2016 and 2020, 18% of road traffic fatalities were 15–24-year-olds.
 - Serious crashes among young people are characterized by speeding and, as a result, running off the road.
 - There are deficiencies in the use of safety equipment.
 - Crashes often involve the abuse of alcohol and other substances.

¹ Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland. (2022). Road Safety Strategy 2022. Available at: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163951/LVM_2022_3.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

- The **elderly** are also over-represented in serious road traffic crashes due to the population structure in Finland.
- A high share of road traffic deaths occurs on **highways and trunk roads (55%)**.
- The number of drink-driving crashes has decreased in recent years, but the number of **crashes related to the use of drugs or mixed substances** has increased.

2.4 Road Safety Targets

Following Finland's commitment in the Valletta Declaration in 2017, the following targets have been set in the Finnish Road Safety Strategy:

- By 2030, a **50% reduction in fatalities** compared to 2020.
- By 2030, a **50% reduction in serious injuries** compared to 2020.

These interim goals also guide the implementation of the traffic safety strategy and the traffic safety work towards the **Vision Zero of 2050**.

2.5 Road Safety Measures

A total of **103 traffic safety measures** are included in the action plan, which is part of the traffic safety strategy of Finland. The measures are grouped under seven strategic guidelines, and each has a responsible party. 67 out of 103 traffic safety measures concern road safety.

Some of the measures were prioritised and a descriptive impact assessment is available for each measure². Quantified impact estimates are available for specific groups of measures for the entire strategy period.

Table 10.2: Traffic safety strategic guidelines and number of measures

Strategic Guidelines	Measures
1. Road safety is a matter for society as a whole	8
2. Decision-making must be based on information	15
3. The transport skills of the different actors need to be improved	19
4. Attitudes in transport need to change	18
5. The transport system and all its components must be safe	18
6. Technological progress brings safety	8
7. Legislation must promote safety	17
Total	103

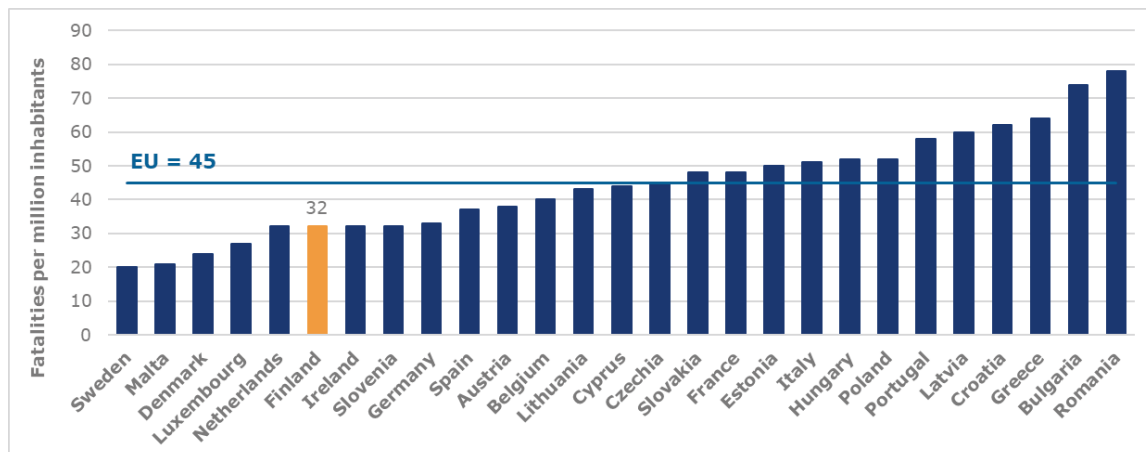
² Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland. (2022). Road Safety Strategy 2022. Available at: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163951/LVM_2022_3.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

3. Road Safety Progress

3.1 Road Safety Outcomes

Based on data for 2024, Finland ranked **6th out of the 27 EU countries** in terms of the lowest numbers of fatalities per million inhabitants. In fact, 32 road fatalities per million inhabitants were recorded that year, which is well below the EU average (45).

Figure 10.1 Mortality rates by country, 2024



Sources: CARE database on road crashes; population data from Eurostat (online data code [demo_pjan](#)).

In 2024, the number of fatalities decreased by 15% compared to 2019³ while the number of serious injuries decreased by 2.5% in 2023 compared to 2019.

³ For all Member States, 2019 has been used as the baseline year for the monitoring of 2030 targets in this report, which is used at EU level. Finland has set 2020 as the baseline year.

Figure 10.2 Road fatalities and target 2030
(Source CARE database)

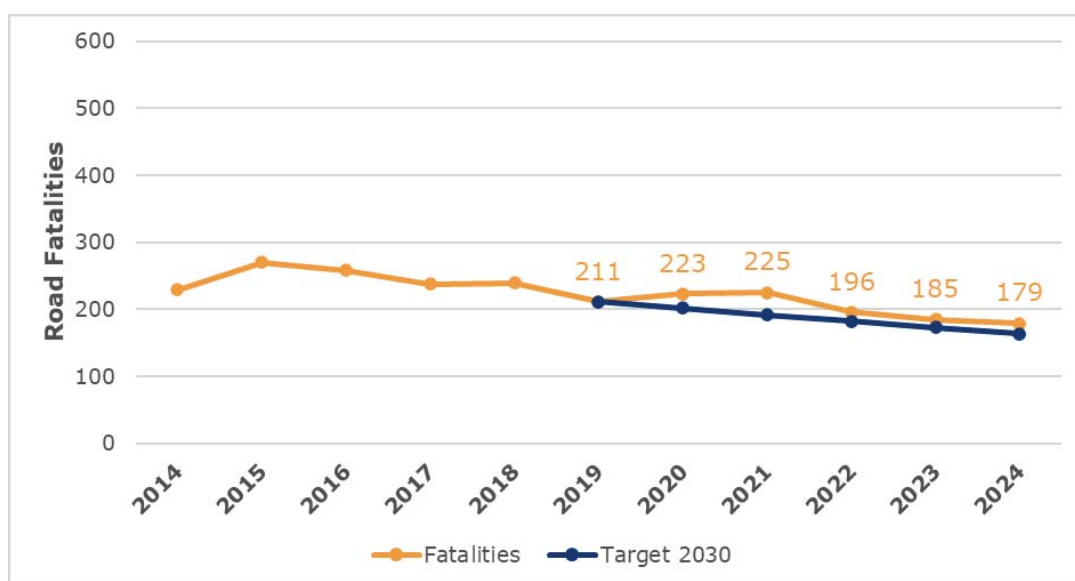
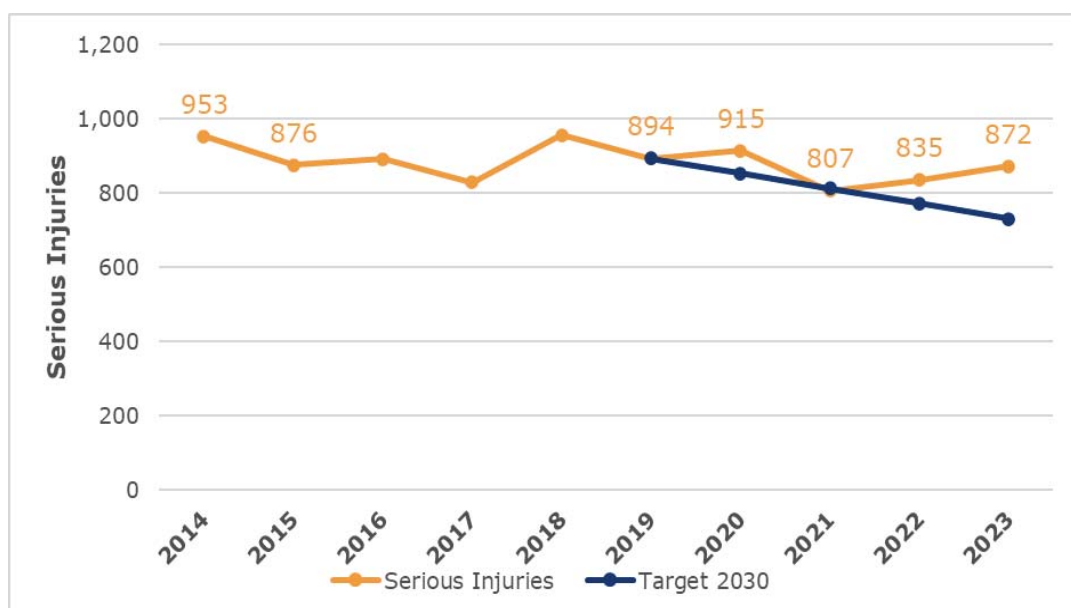


Figure 10.3 Serious road injuries
(Source: Statistics Finland)⁴



Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Finland showed a high proportion of **car occupants and fatalities on roads outside urban areas**⁵. In fact, 51% of killed road users were car occupants in 2023 and 66% of fatalities occurred outside urban areas, on non-motorway roads. This is mainly attributed to the fact that Finland is a sparsely populated country compared to most EU countries. The proportion of trips by car is bigger than in other

⁴ National data on serious injuries concern both police data and hospital data. These data differ from those in the CARE database, where only police data are available.

⁵ European Commission (2023), Country Profile Finland. Road Safety Observatory. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General for Transport.

countries, when looking at household travel surveys. The share of serious injuries occurred on urban roads is higher than the respective share of fatalities.

An overview of the evolution of road fatalities for the years 2019 and 2023 (year with the latest available detailed crash data) is provided below for specific types of roads, crashes and road users.

The number of **total fatalities decreased by 12%** in 2023 compared to 2019. The highest decrease was recorded in fatalities in multi-vehicle crashes (33%). On the other hand, the number of pedestrian fatalities and fatalities inside urban areas increased considerably over this period.

Table 10.3: Evolution of road fatalities, 2019-2023

Fatalities	2019	2023	% in 2023	% change 2019-2023
Total road fatalities	211	185	-	-12%
Inside urban areas	36	60	32%	+67%
Outside urban areas	169	123	66%	-27%
Motorways	6	2	1%	-
Single vehicle crashes	73	77	42%	-5%
Multi vehicle crashes	126	85	46%	-33%
Car occupants	123	95	51%	-23%
PTW riders	28	21	11%	-25%
Cyclists	23	20	11%	-13%
Pedestrians	15	23	12%	+53%

3.2 Road Safety Performance Indicators

The use of seat-belts is higher in Finland compared to the EU average, while the rate of self-reported drink-driving is substantially lower than the EU average. The average age of the passenger car fleet in Finland is a bit higher than the EU average.

Table 10.5: Road Safety Performance Indicators, 2022 – 2025 (Source: ERSO, Country Profiles)

	Finland		EU	
	2022	2025	2022	2025
Speeding⁶				
% of passenger cars travelling within speed limits ^a				
Motorways	45.0	59.0	-	-
Rural Roads	43.0	35.0	-	-
Urban Roads	42.0	58.0	-	-
Seat belt & CRS use rates (%) ^{a,b}				
Front	96.0	-	93.1	92.4
Rear	89.0	-	75.3	69.9
Child restraint systems (roadside observations)	-	-	67.0	83.3
Child restraint systems (in-vehicle inspections)	/	/	-	-
Helmet use rates (%) ^a				
PTW driver	-	-	97.0	97.6
PTW passenger	-	-	94.4	97.0
Cyclist	-	70.3	37.8	34.5
DUI of Alcohol^c (self-reported)				
% of car drivers who have driven at least once in the last 30 days over the legal limit	6.1	-	11.8	11.8
Driver Distraction ^a				
% of drivers not using hand-held mobile device/phone while driving	98.3	-	94.8	94.5
Vehicle Safety				
% of new passenger cars rated with 4 EuroNCAP stars and above ^a	89.5	89.0	83.6	82.7
Average age of passenger car fleet (years) ^d	13.1	13.2	12.3	12.5

Sources: ^a Baseline and Trendline projects, ^b ETSC (2022), ^c ESRA3 project (2024), ^d ACEA (2024, 2025), Notes: *2025 data only for weekdays

4. Monitoring Road Safety Strategy Implementation

4.1 Implementation Progress

Road Safety Management

Based on the self-reported assessment, all measures related to this pillar are on track.

⁶ An EU average is not available for speeding, due to different legal speed limits among countries, which does not allow for a straightforward comparison.

Table 10.6: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to road safety management

B1	Road Safety Management	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	National road safety authority	-	on track
2	National road safety budget	-	-
3	Road safety legislation	-	on track
4	National road safety observatory	-	on track

Concerning the area of **national road safety authority**, in Finland, the Ministry of Transport has only one part of the lead agency's tasks and resources. Various authorities cooperate closely, with different ministries being represented in each other's working groups related to road safety. While there is good cooperation between stakeholders, there is still room for further development.

In the road safety strategy of Finland, a **national road safety budget is not considered**. Road improvement projects are prioritized according to the goals set in the National Transport System Plan.

Concerning the road safety legislation area, **many legislative projects have been carried out** lately or are in progress.

In Finland, there is no single responsible body for road safety statistics, and there are no plans to create one. Several organisations are involved in the data collection and analysis. Based on the self-reported assessment, **most actions for improving road safety statistics are in progress or completed**. The participation in the Trendline project and the collection of Key Performance Indicators is among these actions.

Safe Road User Behaviour

In relation to the pillar of **Safe Road User Behaviour**, all measures are on track.

Table 10.7: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to road user behaviour

B2	Safe Road User Behaviour	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	Enforcement	-	on track
2	Education	-	on track
3	New drivers training	-	on track
4	Communication campaigns	-	on track
5	Measures for vulnerable road users	-	on track
6	Measures for professional drivers	-	on track

Specifically, most of the actions related to the **enforcement** are in progress or completed. A new programme for police traffic enforcement for 2021–2030 has been prepared. Also, most of the **education** related actions are in progress. It is noted that Finland has a strong foundation for road safety education in schools, but its implementation varies by region and school.

Continuous development, consideration of new modes of transport, and close cooperation between different stakeholders are key to enhancing road safety education.

Concerning the **training of novice drivers**, special attention has been given to bicycle traffic in both theoretical and practical driving training.

Additionally, there is a continuous **official and organizational communication** for road safety issues.

Regarding the **vulnerable road users**, actions related to lowering speed limits in areas with high traffic volumes of cyclists and pedestrians and around schools and day-care centres are in progress. Also, actions related to safety of micromobility are on track.

In terms of fitness to drive, Finnish doctors will know in future when they meet a patient what kind of driving licence he/she has and if he/she has a driving disqualification.

Finally, the **legislation on the transport of dangerous goods** has been reformed.

Safe Speeds

Regarding the **Safe Speeds** pillar, all measures are on track.

Table 10.8: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe speeds

B3	Safe Speeds	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	Update of speed limits	-	on hold
2	Enforcing speed limits	-	on track
3	Campaigns on speeding	-	not applicable
4	Monitoring speeding	-	on track

Speed limits have been lowered for a long time in many downtown areas and streets, with high shares of pedestrians and cyclists. Also, the update of the guidelines on speed limits on public roads is on hold, since after a comment round in 2021, there was a strong opposition against lowering the 100 km/h speed limits to 80km/h in some part of road network.

In terms of **enforcement**, the police carry out daily speed checks in different parts of Finland. The use of automatic speed cameras is lower than in 2017, due to problems in the speed ticket process.

Also, for Finland, updating and **monitoring speeds** and speed limits is a continuous process.

Safe Roads

Regarding the **Safe Roads** pillar, based on the self-reported assessment all related measures are on track.

Table 10.9: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe roads

B4	Safe Roads	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	City mobility & safety plans	-	on track
2	Urban infrastructure for VRUs	-	on track
3	Rural roads safety interventions	-	not applicable
4	Motorways safety management	-	not applicable
5	Road design standards	-	on track
6	Road safety audit and inspection	-	on track

In particular, legislation is being prepared on the powers of cities to better manage **micromobility**.

Concerning **urban infrastructure for VRUs**, measures are implemented annually as part of the basic road maintenance and development projects. 5-30 million euros are distributed from the state to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure annually.

Concerning **road safety designs**, Finland starts from a high level, aiming to maintain and ensure the required quality level throughout the country.

In relation to road safety audits and inspections, the implementation of **network-wide road safety assessment** was completed in 2024⁷.

Safe Vehicles

In relation to the pillar of **Safe Vehicles**, the measures of the national traffic safety strategy concerns only the automation preparation, which is on track.

Table 10.10: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe vehicles

B5	Safe Vehicles	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	Fleet renewal	-	not applicable
2	Promotion of ADAS	-	not applicable
3	Technical vehicle inspection	-	not applicable
4	Automation preparation	-	on track

So far, a memorandum proposing **legislative amendments related to automation preparation** is currently under consultation.

⁷More info at: <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/189152> and <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/189153>

Post Crash Care

The current Finnish strategy does not contain any measures related to the pillar of **Post-Crash Care**.

Table 10.11: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to post crash care

B6	Post Crash Care	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2021-2024)
1	Reduce EMS reaction time	-	not applicable
2	Support people injured	-	not applicable

4.2 Gaps

According to the self-reported assessment, among the main challenges in implementing the traffic safety strategy is the **lack of special funding** for the implementation of the actions included in the strategy. Most of the actions are planned to be implemented with current resources of the responsibility parties and by retargeting activities. Additionally, the lack of clear interim targets and indicators has been identified as a challenge.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the Finnish Traffic Safety Strategy 2022-2026, the **targets of halving the numbers of road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 compared to 2020** have been set. These interim goals guide the traffic safety work towards the zero vision of 2050. In the action plan included in the traffic safety strategy 2022-2026, 103 traffic safety measures have been defined, grouped under seven strategic guidelines. Out of these traffic safety measures, 67 concern road safety.

In 2024, Finland was **among the best performing countries** in the European Union in terms of fatality rates (6th with the lowest fatality rate). Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Finland showed a high proportion of car occupants and fatalities on roads outside urban areas.

Based on preliminary data, between 2019 and 2024, a decrease of 15% in road fatalities was recorded. The number of serious injuries decreased by 3% over the period 2019-2023. Therefore, Finland is close to being **on track to meet the 2030 target of halving the number of fatalities** but needs further efforts to meet the target of a 50% reduction in serious injuries.

It is noted that only the numbers of fatalities inside urban areas and pedestrian fatalities increased over the period 2019-2023.

Regarding the progress of the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the national strategy for the period 2022-2024, there is a **smooth implementation flow**. All planned measures are well on track, which is also partially reflected in the progress made in terms of road safety outcomes (fatalities). Finland is making good progress towards meeting the 2030 fatality target, though is not quite on track. For serious injuries, progress has been slow. Possible actions include:

- setting a dedicated road safety fund to accelerate the implementation of specific actions,
- exploring any other relevant activities, with special emphasis on those preventing serious injuries.