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Monitoring Road Safety Progress in the EU - Latvia

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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Latvia

1. Summary

In 2024, Latvia was substantially above the EU average (45), with **60 road fatalities per million inhabitants**. Compared to 2019, a decrease of 15% in road fatalities was achieved.

Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Latvia showed a high proportion of pedestrians and fatalities occurred on roads outside urban areas. Also, the total number of injured cyclists has increased over the last years, while inappropriate speed remains the main cause for fatal crashes.

In the **Road Traffic Safety Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027**, the **targets of halving the numbers of road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030** compared to 2020 have been set. This means that road fatalities and serious injuries should be reduced by 35% in 2027. The plan includes four additional targets for the reduction of fatalities, aiming to address the main road safety issues identified in the country (i.e. vulnerable road users, passenger car occupants, etc.). Also, **quantitative targets for 8 road safety performance indicators** have been set (speed, use of protective equipment, drink driving, driver distraction, vehicle safety, infrastructure, post-crash care) for 2027 and 2030.

The Latvian Road Traffic Safety Plan, based on the progress of the previous years, has defined a set of **33 road safety measures divided in three lines of action**. The Plan also determines the responsible authorities and the deadlines for the implementation of the lines of action, as well as the necessary financing.

Based on the latest available data for 2024, **Latvia is making reasonably good progress but is currently not on track to reach the 2030 target of halving the number of fatalities**, with a 15% decrease since 2019. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of serious injuries fell by 16%.

Regarding progress in the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the road traffic safety action plan for the period 2021-2024, there is a **smooth implementation flow, with some delays being reported in some areas**, attributed mainly to lack of funding. Latvia starts from a medium level in most examined road safety areas. Based on the self-reported assessment, the baseline is assessed as medium in 16 out of the 26 road safety areas and low in 8 areas. The baseline is assessed as high in the areas related to communication campaigns.

In 2024, the **majority of the planned measures are on track**. Only the measures related to communication campaigns have been completed, while in 6 areas, the implementation of the measures has been delayed. The pillars of safe road user behaviour and safe speeds are more advanced, while in the pillars of vehicle safety post-crash care, there are more delays.

Latvia has proceeded to its own assessment of the implementation progress of the Plan up to 2025 and its impact on road safety. The informative report "**Mid-term Impact Assessment of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2021-2027**", which is currently under review from the Cabinet of Ministers, analyses the main lines of action set out in the Plan and the results of their implementation. In this report, it is recognised that the 2027 targets may not be met with the existing measures and, therefore, a series of new measures are proposed to be implemented.

Among the **best practices** are the successful communication campaigns, especially those against drink-driving for the last ten years, although the problem of drunk driving also remains and the challenges in solving it are different - wider police control, application of penalties, introduction of alcolocks, etc. Also, legislation for the safety of e-scooters has been introduced in the Latvian Road Traffic Law.

The main gap reported for the proper implementation of some measures of the strategic plan is the **lack of the necessary funding** from the state budget. While there is some funding from the Road Traffic Safety Council (RTSC), the available amount is limited. This mainly affects measures, such as safety interventions on rural roads, as well as the lack of human resources in traffic police. Furthermore, the reluctance to take unpopular but important road safety decisions at political level and the lack of support from society are also among the challenges to be overcome, e.g., driving above the speed limit has a high tolerance.

Progress in the implementation of the foreseen actions appears to be **broadly well on track, which is also reflected in the evolution of the number of fatalities**, with Latvia making reasonably good progress albeit not currently on track to meet the 2030 target. However, the road safety performance of Latvia is still low, compared to the other EU countries. Based on the self-reported assessment, funding for road safety is not adequate so far, as well as a lack of political will to date to make unpopular road safety decisions (on penalties, stricter regulations). Therefore, new additional measures have been prepared in the report Mid-term Impact Assessment of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2021-2027, to complement the existing plan to help move towards achieving the plan's goals and better performance.

2. Road Safety Strategy and Measures

2.1. Road Safety Strategy

The **Road Traffic Safety Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027** was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on October 6, 2021, through Order No. 712.

The Latvian Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027 has been developed to achieve the policy results brought forward in the **EU policy planning documents**, including the policy planning document EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 - Next Steps Towards "Vision Zero", i.e. to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries from road traffic accidents by 50 % by 2030 in comparison to 2020.

Table 17.1: National road safety strategy

Latvia	
Timeframe	2021-2027
Lead Authority	Ministry of Transport
Link	https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640

2.2. Road Safety Governance

The Ministry of Transport is responsible for the **formulation of the national road safety strategy**.

Also, Road Traffic Safety Council (The Council approved by the Government consists of governmental/state administration and municipal administration bodies and representatives of NGOs) is responsible for the **monitoring of road safety developments** in the country.

2.3. Main Safety Issues

The study "Evaluation of the Impact of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2017-2020" was used in the development of the current Plan, outlining the priority issues and main directions of action. Based on the results of the period 2010-2020 compared to the previous targets, the following main issues arise¹:

- **Safety of Vulnerable Road Users:** pedestrians account for 23.5% of killed and seriously injured persons; cyclists for 16% and powered two-wheelers for about 10%.
- **Driving under the influence of alcohol among PTWs:** 4.7% of motorcycle riders, 20.0% of quadricycle drivers and 22.5% of moped riders involved in injury crashes were under the influence of alcohol in 2019.
- The **main causes of crashes with fatalities** during the period 2014-2019 were “selection of inappropriate speed”, “improper safety assurance before manoeuvring” and “presence of a pedestrian on the carriageway”.
- **“Selection of inappropriate speed”** was the cause for at least 13.9% of crashes with serious injuries and 20.7% of crashes with fatalities.

2.4. Road Safety Targets

In compliance with the EU road safety targets for the decade 2021-2030, Latvia adopts the targets of **halving road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030** compared to 2020. This means a **35% reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2027**. Targets for road casualties as well as for road safety performance indicators have been set in the Latvian Action Plan².

Table 17.2: Targets for road crash casualties

	Baseline (2020)	2027 (% change)	2030 (% change)
1. Killed persons	139	-35%	-50%
2. Seriously injured persons	491	-35%	-50%
3. Killed VRUs	69	-35%	-50%
4. Killed passenger car occupants	64	-35%	-50%
5. Injured children	394	-35%	-50%
6. Crash severity (Fatalities/ 100 crashes with injury)	4.1	-35%	-50%

Table 17.3: Targets for road safety performance indicators

¹ Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027, available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640>

² Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027, available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640>

(Baseline year = 2020)

	2027 (% change)	2030 (% change)
1. % of vehicles not observing the permitted speed limits	-35%	-50%
2. % of vehicle occupants not using seatbelts and CRS	-35%	-50%
3. % of PTWs not using a helmet	-35%	-50%
4. % of drivers driving with BAC over the legal limit	-35%	-50%
5. % of drivers using mobile devices while driving	-35%	-50%
6. % of new vehicles meeting the highest safety requirements	+35%	+50%
7. % of roads meeting the highest safety requirements	+35%	+50%
8. EMS response time	-35%	-50%

2.5. Road Safety Measures

A total of **33 road safety measures** divided in **three lines of action** are included in the road safety strategic plan of Latvia for the period 2021-2027³. The Plan also determines the responsible authorities and the deadlines for the implementation of lines of action, as well as the necessary financing. In addition, each measure is linked to specific targets for road crash casualties and performance indicators.

Table 17.4: Road safety measures and lines of action

Lines of Action	Measures
1. Safe road user	12
2. Safe vehicle	11
3. Safe environment	10
Total	33

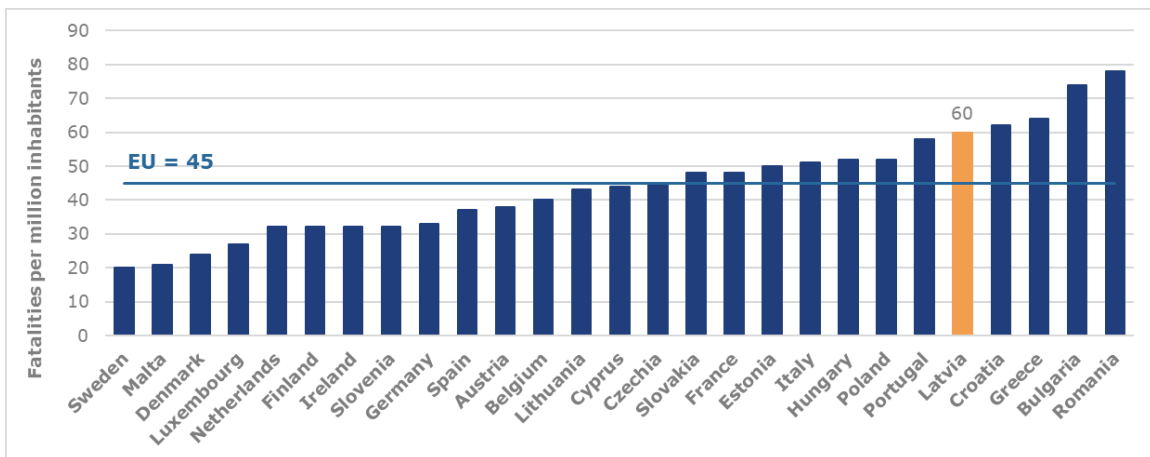
3. Road Safety Progress

3.1. Road Safety Outcomes

Based on data for 2024, Latvia was 23rd out of the 27 EU countries in terms of the lowest number of fatalities per million inhabitants. In fact, 60 road fatalities per million inhabitants were recorded that year, which is well above the EU average (45).

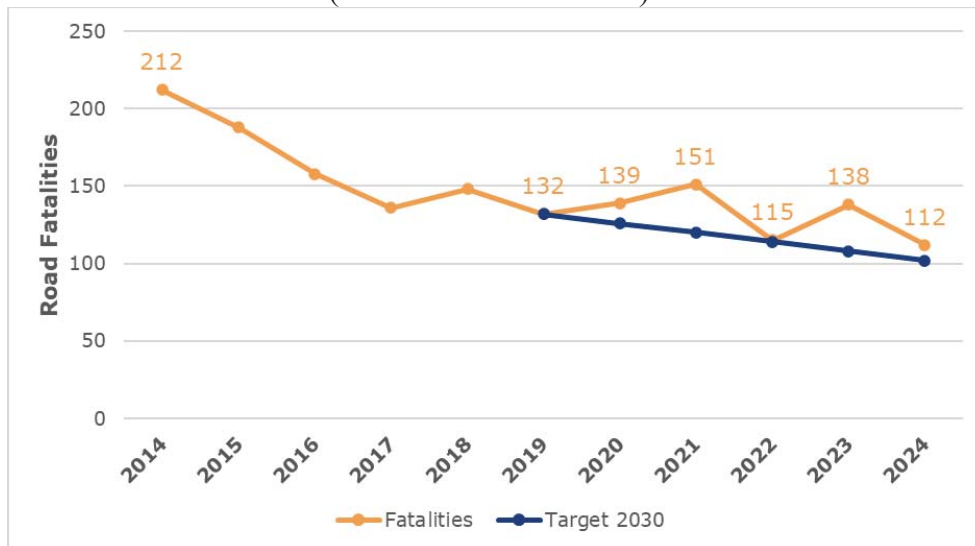
³ Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027, available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640>

Figure 17.1 Mortality rates by country, 2024



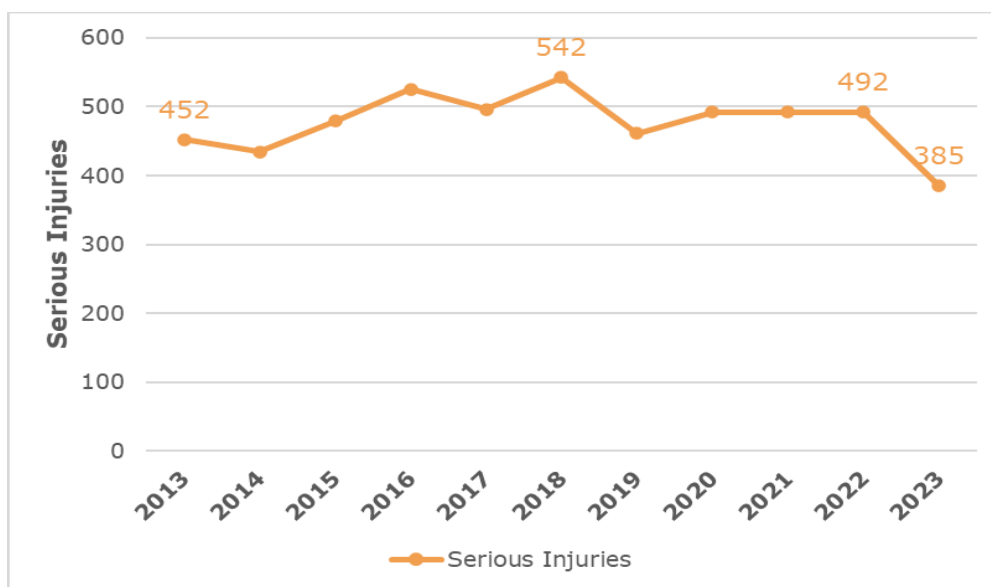
Sources: CARE database on road crashes; population data from Eurostat (online data code [demo_pjan](#)).

Figure 17.2 Road fatalities and target 2030
(Source CARE database)⁴



⁴ It is noted that the global COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the CARE data for 2020 and 2021 for many European countries. Traffic volumes dropped sharply during the pandemic due to traffic restrictions, which was associated with a significant drop in road traffic crashes and fatalities.

Figure 17.3 Serious road injuries
(Source: CARE database)⁵



Latvia made reasonably good progress in achieving a **reduction of 15%** in road fatalities between 2019⁵ and 2024. However, it is currently not on **track to meet the 2030 target of halving the number of road fatalities**. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of serious injuries fell by 16%..

Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Latvia showed a high proportion of pedestrians and fatalities occurred on roads outside urban areas⁶. In fact, 30% of killed people in road crashes were pedestrians in 2024 and 50% of road crash fatalities occurred outside urban areas, on non-motorway roads. It is noted that there are no motorways in Latvia.

3.2. Road Safety Performance Indicators

Latvia performs better than the EU average in relation to seat belt use and helmet use, except for cyclists. Additionally, the average age of the passenger car fleet in Latvia is much higher than the EU average.

⁵ 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. Latvia set 2020 as the baseline year.

⁶ European Commission (2023), Country Profile Latvia. Road Safety Observatory. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General for Transport.

Table 17.7: Road Safety Performance Indicators, 2022 – 2025 (Source: ERSO, Country Profiles)

	Latvia		EU	
	2022	2025	2022	2025
Speeding⁷				
% of passenger cars travelling within speed limits ^a				
Motorways	-	-	-	-
Rural Roads	29.0	-	-	-
Urban Roads	41.4	53.0	-	-
Seat belt & CRS use rates (%) ^{a,b}				
Front	93.6	95.5	93.1	92.4
Rear	90.4	90.0	75.3	69.9
Child restraint systems (roadside observations)	61.9	-	67.0	83.3
Child restraint systems (in-vehicle inspections)	/	/	-	-
Helmet use rates (%) ^a				
PTW driver	100.0	99.9	97.0	97.6
PTW passenger	99.5	99.6	94.4	97.0
Cyclist	17.9	22.2	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	5.2	-	11.8	11.8
Driver Distraction ^a				
% of drivers not using hand-held mobile device/phone while driving	90.5	95.8	94.8	94.5
Vehicle Safety				
% of new passenger cars rated with 4 EuroNCAP stars and above ^a	89.3	89.0	83.6	82.7
Average age of passenger car fleet (years) ^d	15.2	14.4	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

In 2021, Latvia starts from a medium level in two road safety areas related to **Road Safety Management**, which concern the national road safety authority and road safety legislation. On the other hand, the baseline for the remaining two road safety areas of this pillar (National road safety budget and national road safety observatory) is assessed as low.

⁷ 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 17.8: 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	medium	on track
2	National road safety budget	low	delayed
3	Road safety legislation	medium	on track
4	National road safety observatory	low	delayed

The **implementation of the measures** related to the national road safety budget and national road safety observatory has been delayed, while the remaining measures of this pillar are on track. So far, there is lack of funding from the state budget and there is no institution acting as the national road safety observatory, although the Road Safety Directorate has the task of evaluating road crash statistics.

Safe Road User Behaviour

In relation to the pillar of **Safe Road User Behaviour**, Latvia starts from a medium level in 2021 in all road safety areas, except the communication campaigns, the baseline of which is assessed as high. Based on the self-reported assessment, all measures related to this pillar are on track, while the implementation of the measures related to the campaigns have been completed.

Table 17.9: 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	medium	on track
2	Education	medium	on track
3	New drivers training	medium	on track
4	Communication campaigns	high	completed
5	Measures for vulnerable road users	medium	on track
6	Measures for professional drivers	medium	on track

Safe Speeds

Regarding the **Safe Speeds** pillar, Latvia starts from a medium level in all related road safety areas, except campaigns on speeding, for which the baseline is assessed as high. The measures related to the enforcement and monitoring of speeding are on track. On the other hand, the implementation of measures related to the update of speed limits has been delayed, while the implementation of the measures related to campaigns have been completed.

Table 17.10: 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	medium	delayed
2	Enforcing speed limits	medium	on track
3	Campaigns on speeding	high	completed
4	Monitoring speeding	medium	on track

In Latvia, separate initiatives for 30 km/h and other zones have been taken individually at the level of municipalities and only in specific places, not in a wider area. Also, the next phase in the implementation of average speed control has been initiated, **but the data shows that speeding remains a very widespread problem.**

Safe Roads

Regarding the **Safe Roads** pillar, the baseline is assessed as medium in all road safety areas. The baseline is assessed as low only in two areas: Rural roads safety interventions and Motorways safety management. Based on the self-reported assessment, the implementation of measures related to city mobility and safety plans and rural roads safety interventions has been delayed. All remaining measures of this pillar are on track. As already referred above, there is no specific motorway network in Latvia, so no measures related to motorways safety management are considered in the strategic plan.

Table 17.11: 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	medium	delayed
2	Urban infrastructure for VRUs	medium	on track
3	Rural roads safety interventions	low	delayed
4	Motorways safety management ⁸	not applicable	not applicable
5	Road design standards	medium	on track
6	Road safety audit and inspection	medium	on track

So far, road safety policy planning in Latvia is performed only at national level, although there are some initiatives by some municipalities for policy planning on mobility (not directly on traffic safety). In addition, road design standards are regularly reviewed, and newer and safer solutions are introduced.

Safe Vehicles

In relation to the pillar of **Safe Vehicles**, Latvia starts from a low level in all related areas, except the vehicle technical inspections. The implementation of the measures related to fleet renewal has been delayed, while the implementation of measures related to the promotion of

⁸ There is no specific motorway network in Latvia.

ADAS and automation preparation has not started yet. On the contrary, the measures related to vehicle technical inspections are on track.

Table 17.12: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe vehicles

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

Post Crash Care

Regarding the **Post-Crash Care** pillar, Latvia starts from a medium level in 2021 in the road safety area of the reduction of EMS reaction time. The foreseen measures of this area are on track. On the other hand, Latvia starts from a low level in the second area included in this pillar, while the implementation of the related measures has not started yet.

Table 17.13: 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	medium	on track
2	Support people injured	low	not started

4.2. The informative report "Mid-term Impact Assessment of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2021-2027"

The informative report "**Mid-term Impact Assessment of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2021-2027**", which has been submitted for review to the Cabinet of Ministers (07.02.2025. – not adopted yet), was developed to provide an overview of the **progress of the implementation of the Plan** and its **impact on road traffic safety** until 2025. The evaluation analyses the main lines of action set out in the Plan and the results of their implementation, as well as the challenges and opportunities for further improvement of road traffic safety.

The Plan's direct action performance indicators indicate that with the existing measures included in the Plan, the goal of reducing the number of seriously injured and killed in road crashes by 35% in 2027 compared to 2020 may not be achieved. Therefore, the informative report includes **new measures** to improve road traffic safety, which currently are being discussed, such as:

- the separation of opposite lanes in road infrastructure, reconstruction of intersections, implementation of distance marking, as well as updating road infrastructure standards according to the latest road traffic safety requirements, namely, road signs and markings.
- reducing road connections and turning points – eliminating left turns and allocating additional funding for roadside mowing, surface treatment technologies, and other

measures, as well as constructing parking lots for freight vehicles to reduce the risk to traffic safety.

- measures that create legal and financial support, provide compensation, and support the recovery and successful reintegration of individuals into work and home environments after an injury.
- measures to motivate road traffic participants to behave responsibly in traffic, such as determining the amount of insurance premiums based on the driver's recorded violations, including with technical means, training of new drivers and evaluation of necessity of mandatory road traffic education in state education programs, as well the expansion of control over road traffic participants and evaluation of the effectiveness of the current penalty policy.
- the systematic study of serious road traffic crashes and the assessment of the fatigue of drivers of public passenger buses and freight vehicles, as well as improving the safety of micromobility services by requiring micromobility service providers to implement reaction tests.
- measures aimed at the safe and sustainable acquisition and use of transport services and vehicles.

4.3. Best Practices

- Legislation on the safety of **electric scooters** has been developed (included in the national Road Traffic Law) and is in force.
- Latvia has been performing with success communication **campaigns against drink driving** for about 20 years. Based on the Latvian Traffic Safety Action Plan, since the beginning of this century, Latvia has been successful in substantially reducing the number of fatalities (eight times) and seriously injured persons (four times) from road crashes caused under the influence of alcohol⁹.

4.4. Gaps

The main gap referred is the **lack of funding** from the state budget for the implementation of the traffic safety action plan of Latvia. While there is some funding from the Road Traffic Safety Council (RTSC), the available amount is limited. Thus, funding for conducting communication campaigns have been secured from the RTSC, however, for more demanding areas, such as safety interventions on rural roads, there is no available budget. The lack of funding is also linked to the progress made in traffic enforcement, with the traffic police being largely understaffed. Additionally, the reluctance to take unpopular but important road safety decisions at political level and the lack of support from society are also among the challenges to be overcome.

Furthermore, concerning the development of **city mobility and safety plans**, a lack of initiatives is observed at regional level.

Finally, regarding **speeding enforcement**, difficulties are encountered in achieving a common vision among the various involved bodies and in supporting the establishment of higher speeding penalties in the Parliament.

⁹ Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027, available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/326640>

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the Road Traffic Safety Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027, the targets of **halving the numbers of road fatalities and serious injuries in 2030** compared to 2020 have been set. Also, four additional targets related to the reduction of fatalities have been defined, as well as targets for eight road safety performance indicators. In total, 33 road safety measures divided in three lines of action are included in the strategy.

In 2024, Latvia **was among the lower performing countries in the EU** in terms of fatality rates (ranking 23rd). Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Latvia showed a high proportion of pedestrians and fatalities on roads outside urban areas. Also, the total number of injured cyclists has increased over recent years.

Based on preliminary data, between 2019 and 2024, the number of fatalities decreased by 15%, indicating **that Latvia has made progress but is currently not on track to meet the 2030 target**. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of serious injuries fell, also by 16%.

Regarding progress in the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the Road Traffic Safety Plan for the period 2021-2024, **progress has been made in most road safety areas**, while some delays mainly due to funding constraints are reported. In 2024, the majority of the planned measures are on track. The implementation of the measures has been delayed in 6 areas. Latvia has proceeded to its own assessment of the implementation progress of the Plan up to 2025 and its impact on road safety. Within this context, a new set of measures has been proposed and is currently under review.

Finally, the implementation progress of the foreseen actions appears to be **broadly well on track, which is also partially reflected in the evolution of the number of fatalities**, although Latvia needs to do more to meet the 2030 target. Moreover, the road safety performance of Latvia is still low, compared to the other EU countries. Based on the self-reported assessment, funding for road safety is not adequate so far, as well as a lack of common political will to make unpopular road safety decisions (on penalties, stricter regulations). Therefore, new additional measures have been prepared in the report Mid-term Impact Assessment of the Road Traffic Safety Plan 2021-2027, to complement the existing plan to help move towards achieving the plan's goals and better performance.