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Monitoring Road Safety Progress in the EU - Netherlands

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, the Netherlands was **well below the EU average** (45) with 32 fatalities per million inhabitants. Compared to 2019, fatalities decreased by 3% in 2024 while the number of people seriously injured in road crashes, was 7% higher than the respective figure in 2019.

Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in the Netherlands in 2023 showed a high proportion of cyclists and road users aged more than 65 years old. Also, based on police data, over the period 2019-2023, the number of fatalities inside urban areas increased, with significant high increases being recorded among pedestrians and cyclists.

In the **Road Safety Strategic Plan (RSSP) 2030 of the Netherlands**, the ambition of zero casualties by 2050 is reaffirmed. However, **no specific intermediate road safety targets for 2030 have been set**. According to a study of SWOV, halving the number of road casualties by 2030 is likely to be too ambitious, even by taking additional measures. The study suggests that while significant reductions are possible, especially concerning serious road injuries, a 50% decrease might be difficult to achieve.

This RSSP2030 sets out the approach on ensuring safer roads, vehicles and behaviour based on **the risk-driven approach**, meaning focusing on the highest road safety risks and managing those risks in the most effective way. The RSSP 2030 does not contain concrete policy measures, however, there is a concrete agreement to make arrangements with fellow governments. Specific policy measures are included in the national and regional implementation plans. The **second national action plan for the period 2022-2025**, which is discussed in this chapter, includes 43 measures, divided over five road safety themes and 15 action lines.

The national government set out the RSSP2030 in the **first action plan covering the period 2019-2021**. The 55 measures of this plan have almost all been completed.

Regarding the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the second national road safety action plan of the period 2022-2025, **progress has been made in most road safety areas**. Based on the self-reported assessment, out of the 20 road safety areas examined, the implementation of measures in 15 areas is well progressed, in 2 areas it has been completed, while for the remaining 3 areas the implementation has been delayed. It is noted that in 13 out of 20 examined road safety areas of all pillars, the starting level in 2021 is self-assessed as medium, in 2 areas it is assessed as high and for the remaining areas as low.

A few **gaps** have been referred in the implementation of this strategic plan. Legislative obstacles are referred for the data projects (privacy legislation) and re-introduction of the alcolock. Difficulties are also faced in the collection of data on vulnerable road users. Additionally, low priority and/or capacity has been given for the Public Prosecution Service and the police for road safety.

Based on the self-reported assessment, among the biggest **challenges in the implementation of the national action plan** were properly setting up risk-based work and balancing the focus on Engineering, Education and Enforcement.

On the other hand, three **best practice examples** are available for the Netherlands in relation to the implemented measures of the second national action plan. These concern the estimation

of the road safety effects of the first two parts of the infrastructure investment measures, the effects of the MONO campaign focussing on the reduction of casualties due to distraction and the preparation of guidelines for regional access roads with 30 km/h, which can be used by municipalities. There are also available reports on other topics, such as the evaluation of the Bob campaign about driving without alcohol.

Finally, the implementation progress of the foreseen actions appears to be broadly well on track in the Netherlands, however, the number of road fatalities has fallen by only 3% since 2019. A **target of halving road casualties by 2030 would be challenging** for the Netherlands, especially for serious injuries, which are expected to rise towards 2030, without additional measures¹. To that end, the Netherlands carries out analyses to measure the effectiveness of the implemented measures and explores new actions in order to achieve further improvements. Within this context, a better balance between the different safe system approach pillars could be considered.

2. Road Safety Strategy and Measures

2.1 Road Safety Strategy

The Netherlands established the **road safety strategic plan 2030** in 2018 (RSSP2030). This RSSP2030 sets out the approach on ensuring safer roads, vehicles and behaviour based on the **risk-driven approach**, meaning focusing on the highest road safety risks and managing those risks in the most effective way. This RSSP2030 was endorsed by all relevant stakeholders and partners who have a role in improving traffic safety in the Netherlands².

Three phases of implementation are considered in the RSSP2030:

- Phase 1: Implementation – Introduction period (2019–2021)
- Phase 2: Implementation – Experience, learn and evaluate (2022–2025)
- Phase 3: Adjust and professionalise (2025–2030).

Table 20.1: National road safety strategy

Netherlands	
Timeframe	2018-2030
Lead Authority	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in close co-operation with provinces, municipalities, water boards and other relevant stakeholders
Link	https://www.kennisnetwerkspv.nl/getmedia/ce0099b7-ce77-4ce2-98c8-a7810662ef10/19-093-RO-SPV-Engels_v2.pdf.aspx

2.2 Road Safety Governance

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, provinces, urban regions, water boards and municipalities, are responsible for the **formulation of the national road safety strategy**. The Safe Traffic Netherlands (VFN) and the Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV) provided input on the national road safety strategy.

Also, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the provinces, urban regions,

¹ <https://swov.nl/en/fact/road-deaths-12-what-target-number-road-casualties?>

² https://www.kennisnetwerkspv.nl/getmedia/ce0099b7-ce77-4ce2-98c8-a7810662ef10/19-093-RO-SPV-Engels_v2.pdf.aspx

water boards and municipalities are responsible for the **monitoring of road safety developments** in the country.

2.3 Main Safety Issues

In the RSSP2030, the following main safety issues are highlighted, which form the basis for the definition of road safety actions and measures in the road safety action plans³:

- The largest increase in road injuries is observed for **cyclist-only crashes**, particularly among seniors. In 2017, for the first time, there were more fatalities among cyclists than among car occupants.
- **Elderly road users** (65+ years) are over-represented in the number of road fatalities and serious injuries.
- **Vulnerable road users** (focussing mainly on inexperienced drivers and cyclists) and **multiple offenders**.
- **Distraction due to dependence on digital media**, leading to more risks.
- Increased **use of drugs and medicines**.

2.4 Road Safety Targets

The Netherlands **has not set specific road safety targets for 2030**. The ambition of zero road casualties in 2050 is reaffirmed.

2.5 Road Safety Measures

The RSSP 2030 describes **nine policy themes with the most important road safety risks**. The first three themes examine risks arising from the traffic system and the vehicle, the two following themes concern specific risk groups (young people and senior citizens) and modalities (two-wheelers, pedestrians) and the last four concern risks arising from individual road users and their behaviour:

1. Safe infrastructure
2. Heterogeneity in traffic
3. Technological developments
4. Vulnerable road users
5. Inexperienced road users
6. Driving under the influence
7. Speeding
8. Distraction in traffic
9. Traffic offenders

The RSSP 2030 does not contain concrete measures. These are included in the national and regional implementation plans. The **first national action plan**, covering the period 2019-2021, included 55 measures.

The **second national action plan for the period 2022-2025** involves 43 measures, divided

³https://www.kennisnetwerkspv.nl/getmedia/ce0099b7-ce77-4ce2-98c8-a7810662ef10/19-093-RO-SPV-Engels_v2.pdf.aspx

over five road safety themes and 15 action lines.

Table 20.2: Number of road safety action lines and measures of the second national action plan (2022-2025)

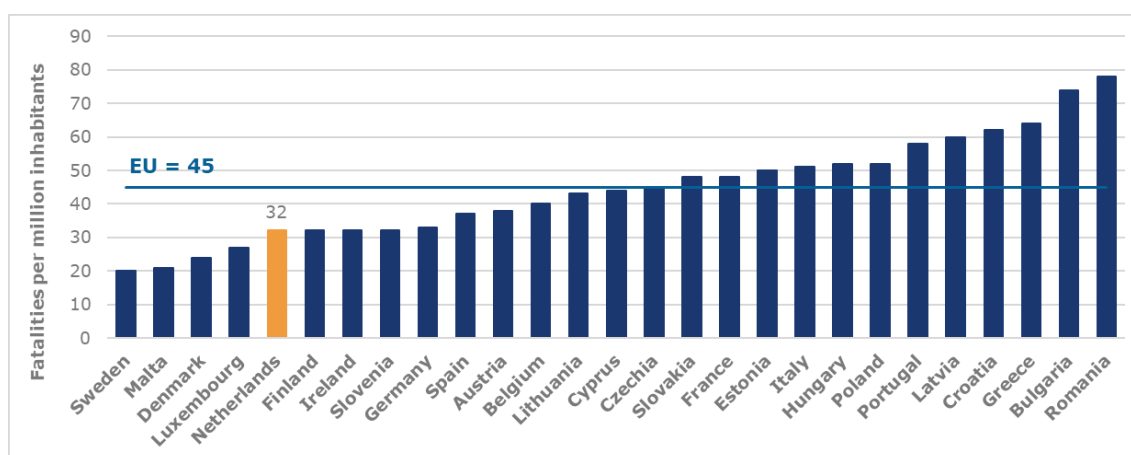
Themes	Action Lines	Measures
Safe infrastructure	2	9
Non-motorised traffic	4	9
Safe vehicles and assisting systems	3	6
Safe behaviour	2	6
(no) driving under the influence	4	13
Total	15	43

3. Road Safety Progress

3.1 Road Safety Outcomes

In the Netherlands, 684 people were killed and 7,400 people were seriously injured in road crashes in 2023⁴. Based on preliminary data for 2024, the Netherlands ranked **5th 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 20.1 Mortality rates by country, 2024



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

Compared to 2019, a decrease of 3% in road fatalities was recorded. The number of **serious injuries increased by 7%**, based on MAIS3+ data. Although the number of seriously injured in traffic in 2023 decreased compared to the number in 2022, it was higher than in previous years. Thus, the trend remains upward.

The Netherlands **has not set specific road safety targets** for fatalities and serious injuries for

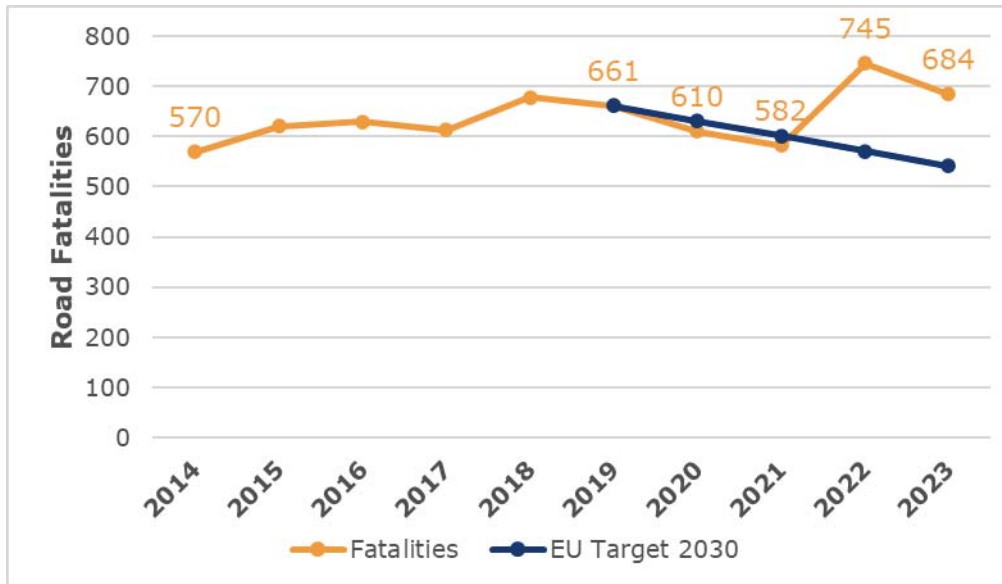
⁴ Based on figures from SWOV, including police, hospital and first aid data.

2030.

In the following figures the fatality and serious injury trends are compared with the EU 2030 targets (halving the numbers of road fatalities and serious injuries in 2030 compared to 2019).

Figure 20.2 Road fatalities and EU target 2030

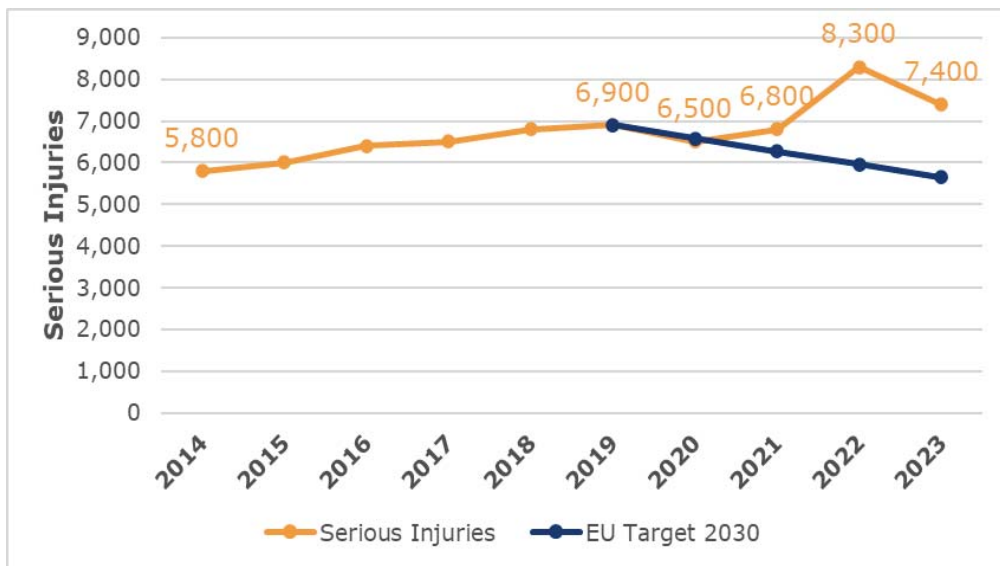
(Source: SWOV)^{5, 6}



⁵Fatalities and serious injuries come from SWOV (the Dutch scientific institute on road safety). The figures in CARE are based on the police data, while the figures of SWOV are also based on hospital and first aid data. Furthermore, the figures of SWOV only concern the degree of injury MAIS3+.

⁶ 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 20.3 Serious road injuries and EU target 2030
(Source: SWOV)^{7, 8}



Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in the Netherlands showed a relatively high proportion of cyclists (due to the high use of bicycles) and people aged more than 65 years old⁹. In fact, based on police data, 30% of killed people were cyclists in 2024 and 36% of seriously injured were cyclists in 2023.

An overview of the evolution of road fatalities for the years 2019 and 2024 (year with the latest available detailed crash data) is provided below for specific types of roads, crashes and road users. Overall, the number of **total fatalities increased**. Especially, the number of fatalities inside urban areas, as well as among cyclists and pedestrians increased considerably. Decreases were recorded in the number of fatalities in single vehicle crashes.

⁷Fatalities and serious injuries come from SWOV (the Dutch scientific institute on road safety). The figures in CARE are based on the police data, while the figures of SWOV are also based on hospital and first aid data. Furthermore, the figures of SWOV only concern the degree of injury MAIS3+.

⁸ 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.

⁹ European Commission (2023), Country Profile Netherlands. Road Safety Observatory. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General for Transport.

Table 20.3: Evolution of road fatalities, 2019-2024
(Source: CARE database)¹⁰

Fatalities	2019	2024	% in 2024	% change 2019-2024
Total road fatalities	586	566	-	-3%
Inside urban areas	232	227	40%	-2%
Outside urban areas	274	275	49%	0%
Motorways	75	64	11%	-15%
Single vehicle crashes	223	174	31%	-22%
Multi vehicle crashes	315	340	60%	+8%
Car occupants	240	221	39%	-8%
PTW riders	80	78	14%	-3%
Cyclists	148	169	30%	+14%
Pedestrians	49	55	10%	+12%

3.2 Road Safety Performance Indicators

The Netherlands perform better than the EU average in relation to seat belt use. The average age of the passenger car fleet is lower than the EU average.

¹⁰ Figures in CARE database are based solely on police data and are subject to under-reporting.

Table 20.4: Road Safety Performance Indicators, 2022 – 2025 (Source: ERSO, Country Profiles)

	Netherlands		EU	
	2022	2025	2022	2025
Speeding¹¹				
% of passenger cars travelling within speed limits ^a				
Motorways	61.3	34.0	-	-
Rural Roads	61.7	45.0	-	-
Urban Roads	76.9	60.0	-	-
Seat belt & CRS use rates (%) ^{a*,b}				
Front	97.0	99.8	93.1	92.4
Rear	96.0	99.6	75.3	69.9
Child restraint systems (roadside observations)	-	94.5	67.0	83.3
Child restraint systems (in-vehicle inspections)	/	/	-	-
Helmet use rates (%) ^a				
PTW driver	-	99.4	97.0	97.6
PTW passenger	-	99.5	94.4	97.0
Cyclist	-	5.0	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	12.0	-	11.8	11.8
Driver Distraction ^a				
% of drivers not using hand-held mobile device/phone while driving	-	94.5	94.8	94.5
Vehicle Safety				
% of new passenger cars rated with 4 EuroNCAP stars and above ^a	-	-	83.6	82.7
Average age of passenger car fleet (years) ^d	11.7	11.9	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

The second national action plan of the Netherlands (2022-2025) is self-assessed in this chapter. Measures implemented from 2022 up to April 2024 are self-assessed. Various measures have made more progress up to the date of the publication of the current report.

Road Safety Management

Based on the self-reported assessment, the Dutch national government starts from a medium level in all road safety areas related to **Road Safety Management**. 9 of the ongoing or planned measures of the second road safety action plan lie in this pillar. In 2024, most of the measures

¹¹ An EU average is not available for speeding, due to different legal speed limits among countries, which does not allow for a straightforward comparison.

are in progress, besides those related to the national road safety authority, which have been delayed. Steps still need to be taken to improve the exchange between the CBR and the Public Prosecution Service or police. However, for ROI (Dutch Institute for Public Administration) there is an improvement in preparation, i.e. an automatic notification is being built in between police and CBR ICT systems, which is expected to be ready in early 2025. It is noted that no measures related to national road safety observatory have been planned for the examined period.

Table 20.5: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to road safety management

B1	Road Safety Management	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2022-2024)
1	National road safety authority	medium	delayed
2	National road safety budget	medium	on track
3	Road safety legislation	medium	on track
4	National road safety observatory	-	-
5	Other	low	on track

Also, projects on SPI monitor and collecting ambulance data are on schedule. Pilot (blood) test on driving under the influence in emergency rooms has started.

Safe Road User Behaviour

In relation to the pillar of **safe road user behaviour**, 17 measures are included in the second national action plan. The Netherlands starts from a medium level in 2021 in the road safety areas of enforcement and education. The baseline is assessed as high for the communication campaigns, while is assessed as low for the areas of vulnerable road users, driving under the influence and alcolock programme.

In 2024, all measures related to this pillar are on track, besides those concerning the alcolock programme, which have been delayed. It is noted that no measures related to new drivers training and professional drivers have been planned for the examined period.

More specifically, extra efforts are being made on **traffic enforcement**, including both handheld detection systems and movable speed cameras.

Also, together with social partners, the Ministry of Education and local authorities, efforts are being made to **educate and provide information about safe traffic behaviour**.

Concerning the measures for **VRUs**, various measures for cyclists and pedestrians will be implemented.

Finally, in the second action plan, an **integrated approach to driving under the influence** is included, which consists of various actions (research agenda, communication campaign, etc).

Table 20.6: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to road user behaviour

B2	Safe Road User Behaviour	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2022-2024)
1	Enforcement	medium	on track
2	Education	medium	on track
3	New drivers training	-	-
4	Communication campaigns	high	on track
5	Measures for vulnerable road users	low	on track
6	Measures for professional drivers	-	-
7	Other (integral approach on driving under the influence)	low	on track
8	Other (alcohol lock programme)	low	delayed

Safe Speeds

Regarding the **Safe Speeds** pillar, only one measure related to monitoring speeding is included in the second action plan of the Netherlands. Based on the self-reported assessment, the Netherlands starts from a medium level in this road safety area. National data on speeding is available but has yet to be made available in SPI monitor.

Table 20.7: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe speeds

B3	Safe Speeds	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2022-2024)
1	Update of speed limits	-	--
2	Enforcing speed limits	-	-
3	Campaigns on speeding	-	-
4	Monitoring speeding	medium	on track

Safe Roads

Regarding the **Safe Roads** pillar, the baseline is self-assessed as medium in all road safety areas, apart from the area of road safety audits and inspections, where the baseline is assessed as low. In the second action plan, eight road safety measures related to safe roads are included.

The **implementation** of the planned measures related to city mobility& safety plans (1) and road design standards (2) has been completed. The remaining measures are on track based on the self-reported assessment. It is noted that local authorities take measures related to urban infrastructure for VRUs. These measures can be co-financed from the investment impulse (measure under the theme Road Safety Budget).

More specifically, the assessment framework on **30 km/h in built-up areas** is available and

the municipalities are making use of the new possibilities. Also, investment incentives for local authorities have been planned to be provided and are on progress.

Concerning the **national roads safety management**, the improvement of the road safety of national N-roads is planned and the development of a strategic agenda on road safety for the main road network, which are also on track.

In relation to **road safety standards**, two measures were planned and are now completed: a) strengthening the safety management of the road infrastructure and b) development of guidelines for safer roads infrastructure (slow traffic).

Regarding the area of **road safety audits and inspections**, a project RoadMonitor has shown promising results and will be followed up extensively.

Table 20.8: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe roads

B4	Safe Roads	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2022-2024)
1	City mobility & safety plans	medium	completed
2	Urban infrastructure for VRUs	-	-
3	Rural roads safety interventions	medium	on track
4	Motorways safety management	medium	on track
5	Road design standards	medium	completed
6	Road safety audit and inspection	low	on track

Safe Vehicles

In relation to the pillar of **Safe Vehicles**, the Netherlands starts from a medium level in three areas: promotion of ADAS, Light Electric Vehicles & invalid carriages and research in crash risks in heavy cars. The baseline of the automation preparation is assessed as high. Within this pillar, seven measures are considered in the second strategic plan.

In 2024, most of the relative measures are on track. More specifically, the National Road Transport Agency discusses the **promotion of ADAS** at the international level. Also, the national government is discussing the topic of **automation preparation** (through multiple actions) at the international level. It is noted that no measures related to fleet renewal and vehicle technical inspections have been planned for the examined period.

Concerning the area of **LEV & invalid carriages**, further elaboration of the framework on light electric vehicles (LEV) has been planned, as well as the development of a new framework for invalid carriages. The implementation of both frameworks has been slightly delayed but is expected in the course of 2025.

Finally, a report on the in-depth research into **crash risks in heavy cars** is expected to be available soon.

Table 20.9: Self-reported assessment of implementation progress of measures related to safe vehicles

B5	Safe Vehicles	Baseline Assessment (2021)	Progress (2022-2025)
1	Fleet renewal	-	-
2	Promotion of ADAS	medium	on track
3	Technical vehicle inspection	-	-
4	Automation preparation	high	on track
5	Other (LEV & invalid carriages)	medium	delayed
5	Other (accident risks heavy cars)	medium	on track

Post Crash Care

Regarding the **Post-Crash Care** pillar, no relative measures have been planned in the second road safety action plan of the Netherlands.

Table 20.10: 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	-	-
2	Support people injured	-	-

4.2 Best Practices

Three best practice examples are provided from the Netherlands for this period.

Road Safety Management

- **Road safety effects of 'second-tranche measures'**: Estimate of casualty and cost savings due to the first two parts of the infrastructure investment incentive.

Safe Road User Behaviour

- **Research into the effects of the MONO campaign**: The policy objective of this campaign is reducing the number of injuries and fatalities due to distraction in traffic. The communication objective of this campaign is motivating and activating road users to behave correctly: not responding immediately to incoming messages from social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) and other devices while driving or cycling. The campaign target groups were motorists and cyclists.

Safe Roads

- **Guidelines for regional access road 30 km/h (GOW30)**: The guidelines offer municipalities tools to improve traffic safety within built-up areas by applying the road type GOW30.

4.3 Gaps

Based on the self-reported assessment, the following gaps have been identified in the implementation of specific measures of the second road safety action plan of the Netherlands:

- Low priority and/or capacity for the Public Prosecution Service and the police for road safety
- Privacy legislation creates obstacles in data projects
- Call from major cities to be able to focus on traffic enforcement themselves
- The collection of data on vulnerable road users is difficult
- There is a gap between the desire to reintroduce the alcolock and the existing legal frameworks.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the Road Safety Strategic Plan (RSSP) 2030 of the Netherlands, the ambition of zero casualties by 2050 has been defined. No specific targets for **road fatalities and serious injuries for 2030** have been set. In mid-2021, a parliamentary motion was carried to apply an intermediate target of 50% reduction in the number of road casualties by 2030. The Dutch Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV) conducted an exploratory study indicating that halving the number of road casualties by 2030 is likely too ambitious. The study suggests that while significant reductions are possible, especially concerning serious road injuries, a 50% decrease is probably out of reach¹².

In addition, the RSSP 2030 does not contain concrete measures. These are included in the national and regional implementation plans. The second national action plan for the period 2022-2025 includes 43 measures, divided over five road safety themes and 15 action lines.

In 2024, the Netherlands **was one among the best performing countries in the European Union** in terms of mortality rates (5th with the lowest fatality rate). Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in the Netherlands in 2023 showed a high proportion of cyclists and people aged more than 65 years old.

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of fatalities decreased by 3% and the number of serious injuries by 7% over the period 2019-2023. Although the number of seriously injured in traffic in 2023 decreased compared to the number in 2022, it was higher than in previous years. Thus, the trend remains upward, mainly due to population growth, more kilometres driven and, among others, more elderly people on bicycles.

Regarding the implementation of the road safety actions foreseen in the second national road safety action plan for the period 2022-2024, **progress has been made in most road safety areas**. Out of the 20 road safety areas examined, the implementation of measures in 15 areas is well progressed, in 2 areas has it been completed, while for the remaining 3 areas the implementation has been delayed.

Based on the self-reported assessment, the biggest **challenges** in the implementation of the national action plan lie in properly setting up risk-based working, especially in the area of data collection and in transferring risk-based working to the co-governments and to other

¹²<https://swov.nl/en/fact/serious-injuries-12-what-target-number-road-casualties>

departments within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. In this regard, the financial stimulus (the investment stimulus) that is available to the co-governments was helpful, where having a risk analysis and later implementation plans were made mandatory. The second major challenge is balancing the focus on Engineering, Education and Enforcement. In particular, the design of safe roads receives a lot of attention from co-governments, partly due to the investment impulse. This is now starting to become more balanced, for instance with the recent regional policy plans and the acquisition of new flexible enforcement tools.

The Netherlands carries out **effectiveness analyses** on many fronts in order to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the plan, by attempting to link the progress of road safety actions to the performance outcomes (fatalities and serious injuries). This exercise will help to further support the decision-making process, identify the good practices, as well as the focus areas for the future implementation of the strategy.

Finally, the implementation progress of the foreseen actions appears broadly well on track, however, the **number of road fatalities has fallen by 3% only since 2019**, while according to Dutch studies, without additional measures, the number of serious injuries is expected to rise towards 2030¹³. However, based on the self-reported assessment, significant reductions can be achieved through additional measures. To that end, the Netherlands carries out analyses to measure the effectiveness of the implemented measures and explores new actions in order to achieve further improvements. Within this context, a better balance between the different safe system approach pillars could be considered.

¹³ <https://swov.nl/en/fact/road-deaths-12-what-target-number-road-casualties?>