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Monitoring Road Safety Progress in the EU - Sweden

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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Summary

In 2024, Sweden **had the best road safety performance in the EU**, with 20 road fatalities per million inhabitants, well below the EU average (45 per million). Compared to 2019, a decrease of 4% in road fatalities was achieved. In 2023, 1,786 people were seriously injured in road crashes, which is 8% lower than the respective figure in 2019.

Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Sweden shows a relatively high proportion of fatalities occurring outside urban areas as well as fatalities among older people. Also, a large proportion of serious injuries is comprised of cyclists in single-bicycle crashes and pedestrians in fall accidents.

The road safety work in Sweden is carried out by using a ‘management by objectives’ model and it is based on Vision Zero. The long-term goal for road safety is zero fatalities and severe injuries but interim targets are set on the way. Interim targets are set for the numbers of fatalities and severely injured by the government in interaction with relevant stakeholders. By 2030, interim targets **are reducing road fatalities by 50%** (maximum of 133 fatalities by 2030) **and serious injuries by 25%**. Interim targets are also set for a number of Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs).

Based on the latest available data, and notwithstanding its good performance in comparison with other EU Member States, Sweden is not yet ready **to meet the 2030 target of halving road fatalities** without an accelerated pace of change in road safety measures.

2. Road Safety Strategy and Measures

2.1 Road Safety Strategy

Sweden does not have a road safety strategy in a traditional sense. Instead, the road safety work in Sweden is carried out systematically by using a ‘**management by objectives**’ model which is based on Vision Zero. The long-term goal for road safety is hence zero fatalities and severe injuries but interim targets are set on the way. These interim targets are set by the government in interaction with stakeholders.

The management model involves measuring and following up a series of current conditions in the road traffic system which have a verified relationship with the trend for the numbers of fatalities and severely injured on the roads. These conditions are measured using what are known as road safety performance indicators (SPIs). Interim targets are also set for these indicators and together the target values correspond to the overall target for road safety development.

The SPI-targets are decided by an analysis based on a so called “back-casting model”. With this model, fatal accidents which occur today are analysed in order to make a prediction as to how likely they are to occur in a future target year given the anticipated development of vehicle technology and the infrastructure where the accident occurred. From this analysis, an assessment is made of which conditions in the road traffic system, represented by the SPIs, need to be achieved and hence which further measures are needed to reach the road safety targets.

There are also interim targets on suicides and pedestrian fall accidents which are jointly agreed by along with the different stakeholders.

The fundamental idea in the Swedish work towards the 2030 goal is the long-term systematic road safety work – regardless of the effect of external factors (such as traffic increases) and any random variation on the outcome.

2.2 Road Safety Action Plan

From the analysis described in 1.2.1, a **Road Safety Action Plan for the period 2022-2025** has been prepared under the guidance of the Swedish Transport Administration, with the participation of authorities and road safety stakeholders. Unlike a traditional Action Plan, this plan brings together various stakeholders with the aim of involving other stakeholders to play their part in the road safety work. Thus, strengthening and highlighting effective road safety measures which can be implemented by all those stakeholders involved and thereby increase active contributions to road safety in general and to safe road traffic for the period 2022 to 2025. The plan furthermore, also highlights the responsibilities of different authorities and stakeholders in the short term, with a focus on a number of priority action areas¹.

This action plan is based both on the national interim targets and the targets jointly agreed among the stakeholders. In light of the targets and road safety trends, the action plan focuses on six priority action areas: speed, sober driving, safe cycling, safety for pedestrians (focus on falls), suicide prevention and leadership for road safety. This means that the action plan 2022-2025, was expanded by three priority action areas compared to the first action (2019-2022) plan’s three action areas (speed, sober driving and safe cycling). The action plan contains a total of 250 measures that 33 different authorities and stakeholders intend to implement during the period.

Table 28.1: National road safety action plan

Sweden	
Timeframe	2022-2025
Lead Authority	Swedish Transport Administration
Link	https://bransch.trafikverket.se/globalassets/dokument/vision-zero/road-safety-action-plan-2022_2025.pdf

2.3 Road Safety Governance

The Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure (Minister for Infrastructure), the Swedish Transport Administration, the Swedish Transport Agency, and Transport Analysis are responsible for road safety in Sweden. This work is carried out in a systematic way using the management by objectives model which is described in 1.2.1.

Since 2016, the Swedish Transport Administration has been tasked by the Government to lead overall collaboration on road safety work. This assignment means that the Swedish Transport Administration must lead the collaboration in a way that creates a continued and increased commitment and responsibility among the relevant authorities and stakeholders to contribute

¹https://bransch.trafikverket.se/globalassets/dokument/vision-zero/road-safety-action-plan-2022_2025.pdf*

to safe road traffic in which no one is killed or seriously injured. One of the activities conducted as part of this assignment is that the Swedish Transport Administration brings together authorities, organizations and stakeholders who have the opportunity to contribute to this work in the joint Road Safety action plan described in 1.2.2.

The Swedish Transport Agency is the regulatory body in Sweden which also manages the Swedish Traffic Accident Data Acquisition and Transport Analysis supports to follow up goals and the production of official statistics in the transport and communication sectors, including travel surveys and commodity flow surveys.

2.4 Main Safety Issues

The main road safety issues in Sweden are: speeding, sober driving and safe cycling. These are incorporated in the road safety action plan 2022-2025 along with other stakeholders. The action plan focuses on six priority action areas: speed, sober driving, safe cycling, safety for pedestrians (focus on falls), suicide prevention and leadership for road safety. As according to the updated forecast with scenarios to reach the traffic safety targets for 2030² and the updated analysis, achieving the ambitious targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 within the remaining timeframe requires an accelerated pace of change in road safety measures.

Additional measures beyond the current scenario based on the SPIs would be necessary to achieve the road safety targets for 2030. These include in particular:

- an accelerated implementation of infrastructure improvements,
- stricter speed compliance enforcement, and
- enhanced measures to protect vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

While vehicle technology and future developments will play a crucial role in the long term, the analysis indicates that these measures alone cannot by themselves deliver the required safety gains by 2030.

2.5 Road Safety Targets

The following interim targets have been set for the period 2021-2030 in Sweden:

- By 2030, a **50% reduction in fatalities**, compared to the average value of the period 2017-2019, to a maximum of 133 fatalities in 2030.
- By 2030, a **25% reduction in serious injuries**, compared to the average value of the period 2017-2019.

The following outcome indicators have been defined (see table 28.2):

² Trafikverket December 2024, Forecasts on road safety development and scenarios to meet the targets for 2030 and 2050 – an update

Table 28.2: Road safety targets for additional outcome indicators³

Indicator	Initial value (mean 2017-2019)	Target 2030
1. Number of suicides in the road transport system	52	to be reduced
2. Number of seriously injured cyclists in single-bicycle crashes (-25%)	1,600	1,200

As regards road safety performance indicators (SPIs), targets for 10 “system indicators” related to safe infrastructure and vehicles and 6 “use indicators” related to the safe road use (speed, drink-driving, use of seat-belts and helmets) have been defined for 2030. The baseline year for these targets is 2020.

Table 28.3: Road safety targets for performance indicators

Indicator	Description	Initial value (2020)	Target 2030
1. Safer roads, national road network	Share of traffic volume on roads with median barriers, national roads with speed limits 80-120 km/h	64%	70%
2. Safer roads, national road network	Share of traffic volume on roads with median barriers, national roads with speed limits 90-120 km/h	85%	96%
3. Safe state road intersections	Share of traffic in intersections with very high or high safety standard	80%	85%
4. Safe state road intersections	Share of traffic in intersections with very high, high or medium safety standard	93%	99%
5. Safe pedestrian, cycling and moped passages, state road network	Share of pedestrian, bicycle and moped crossings of good or medium safety classifications	60%	80%
6. Safe pedestrian, cycling and moped passages, municipal road network	Share of pedestrian, bicycle and moped crossings of good or medium safety classifications	50%	75%
7. Safer vehicles	Share of new cars sold with 5 stars in Euro NCAP test	89%	90%
8. Systematic measures for safe pedestrian and cycle traffic	Survey of selected municipalities, share of municipalities with a high level	15% (2021)	70%
9. Suicide preventive design	Suicide barriers on high bridges near urban areas		50%
	Access barriers on busy roads near urban areas		50%
	Viaducts across busy roads near urban areas		25%

³ Source: Trafikverket (2023), Analys av trafiksäkerhetsutvecklingen 2023. Available at: <https://trafikverket.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1853965/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Table 28.4: Road safety targets for use indicators

Indicator	Description	Initial value (2020)	Target 2030
1. Compliance with speed limits, national road network	Share of traffic volume within speed limits	49%	80%
2. Compliance with speed limits, municipal road network	Share of traffic volume within speed limits	67%	80%
3. Sober drivers	Share of traffic volume with sober drivers	Not determined	99.9%
4. Seat belt	Share of passenger car occupants in the front seat observed using a seat belt	97.9%	99.5%
5. Helmet use, cyclists	Share of cyclists observed wearing a helmet	47%	80%
6. Helmet use, moped riders	Share of moped riders observed wearing a helmet	98%	100%

2.6 Road Safety Measures

Regular systematic work on road safety in Sweden which includes implementation of various improvements in the infrastructure is complemented by the road safety action plan 2022-2025 described in 1.2.2. It contains a total of **250 road safety measures** divided in six priority action areas⁴. The priority areas are the following:

Table 28.5: Priority action areas

Priority action area
1. Speed
2. Sober driving
3. Safe cycling
4. Safety for pedestrians (focus on falls)
5. Suicide prevention
6. Leadership for road safety

The priority action areas overlap to some extent and there are also many measures that have a bearing on more than one priority action area. This applies in particular to measures for safe cycling and safety for pedestrians. In these cases, the measures are presented in both areas. For other overlapping measures, the measure is normally found under the action area to which it is most closely linked. These measures are followed up on an annual basis under the direction of the Swedish Transport Administration.

⁴https://bransch.trafikverket.se/globalassets/dokument/vision-zero/road-safety-action-plan-2022_2025.pdf

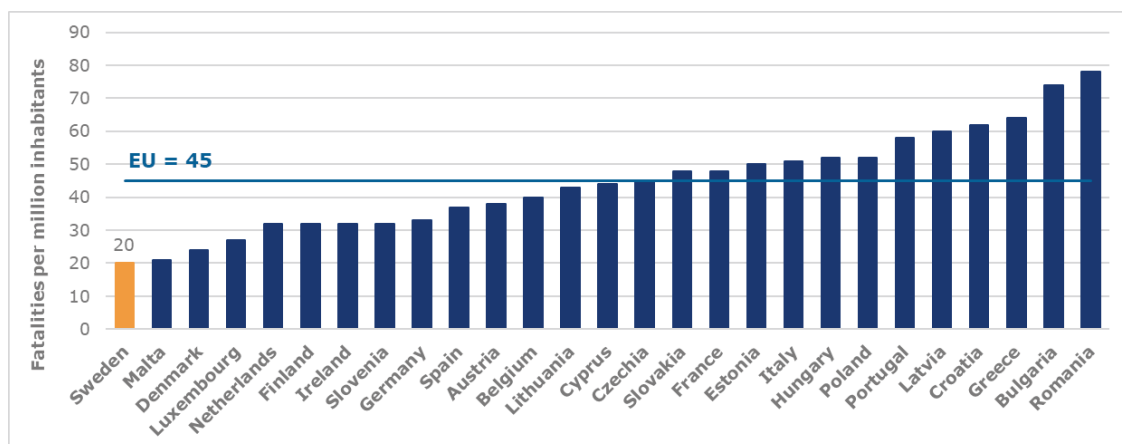
3. Road Safety Progress

3.1 Road Safety Outcomes

In Sweden, 213 people were killed in road crashes in 2024. Based on data for 2024, Sweden ranked 1st out of the 27 EU countries in terms of the lowest numbers of fatalities per million inhabitants. In fact, 20 road fatalities per million inhabitants were recorded that year, which is well below the EU average (45).

In 2023, 1,786 people were seriously injured in road crashes.

Figure 28.1 Mortality rates by country, 2024



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

Figure 28.2 Road fatalities and target 2030
(Source CARE database)⁵

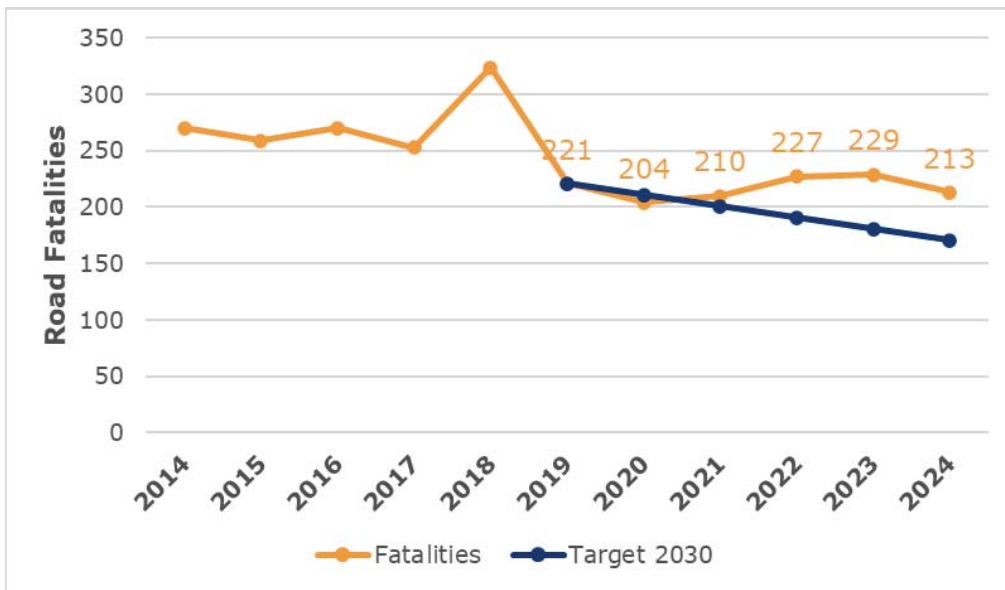
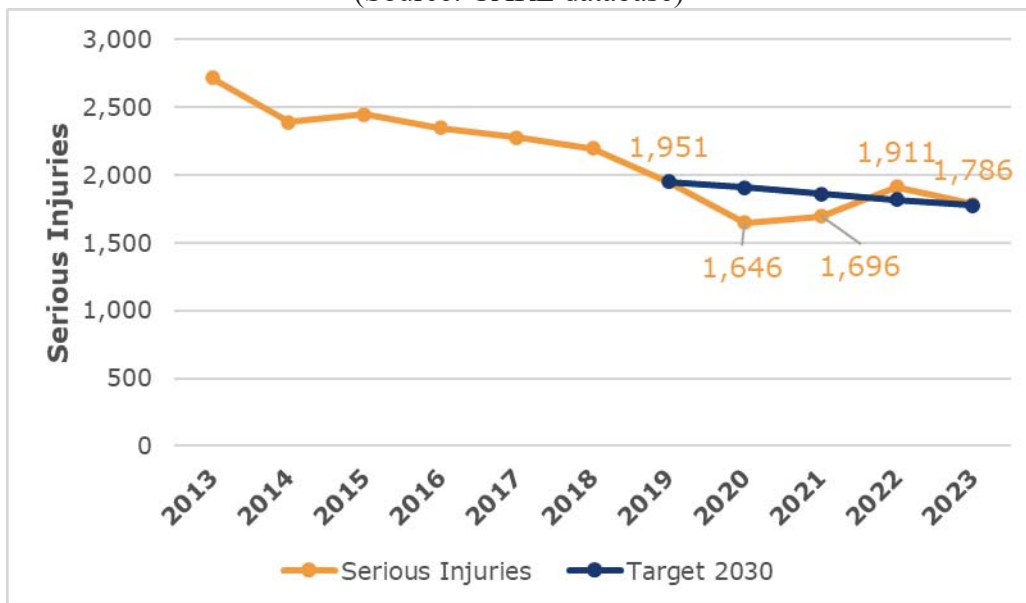


Figure 28.3 Serious road injuries
(Source: CARE database)⁵



Compared to 2019⁶, a decrease of 5% in road fatalities was recorded in 2024. However, Sweden is not yet on track to meet the **2030 target of halving the number of road fatalities**.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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. Sweden has set the average of 2017-2019 as baseline.

Table 28.6: Monitoring of additional road safety targets⁷

Indicator	Initial value (mean 2017-2019)	2023	Goal 2030
1. Number of suicides in transportation area	52	44	to be reduced
2. Number of seriously injured in single-bicycle accidents	1,600	2,200	1,200

Compared to the EU average, Sweden shows a relatively high proportion of fatalities on rural roads and fatalities among older people⁸. In fact, fatalities outside urban areas accounted for 69% of all road fatalities in 2022.

An overview of the evolution of road fatalities and serious injuries during the period 2019-2023 (which is the latest available year) is provided below for specific types of roads, crashes and road users.

Table 28.7: Evolution of road fatalities, 2019-2023

Fatalities	2019	2023	% in 2023	% change 2019-2023
Total road fatalities	221	229	-	+4%
Inside urban areas	49	48	21%	-2%
Outside urban areas	146	162	71%	+11%
Motorways	20	19	8%	-5%
Single vehicle crashes	75	99	43%	+32%
Multi vehicle crashes	120	107	47%	-11%
Car occupants	103	110	48%	+7%
PTW riders	35	32	14%	-9%
Cyclists	17	24	10%	+41%
Pedestrians	27	24	10%	-11%

Table 28.8: Evolution of serious injuries, 2019-2023

Serious Injuries	2019	2023	% in 2023	% change 2019-2023
Total serious injuries	1,951	1,786	-	-8%
Inside urban areas	720	755	42%	+5%
Outside urban areas	986	983	55%	0%
Motorways	202	3	0%	-99%
Single vehicle crashes	715	686	38%	-4%

⁷ Source: Trafikverket (2023), Analys av trafiksäkerhetsutvecklingen 2023. Available at: <https://trafikverket.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1853965/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

⁸ European Commission (2023), Country Profile Sweden. Road Safety Observatory. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General for Transport.

Serious Injuries	2019	2023	% in 2023	% change 2019-2023
Multi vehicle crashes	1,021	904	51%	-11%
Car occupants	1,058	835	47%	-21%
PTW riders	313	297	17%	-5%
Cyclists	198	233	13%	+18%
Pedestrians	217	198	11%	-9%

3.2 Road Safety Performance Indicators

The use rates of seat-belts among passenger car occupants in Sweden are higher than the average EU rates. Self-reported drink-driving is lower compared to the EU average. Additionally, the passenger car fleet in Sweden is younger than the EU average.

Table 28.9: Road Safety Performance Indicators, 2022 – 2025 (Source: ERSO, Country Profiles)

	Sweden		EU	
	2022	2025	2022	2025
Speeding⁹				
% of passenger cars travelling within speed limits ^a				
Motorways	44.4	50.0	-	-
Rural Roads	51.7	55.0	-	-
Urban Roads	66.0	63.0	-	-
Seat belt & CRS use rates (%) ^{a,b}				
Front	97.9	95.5	93.1	92.4
Rear	-	-	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	47.0	-	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	7.1	-	11.8	11.8
Driver Distraction ^a				
% of drivers not using hand-held mobile device/phone while driving	94.6	-	94.8	94.5
Vehicle Safety				
% of new passenger cars rated with 4 EuroNCAP stars and above ^a	95.5	93.0	83.6	82.7
Average age of passenger car fleet (years) ^d	10.7	11.0	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

⁹ An EU average is not available for speeding, due to different legal speed limits among countries, which does not allow for a straightforward comparison.

4. Monitoring Road Safety work

Swedish Transport Administration is in charge of overall collaboration on road safety, including monitoring and updates.

Monitoring the actual numbers of fatalities and severely injured together with the outcome of the indicators, are followed up and analysed annually under the direction of Swedish Transport Administration. The main way road safety is monitored is the road safety performance indicators and their outcome. The analysis is presented at annual results conferences attended by various stakeholders which through their activities can contribute to meeting the interim targets.

With the analysis report as a starting point, concerned stakeholders plan measures in their different activities and operations. This planning is administered by the Swedish Transport Administration and results in the Road Safety Action Plan (described above) where all stakeholder commitments are documented. The action plan is followed up and revised annually¹⁰.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In Sweden, the long-term goal for road safety is zero fatalities and severe injuries. Interim targets are set for the numbers of fatalities and severely injured by the government in interaction with relevant stakeholders and by 2030, interim targets **are reducing road fatalities by 50%** (maximum of 133 fatalities by 2030) **and serious injuries by 25%**. Further, interim targets are also set for a number of SPIs. In light of the targets and road safety trends, the road safety action plan 2022-2025 focuses on six priority action areas: speed, sober driving, safe cycling, safety for pedestrians (focus on falls), suicide prevention and leadership for road safety. The action plan contains a total of 250 measures that 33 different authorities and stakeholders intend to implement during the period.

In 2024, Sweden, with 20 road fatalities per million inhabitants, had the **best road safety performance in the EU**, in terms of the lowest numbers of fatalities per population. Compared to the EU average, Sweden shows a relatively high proportion of fatalities on rural roads and fatalities among older people. Also, a large proportion of serious injuries is comprised by cyclists in single-bicycle crashes and pedestrians in fall crashes.

Compared to 2019, the number of fatalities decreased by 4% in 2024. However, despite this decrease, without an accelerated pace of change in road safety measures Sweden is not yet ready **to meet the 2030 target of halving road fatalities** (i.e. maximum of 133 fatalities by 2030). Between 2019 and 2023 the number of serious injuries decreased by 8%, indicating that Sweden is on track to **meet the 2030 target of reducing serious injuries in 2030**.

¹⁰ Example: [Uppföljning av Aktionsplan för säker vägtrafik 2022–2025](#)