
EU Commission: road fatalities on the rise. 20,000 deaths in a year. Bulgaria and Romania top the list

Road fatalities in Europe have increased in 2021. Indeed, nearly 20,000 people were killed in road accidents. The death rate has increased by 6% compared to 2020, although it remains below pre-pandemic levels. The European Commission said this in a statement, announcing the road fatalities figures on the occasion of the annual Excellence in Road Safety Awards. Over the past 12 months, 19,900 people have lost their lives in road accidents. The rise followed an unprecedented annual fall of 17% between 2019 and 2020, which was also the result of lower traffic levels due to the pandemic lockdowns. EU-wide, there were 45 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2021 (from 20/million in Sweden and 22/million in Denmark to 81/million in Bulgaria and 92/million in Romania). For the first seven months of 2022, preliminary figures show an average increase of over 10% of road deaths compared to the same period in 2021. However, the current trend is still below pre-pandemic levels. As part of its Vision Zero strategy, the Commission is working closely with Member States on a holistic safe-system approach, encompassing safe vehicles, safe infrastructure, safe road use, and better post-crash care. The Commission has also published a series of reports as part of its European Road Safety Observatory on topics such as road safety, the importance of seat-belt wearing, the vulnerability of children, cyclists and seniors as road users, or driver distractions.

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