



LITHUANIA

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Lithuania recorded 184 road deaths in 2019, which is 11 more compared to 2018, when the country recorded its lowest figure. Lithuania is one of the IRTAD countries that has achieved the strongest reduction in the number of road deaths in recent years. Since 2000, the number of road deaths decreased by 71%. In 2019, the mortality rate was 6.6 road deaths per 100 000 population. A new road safety strategy is under preparation and will be based on a vision of zero fatalities and seriously injured in traffic.

Impact of Covid-19

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Lithuania introduced lockdown measures on 17 March 2020. These affected the movement of people and goods on the road and, in turn, the exposure of people to road crashes. The number of road deaths therefore decreased by 78% in April 2020 compared to the average for 2017-19. Traffic volume decreased by 36% in April 2020 compared to April 2019, according to preliminary data.

Table 1. Road fatalities by month

	Average 2017-19	2020	% change
January	19	17	-10.5
February	13	10	-23.1
March	11	13	18.2
April	9	2	-77.8
May	13	18	38.5
June	14	10	-28.6
July	22	12	-45.5
August	19	14	-26.3
September	15	25	66.7
October	16	13	-18.8
November	16	..	..
December	15	..	..

Table 2. Road motor vehicle traffic by month

	2019	2020	% change
January	4 293	4 801	11.8
February	4 664	4 924	5.8
March	5 013	3 997	-20.3
April	5 633	3 619	-35.8
May	5 759	4 868	-15.5
June	6 222	5 944	-4.5
July	6 411	6 556	2.3
August	6 740	6 827	1.3
September	5 824	6 218	6.8
October	5 665	..	..
November	5 048	..	..
December	4 904	..	..

Trends

Lithuania registered an overall **increase in the number of road deaths in 2019**. According to the latest available data, 184 persons lost their lives in traffic crashes in Lithuania in 2019. This represents a 6.4% rise compared to 2018. In 2018, 173 road deaths were registered - the lowest number of road deaths on record.

The **longer-term trend for road deaths** in Lithuania shows significant progress. Between 2000 and 2019, the number of annual road fatalities fell by 71%. The strongest decline occurred in 2008-2010. Between 2007 and 2010, the number of road deaths decreased by 60%.

The number of **traffic deaths per 100 000 inhabitants** in Lithuania has fallen by 64% between 2000 and 2019. In 2019, 6.6 traffic deaths per 100 000 inhabitants were recorded, compared to 18.3 in 2000. The average in the European Union is 5.1 deaths per 100 000 inhabitants in 2019.

Lithuania recorded 1.1 **road fatalities per 10 000 registered vehicles** in 2019. This represents a decrease of 79% compared to the year 2000, when the rate of deaths to registered vehicles stood at 5.0.

Country Profile

Population in 2019: 2.7 million

GDP per capita in 2019: USD 19 444

Cost of road crashes: 0.8% of GDP (2019)

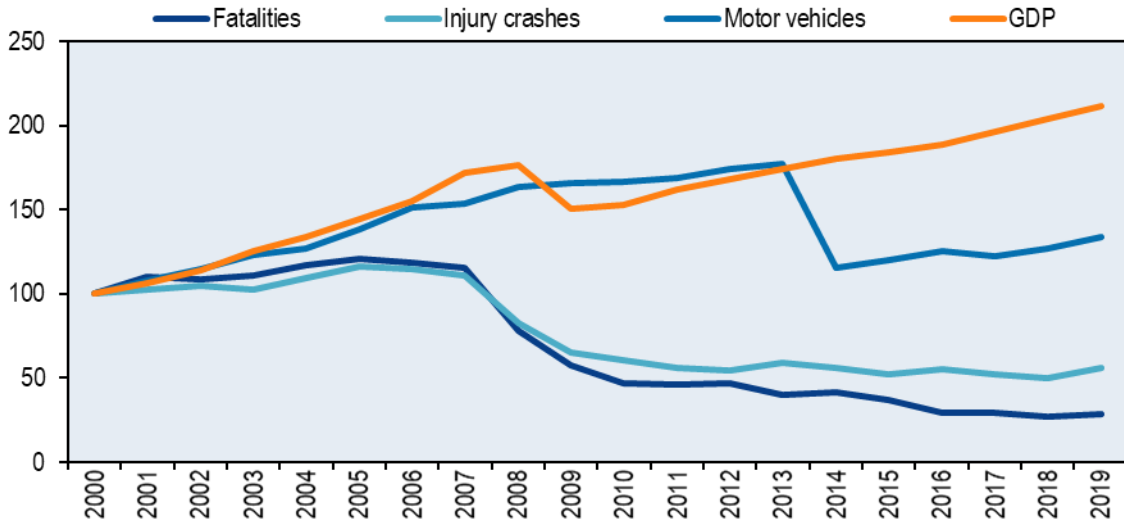
Road network in 2019: 91 463 kilometres (urban roads 77%; rural roads 23%; motorways 0.4%)

Registered motor vehicles in 2019: 1.7 million (cars 88%; goods vehicles 8%; motorised two-wheelers 3%, motorcycles 2.3%)

Speed limits: 50 km/h on urban roads; 90 km/h on rural roads; 120-130 km/h on motorways)

Limits on Blood Alcohol Content: 0.4 g/l for general drivers; 0.0 g/l for professional drivers, novice drivers and motorcyclists

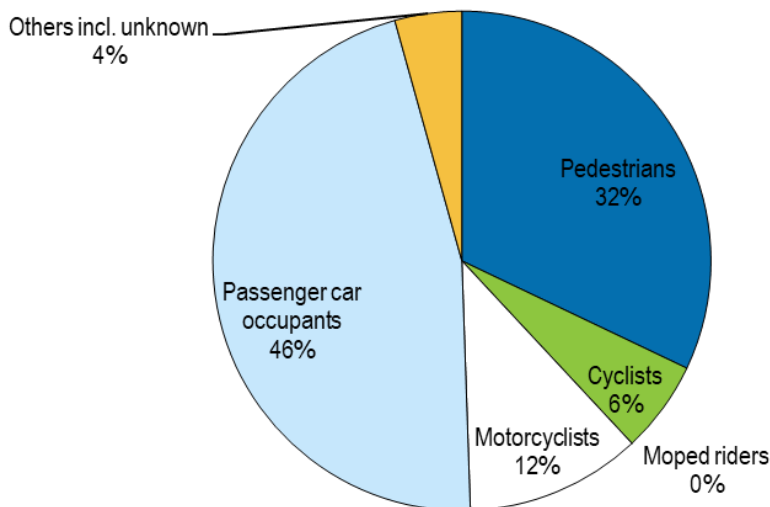
Figure 1. Road safety, vehicle stock and GDP trends
Index 2000 = 100



Note: In 2014, vehicles which failed to meet the requirements of compulsory civil liability insurance and/or technical inspection were removed from the register. This creates a break in the data series.

Analysis by road user group shows that **half of road deaths are vulnerable road users**. While car occupants accounted for the largest share of road deaths in 2019 with 46% of the total, pedestrians represented a very large share (32%) of total road deaths. This is much higher than the average for OECD countries. Motorcyclists accounted for 11% and cyclists for 6% of all road deaths. The long-term trend shows that traffic in Lithuania has become safer for all road user groups. Since 2010, the strongest decline occurred among cyclists who experienced 52% fewer road fatalities in 2019 compared to 2000 (from 23 to 11). During the same period the total number of road deaths decreased by 39%.

Figure 2. Road fatalities by road user group in percentage of total, 2019



Road deaths by age group show that road safety is not improving for all age groups. However, as absolute numbers are relatively small, detailed analysis is not so relevant. The age groups the most at risk in traffic are the young population aged 18-20 and 21-24, with a mortality rate of respectively 15.6 and 11.0 in 2019.

Figure 3. Road fatality rates by age group, 2010-2019

Deaths per 100 000 population in a given age group

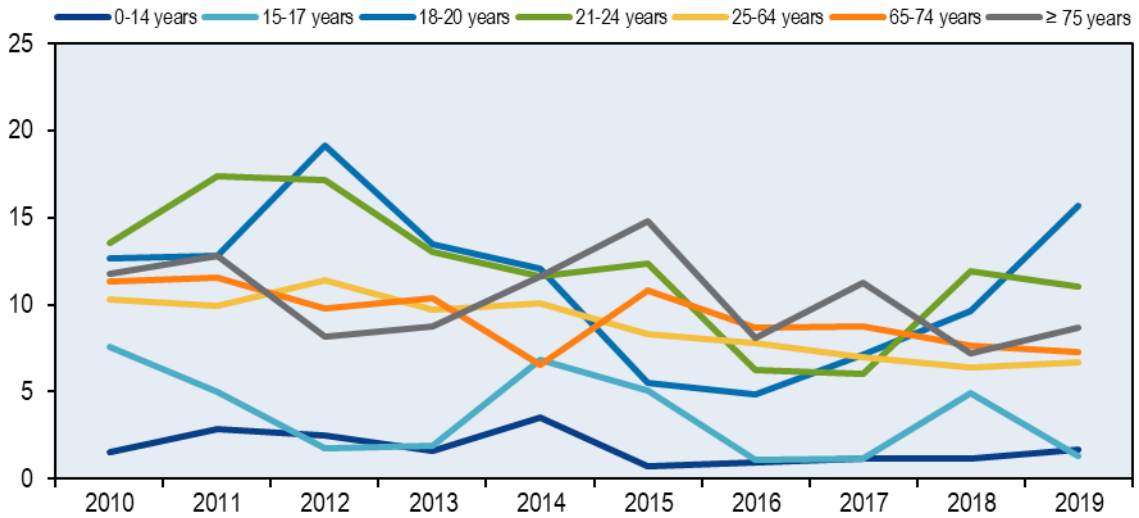
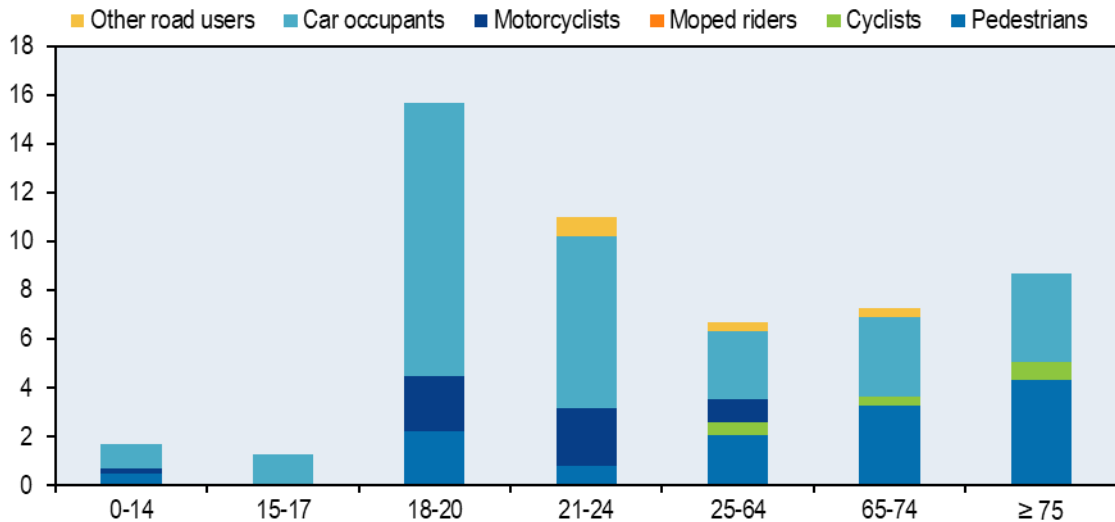


Figure 4. Road fatality rate by age and road user group, 2019

Fatalities per 100 000 population



Analysis of **fatalities by road type** shows progress in road safety mainly on the rural network. Since 2010, the number of road deaths has increased on urban roads (+3.5%) and motorways (+20%). It decreased substantially on rural roads (-57%). The motorway network has not developed much. Currently it represents only 0.4% of the road network

or around 500 km. Crashes on the rural network are more severe as speeds are higher and infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians is less developed.

Figure 5. Road fatalities by road type

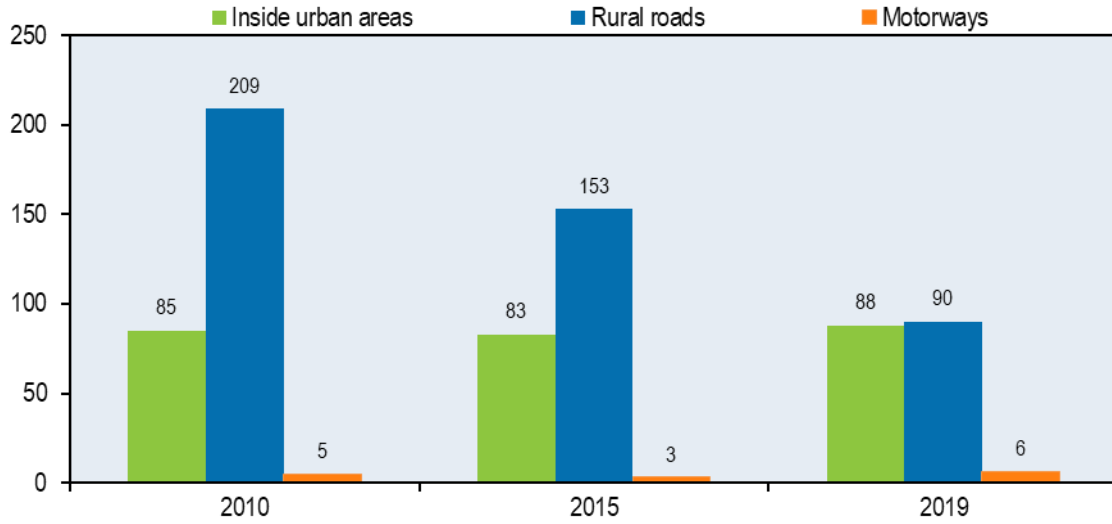
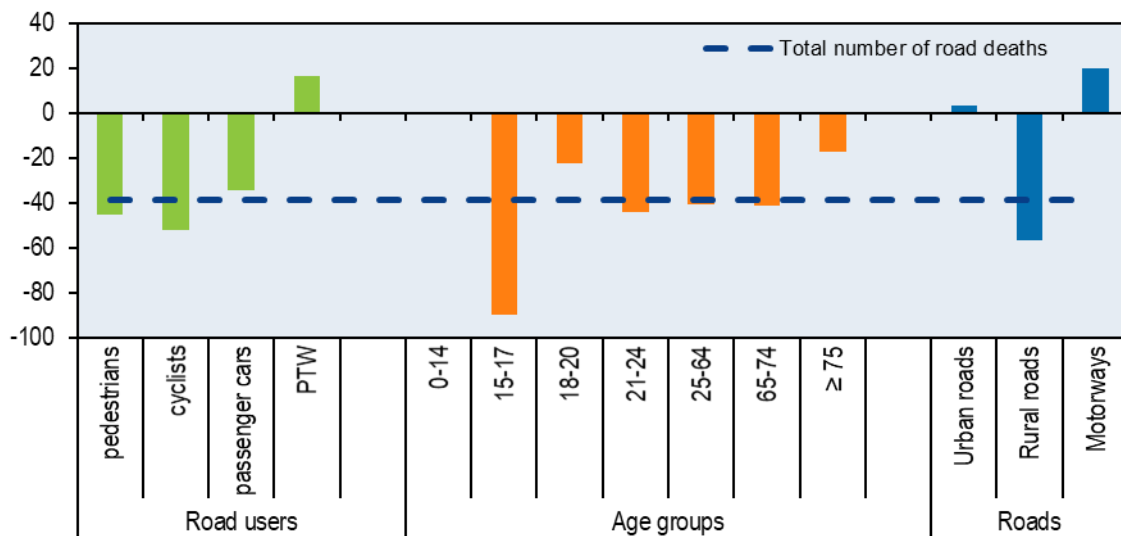


Figure 6. Evolution of road deaths by user category, age group and road type, 2010-19



Economic costs of road crashes

Traffic crashes represent a significant cost for society, estimated at around EUR 334 million (0.8% of GDP) in 2019. These costs are estimated using a “capital approach” method.

Table 3. Costs of road crashes, 2019

	Total [EUR]
Fatalities	111.78 million
Injured	181.35 million
Total	293.13 million
Total as % of GDP	0.7%

Source: Transport Competence Agency. Statistics of fatal and injury road accidents in Lithuania, 2016–19.

Behaviour

The behaviour of road users is an important determinant of a country’s road safety performance. According to police data, **inappropriate speed** is the main cause of traffic crashes in Lithuania.

Speeding at 30 km/h above the limit is considered a serious violation. It incurs severe sanctions, including immediate licence withdrawal for novice drivers. Observations in 2019 indicated that 17% to 28% of all drivers exceed the speed limit by more than 10 km/h on different types of state roads. In 2014, research showed that 33% of drivers exceed the speed limit by more than 10 km/h in urban areas.

Table 4. Passenger car speed limits by road type, 2020

	General speed limit	Comments
Urban roads	50 km/h	
Rural roads	90 km/h (70 km/h on gravel roads)	70 km/h for novice drivers (driving experience of less than 24 months)
Motorways	120 or 130 km/h (110 km/h in winter)	90 km/h for novice drivers

Driving under the influence of alcohol is another major cause of road crashes in Lithuania. In 2019, 11% of fatalities were caused by drink driving. That said the number of alcohol-related crashes halved between 2004 and 2015.

The general maximum authorised blood alcohol content (BAC) in Lithuania is 0.4 g/l. For novice drivers with less than 24 months driving experience, professional drivers, moped and motorcycle drivers, the limit is 0.0 g/l since 1 May 2015.

Since 1 January 2016, it alcohol sales in gas stations are banned. Since 1 April 2016, driving with a BAC of 1.5 g/l and above is considered a crime and carries up to one year in prison.

Drivers that test positive for driving under the influence of drugs are subject to a fine of EUR 300-900 and licence withdrawal of 12 to 36 months. They can also be subject to 10 to 30 days of administrative arrest.

In 2017, the police only reported a single injury road crash with a **driver under the influence of drugs**. The real number of drug-related crashes is certainly higher as there is not yet a systematic process to check the presence of drugs in the case of a road crash.

An increasing problem for traffic safety in Lithuania is distraction, for instance through the **use of mobile phones** while driving. However, there is no estimate of the number of fatal crashes due to the use of mobile phones. In Lithuania it is not permitted to drive using a hand-held mobile phone. Hands-free mobile phones may be operated.

The share of **sleepiness and fatigue** as a causal factor in crashes is especially challenging to detect. There are no estimates for the number of fatal crashes due to drowsiness for Lithuania.

Seat-belt wearing is compulsory in Lithuania in both front and rear seats. Children below 135 cm in height must use dedicated child restraints. Based on a 2019 survey on roads of national significance, 97% of car drivers and 92% of front seat passengers were wearing a seatbelt. Only 26% of rear seat passengers did so.

Table 5. Seat belt wearing rate by car occupancy¹

In percent

	2014	2016	2019
Front seats			
General (driver and passenger)	96	98	94.5
Driver	97	95	97
Passenger	95	97	92
Rear seats			
General	33	26	26

1. Data refer to roads of national significance.

For motorcyclists, **helmet wearing** is the most effective passive safety habit. Helmets are compulsory for users of all of motorised two-wheelers in Lithuania. However, there is no information on the helmet-wearing rate of riders of motorised two-wheelers. Bicycle helmets are compulsory for children under 18 years of age.

Road safety management and strategies

Several factors have influenced Lithuania's road safety performance as captured by the above indicators. Since 1991, road safety performance can be divided into the following periods:

- **1992–96:** A significant reduction in the number of fatalities occurred in 1992, immediately after the break-up of the Soviet Union. The following years saw dramatic political changes and economic austerity, but a positive trend in road safety mainly through the introduction of safer European vehicles.
- **1997–2000:** in this period, the number of traffic fatalities increased slightly, with a new peak reached in 1998. It then dropped again in the two following years as a result of an economic crisis in neighbouring Russia.
- **2000–07:** An improved economic situation in Lithuania brought a rapid increase in traffic volume accompanied by a yearly increase in road traffic fatalities.
- **2008–17:** An important breakthrough was achieved in this period due to citizens' growing awareness of road safety issues and the European Union's official target to reduce road fatalities by 50% between 2001 and 2010. Lithuania reached the EU road safety target in 2010. The economic downturn in 2008-10 probably contributed to a reduction in traffic and a decrease in the number of road fatalities. The year 2016 saw a further marked decrease, explained partly by a ban on alcohol sales in the gas stations.
- **2018–30:** A Vision Zero strategy for road and rail transport aims to reduce sharply the number of fatalities and serious injuries on Lithuania's roads and rail lines.

Responsibility for the **organisation of road safety** in Lithuania lies with the Ministry of Transport and Communications. It is supported by the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration and the Lithuanian Road Administration. Police and municipalities are further agencies with responsibility for road safety. A State Traffic Safety Commission makes recommendations on road safety policy. It consists of representatives of state and municipal administration bodies nominated by the government.

A new **National Traffic Safety Development Programme** is under preparation after the implementation of the preceding 2011-17 programme. It will be based on a vision of zero killed and seriously injured in traffic.

Measures

Road safety management: As of 2018, Lithuania has started collecting injury data based on the Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS3+). In 2017, the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration started conducting in-depth investigations of all fatal crashes. This

allows for the collection of additional information about the circumstances of crashes and design more targeted road safety measures.

Speed management: In 2018, Lithuania introduced section control to enforce speed limits on sections of road. As of June 2018, there were already 50 sections equipped with automated enforcement.

Road users: Lithuania's parliament approved legislation to introduce an alcohol lock programme in 2018. Already since 2016, the sale of alcohol in gas stations is prohibited. A maximum BAC level of 0.0 g/l for drivers with less than 24 months driving experience, professional drivers, moped and motorcycle riders has been in force since 2015.

Definitions, methodology, data collection

In Lithuania, a **road fatality** is any person killed in a traffic crash within 30 days of the crash (prior to 1995, the limit was 7 days). There is no official definition of slight and **serious injuries** in use, however. Nevertheless, in 2015 police reported the number of traffic injuries by severity, based on health sector definitions:

- Seriously injured: persons suffering a road injury entailing an irreversible mutilation of one part of the body or a loss of more than 30% of working capacity.
- Lightly injured: persons suffering a road injury for more than ten days, or a loss of working capacity between 5% and 30%.
- Slightly injured: persons suffering a road injury for less than ten days or a loss of working capacity inferior to 5%.

Lithuania started collecting serious injury data based on the Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale of three or more (MAIS3+) in 2018. Most crash data is collected and managed by traffic police. Hospitals and insurance companies also have data on some crashes. There is no estimate of under-reporting. According to the police, nearly 100% of injury crash data are collected and recorded in their database. Information about the severity of an injury is included in only 65% of injury crashes. Road safety experts lack information to help identify the causes of crashes. Information on road user behaviour is also limited. Information on injury type is not systematically recorded.

Resources

Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania: <http://sumin.lrv.lt/>

Transport Competence Agency: <https://www.tka.lt/>

Lithuanian Road Administration: <http://lakd.lrv.lt/>

State Enterprise Regitra: <https://www.regitra.lt/en/general>

Road safety and traffic data

	1990	2000	2010	2017	2018	2019	2019 % change over			
							2018	2010	2000	1990
Reported safety data										
Fatalities	1 081	641	299	188	173	184	6.4%	-38.5%	-71.3%	-83.0%
Injury crashes	5 135	5 807	3 530	3 049	2 921	3 260	11.6%	-7.6%	-43.9%	-36.5%
Injured persons hospitalised	..	..	..	1 048	967	1 088	12.5%	..	..	..
Deaths per 100,000 population	29.3	18.3	9.5	6.6	6.2	6.6	6.9%	-30.8%	-63.9%	-77.5%
Deaths per 10,000 registered vehicles	12.7	5.0	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.7%	-23.2%	-78.5%	-91.6%
Fatalities by road user										
Pedestrians	..	..	108	69	71	59	-16.9%	-45.4%	..	..
Cyclists	..	..	23	13	9	11	22.2%	-52.2%	..	..
Moped riders	..	..	3	4	1	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	..	..
Motorcyclists	..	..	15	13	15	21	40.0%	40.0%	..	..
Passenger car occupants	..	..	130	82	73	85	16.4%	-34.6%	..	..
Other road users	..	..	20	7	4	8	100.0%	-60.0%	..	..
Fatalities by age group										
0-14 years	..	..	5	5	5	7	40.0%	40.0%	..	..
15-17 years	..	..	6	1	4	1	-75.0%	-83.3%	..	..
18-20 years	..	..	21	7	9	14	55.6%	-33.3%	..	..
21-24 years	..	..	26	9	16	14	-12.5%	-46.2%	..	..
25-64 years	..	..	173	108	97	102	5.2%	-41.0%	..	..
65-74 years	..	..	34	24	21	20	-4.8%	-41.2%	..	..
≥ 75 years	..	..	29	31	20	24	20.0%	-17.2%	..	..
Fatalities by road type										
Urban roads	..	..	85	83	71	88	23.9%	3.5%	..	..
Rural roads	..	..	209	93	98	90	-8.2%	-56.9%	..	..
Motorways	..	..	5	12	4	6	50.0%	20.0%	..	..
Traffic data										
Registered vehicles (thousands)	849	1 286	2 145	1 578	1 628	1 719	5.6%	-19.8%	33.6%	102.6%
Registered vehicles per 1,000 population	229.7	366.3	682.5	554.2	579.7	615.2	6.1%	-9.9%	68.0%	167.8%