

Worldwide, an estimated 1.2 million people are killed in transport accidents each year, mostly due to road traffic accidents, and as many as 50 million people are injured or disabled (WHO, 2009b). In EU countries alone, they were responsible for approximately 48 000 deaths in 2008. In 2008, Italy, Poland, France and Germany each experienced around 5 000-6 000 transport accident deaths.

Mortality from road accidents is the leading cause of death among children and young people, and especially young men, in many countries. The fatality risk for motor cycles and mopeds is highest among all modes of transport, even though most fatal traffic injuries occur in passenger vehicles (ETSC, 2003; Beck *et al.*, 2007).

Besides the social, physical and psychological effects, the direct and indirect financial costs of transport accidents are substantial; one estimate put these at 2% of gross national product annually in highly-motorised countries (Peden *et al.*, 2004). Injury and mortality from transport accidents remains a serious public health concern.

Death rates were the highest in 2008 in Lithuania, Romania and Latvia, all in excess of 15 deaths per 100 000 population (Figure 1.6.1). They were the lowest in Malta, the Netherlands, Iceland, Sweden and Switzerland, at five deaths per 100 000 population or less. A four-fold difference exists between the countries with the lowest and highest rates. Deaths from transport accidents are much higher for males than for females in all EU countries, with disparities in rates ranging from three times higher for males in Denmark, Sweden and Germany to five or more times higher in the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Poland. On average, almost four times as many males than females die in transport accidents (Figure 1.6.1).

Much transport accident injury and mortality is preventable. Road security has increased greatly over the past decades in many countries through improvements of road systems, education and prevention campaigns, the adoption of new laws and regulations and the enforcement of these new laws through more traffic controls. As a result, death rates due to transport accidents have been cut by around 40% in

EU countries since 1994 (Figures 1.6.2 and 1.6.3). Estonia has seen the largest decline in transport accident mortality of 78% between 1994 and 2008, with most of the fall occurring in the mid-1990s following independence. Reductions in Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia and Germany since 1994 are close to 60%, although vehicle kilometers travelled have increased by 2.7 times on average in European countries in the same period (OECD/ITF, 2008). Death rates have also declined in Greece, but at a slower pace, and therefore remain above the EU average. In Bulgaria and Romania there have been significant increases in death rates from road accidents since 1994.

Based on an extrapolation of past trends, projections from the World Bank indicate that between 2000 and 2020, road traffic deaths may decline further by about 30% in high-income countries, but may increase substantially in low- and middle-income countries if no additional road safety counter-measures are put in place (Peden *et al.*, 2004).

Definition and deviations

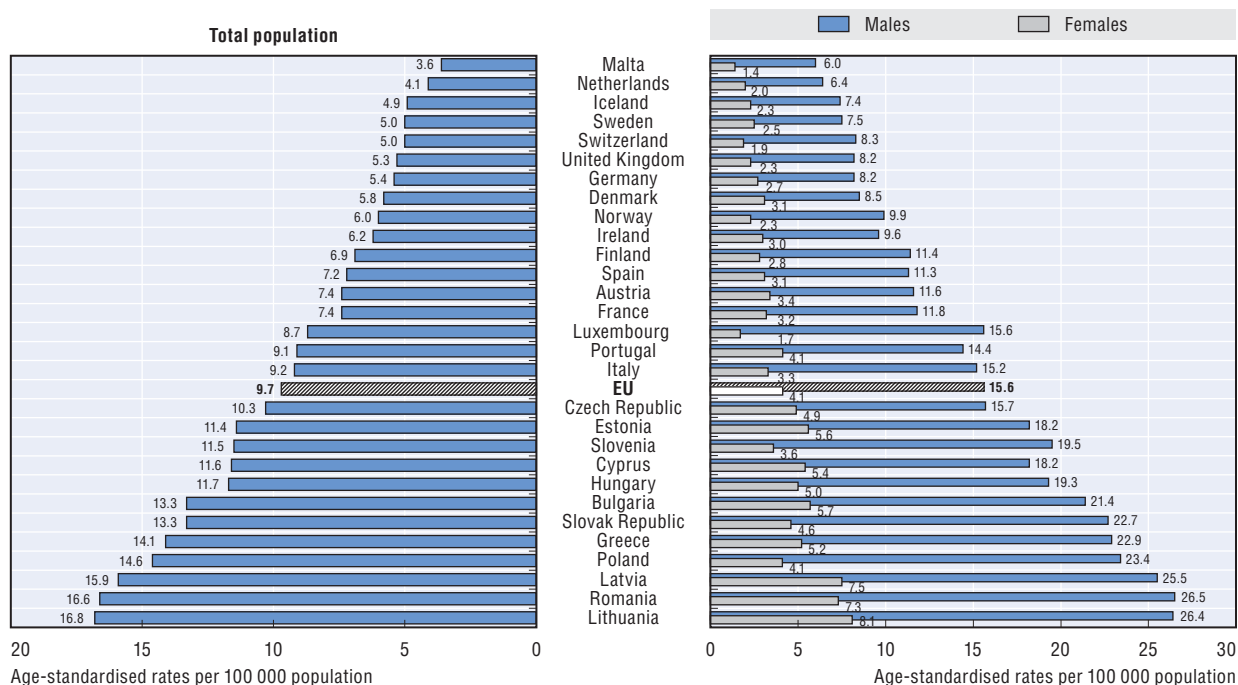
Mortality rates are based on numbers of deaths registered in a country in a year divided by the size of the corresponding population. The rates have been directly age-standardised to the WHO European standard population to remove variations arising from differences in age structures across countries and over time. The source is the Eurostat Statistics Database.

Mathers *et al.* (2005) have provided a general assessment of the coverage, completeness and reliability of data on causes of death.

Deaths from transport accidents are classified to ICD-10 codes V01-V99. The majority of deaths from transport accidents are due to road traffic accidents.

Mortality rates from transport accidents in Luxembourg are biased upward because of the large volume of traffic in transit, resulting in a significant proportion of *non-residents* killed.

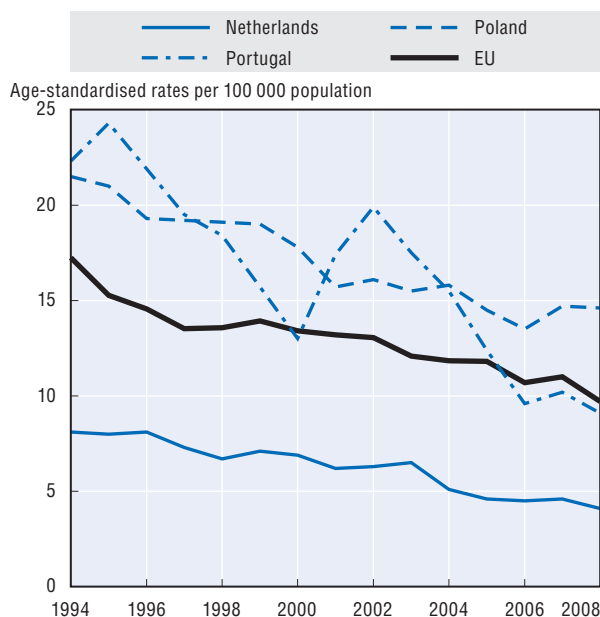
1.6.1. Transport accident mortality rates, 2008 (or nearest year available)



Source: Eurostat Statistics Database. Data are age-standardised to the WHO European standard population.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932335704>

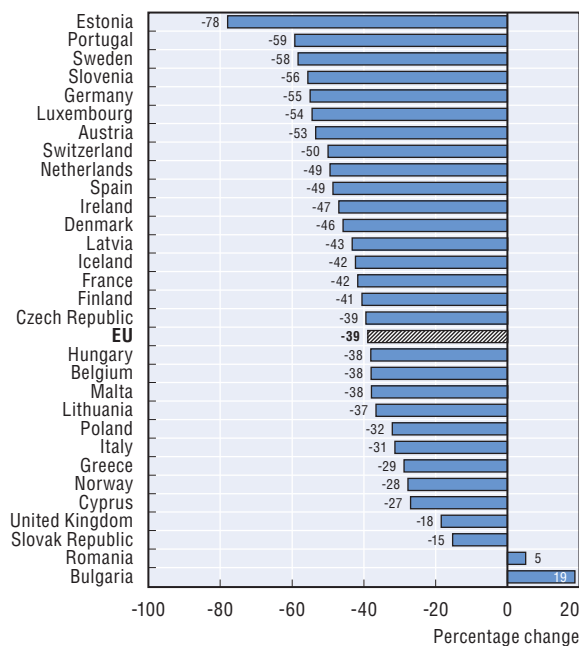
1.6.2. Trends in transport accident mortality rates, selected EU countries, 1994-2008



Source: Eurostat Statistics Database. Data are age-standardised to the WHO European standard population.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932335723>

1.6.3. Change in transport accident mortality rates, 1994-2008 (or nearest year available)



Source: Eurostat Statistics Database. Data are age-standardised to the WHO European standard population.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932335742>



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