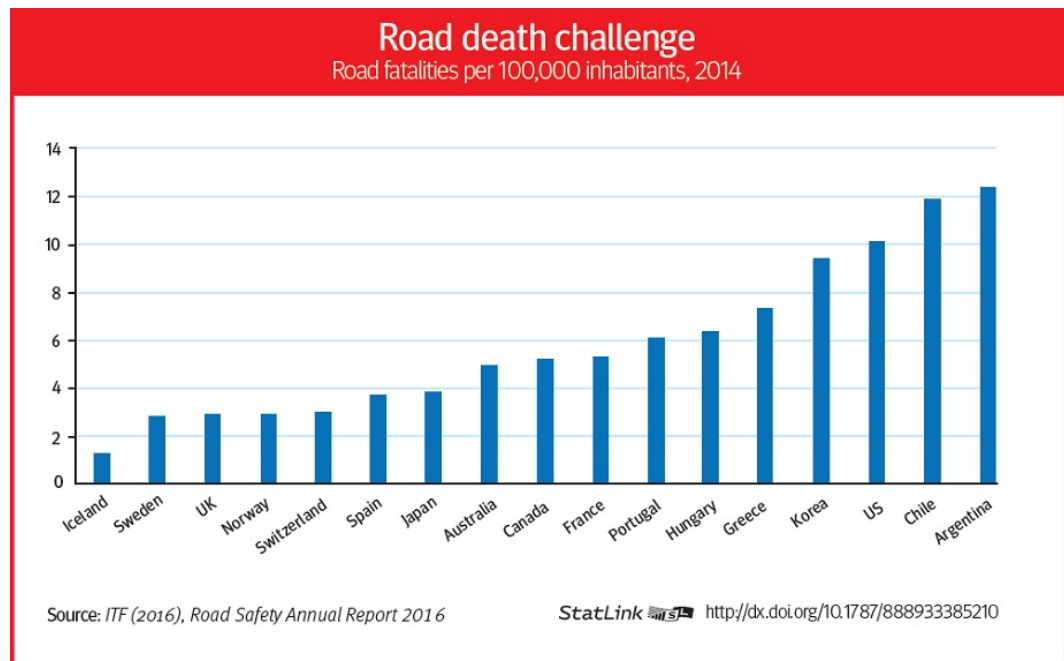


Road death challenge

Last update: 15 March 2017



Every year about 1.2 million people die in crashes on the world’s roads and many millions are seriously injured. This heavy toll comes despite decades of efforts to improve traffic safety.

Not that the trend is all bleak. The number of road fatalities in 32 IRTAD (International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group) countries decreased by 42% between 2000 and 2014, an impressive achievement for a relatively short period. Many countries saw reductions of over 50%, and some achieved reductions of up to 70%. However, in 2015 the number of road deaths increased in at least 19 countries.

Data for some countries point to high rates, up to 26 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in South Africa. The IRTAD countries with the lowest road fatality rates are all located in Europe. In 2014, five countries—Iceland, Sweden, the UK, Norway and Switzerland—recorded less than three fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants.

Reasons for this overall good performance include the implementation of systematic road safety strategies, addressing speeding and drink driving, better road infrastructure and safer vehicles, and better road trauma management.

Moreover, the economic downturn, which hit many countries over the past decade, may have contributed thanks to fewer trips.

But while car crash fatalities have fallen, fatalities among pedestrians, cyclists and people over 65 years old have not fallen and have even risen in some cases. In France, moped riders and motorcyclists account for almost a quarter of total fatalities, for instance. Drink driving, speeding and not wearing seat belts or helmets remain leading causes of serious and fatal injuries.

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