



# ALCOHOL INTERLOCKS IN EUROPE

AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT  
AND FORTHCOMING  
PROGRAMMES



European Transport Safety Council

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## INTRODUCTION

22,660 people were killed in the European Union as a consequence of road collisions in 2019. Driving under the influence of alcohol is one of the four main killers on the road, alongside speeding, non-use of the seatbelt and driver distraction.

**Around 2,654 people were recorded killed in alcohol-related collisions in police records in 2018 in 23 EU countries. This figure is likely to be higher due to a high level of underreporting of road deaths attributed to alcohol as well as data collection limitations.<sup>1</sup>**

A study commissioned by the European Commission's DG MOVE and published in 2014 concluded that alcohol interlocks can offer an effective and cost-beneficial improvement to road safety in Europe, particularly for repeat offenders and in commercial vehicles.<sup>2</sup>

Alcohol interlock programmes give offenders who would normally lose their driving licence a possibility to continue driving, as long as they are sober. The ignition interlock device makes sure that drivers can only start the engine after having completed a breath test that has indicated that they are sober. At the same time the device can collect information that can be used to monitor drink-driving behaviour.

ETSC has long been in favour of alcohol interlocks, in particular as part of a rehabilitation programme. Studies have repeatedly shown that the combination of alcohol interlocks and rehabilitation programmes cut reoffending rates. In 2016, ETSC set out guidelines to support authorities that want to introduce an alcohol programme including on legislation, technical and procedural aspects, rehabilitation, enforcement, costs, piloting and evaluation; and communication.<sup>3</sup>



This new report aims at providing a more practical approach with an inventory of long-running alcohol-interlock programmes in Europe, showing how each country has implemented their national scheme. It also identifies strengths and weaknesses to advocate for more effective measures and to inspire other Member States to deliver successful programmes. All the information collated in this publication has been provided by the panel of contributing experts.

Other countries have decided to follow this trend and to include alcohol interlock programmes in their legal systems. This is the case in Lithuania, France and Italy. Lithuania and France are already running programmes, whereas Italy, after a successful trial, is now in the legislative process to adopt the law in the coming months.

<sup>1</sup> ETSC (2019), Progress in reducing drink-driving and other alcohol-related road deaths in Europe, <https://bit.ly/3kDcICS>

<sup>2</sup> ECORYS (2014), Study on the prevention of drink-driving by the use of alcohol interlock devices, <https://bit.ly/3mzuZlj>

<sup>3</sup> ETSC (2016) Alcohol Interlocks and Drink-driving Rehabilitation Programmes in the EU. <https://bit.ly/2KTAf6H>



## PART I

MANDATORY  
FITTING OF ALCOHOL  
INTERLOCKS

INVENTORY  
OF EUROPEAN  
PROGRAMMES FOR  
OFFENDERS

# AUSTRIA

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>4</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK COMBINED WITH REHABILITATION

RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION	Driving licence administration authorities (an operative coordinating institution ("ABS Institution") has been created for the purpose of the trial)
TRIAL	Pilot project 2012-2013
ENTRY INTO FORCE	2017 – 2022 (5 year trial)
POSITION IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM	Administrative
HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?	150 - 200 installations per year
WHO ?	<p>Offenders that volunteer based on the following criteria :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only category B and BE</li> <li>• A suspension of the driving licence for at least four months</li> <li>• The expiration of at least half of the suspension period</li> <li>• No alcohol addiction</li> </ul>
REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS	<p>The driver has to meet a mentor every two months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of data readout for violations</li> <li>• Discussion of the participant's experience with the device Discussion of the driving behaviour in reference to the data readout and driver's logbook and development of strategies for a successful continuation of the programme</li> <li>• Support with administrative procedures in relation to the DUI offence</li> <li>• No mandatory medical or psychological examination (medical or psychological measures can be required in the revocation proceedings, in this case they have to be fulfilled before entering the alcohol interlock programme)</li> </ul>
COSTS	<p>Costs (approximate values)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,500 euros/year for the device</li> <li>• 600 euros minimum for the mentoring programme</li> <li>• 300 euros to install and remove the device</li> </ul>
GENDER/AGE	Approximately 80% men
PARTICIPATION RATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No general participation rate can be identified because there are no figures available of how many are eligible.</li> <li>• It can be said that once a candidate is in contact with the ABS institution there is a participation rate of nearly 99%</li> </ul>
EVALUATION	No official evaluation yet (Evaluation planned after the trial period ends in 2022)



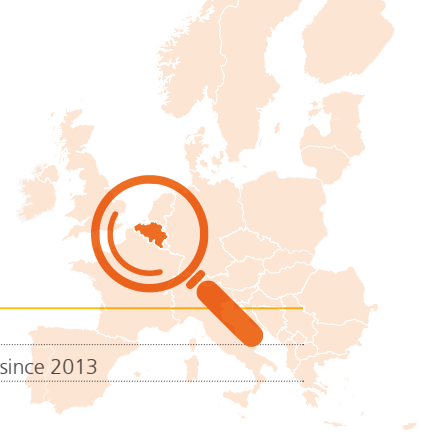
*Participants have to meet a mentor on a regular basis to join the Austrian programme.*

<sup>4</sup> Consolidated federal law: Entire legal provision for the Driving License Act - Alternative Probation System Ordinance, version dated November 18, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3f6N5Zm>

# BELGIUM

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>5</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK COMBINED WITH REHABILITATION



<b>RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION</b>	Federal Public Service – Mobility & Transport
<b>ENTRY INTO FORCE</b>	Legislation came into force on 1 October 2010, but only operational since 2013
<b>POSITION IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM</b>	Criminal
<b>HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?</b>	757 (as of 20 October 2020)
<b>WHO ?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat offenders with a BAC equal or above 1.2 g/l: judges must impose an alcohol interlock (1-3 years), a driving ban (at least 3 months) and rehabilitation tests</li> <li>• First offenders with a BAC equal or above 1.8 g/l: judges must impose an alcohol interlock (1-3 years), unless clear justification</li> <li>• First offenders with a BAC equal or above 0.8 g/l or repeat offenders with a BAC above 1.2 g/l: judges may apply an alcohol interlock</li> </ul> <p>Possible exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judge may exempt one or more vehicle categories</li> <li>• This has to be justified</li> <li>• Not possible to exclude vehicle category with which the traffic offence has been committed</li> <li>• No alcohol interlock for alcohol-dependent people (driving ban for medical or psychological reasons, art.42)</li> <li>• After the new law of 6 March 2018: judges use this art.42 more frequently</li> </ul>
<b>REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS</b>	<p>Monitoring programme with awareness raising about the risks of alcohol, drink driving, recidivism and technical aspects of the device. Through data downloads the driver can learn more about their own behaviour (they won't see the data by themselves but the monitoring entity will discuss the results regularly with them).</p> <p>Three recognised monitoring entities: VIAS Institute, Psycho Medisch Advies (since September 2018) and Noviter (since July 2019).</p>
<b>COSTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year : 3 800 euros + Fine : 1,600-16,000 euros</li> <li>• Repeat offender: 3,200 - 40,000 euros - The judge can subtract the costs of the alcohol interlock from the fine</li> </ul>
<b>EVALUATION</b>	<p>The evaluation led to a change in the legislation adopted on the 6th of March 2018: judges are no longer free to decide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In case of a BAC above 1.8 (they have to give a reason as to why they don't impose an alcohol interlock), and</li> <li>• In case of severe recidivism (<math>\geq 1.2</math>BAC) (no exception with a reason is possible), but in every case judges have the possibility to limit to certain vehicle categories (except the vehicle category with which the offence was committed).</li> <li>• Exception: no alcohol interlock if the offender is alcohol dependent (in this case there is a license withdrawal for physical or psychological reasons).</li> </ul>

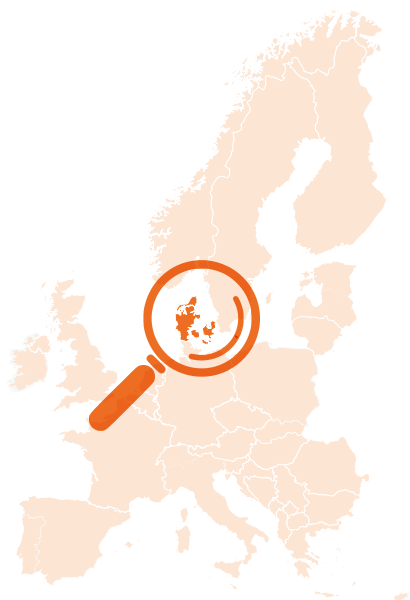
<sup>5</sup> Condamnation à l'éthylotest antidémarrage, <https://bit.ly/2Lloptf>



# DENMARK

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>6</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK COMBINED WITH REHABILITATION



*Today approximately 450 drivers are participating in the Danish alcohol interlock programme.*

<b>RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION</b>	Danish Road Safety Traffic Authority
<b>ENTRY INTO FORCE</b>	2015 – New programme in 2017
<b>POSITION IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM</b>	Administrative
<b>HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?</b>	450
<b>WHO ?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary programme: first time offenders with a BAC above 2 g/l, or second time offender with a BAC above 1.2 g/l In the voluntary programme the offender can participate from day one of the suspension of his driving licence. However, if the driver has caused personal injury or caused serious danger while driving, the driver can not participate in the programme.</li> <li>• Mandatory programme: second time offenders with a BAC level higher than 1.2 or first time offenders with a BAC level higher than 2.0. If it is the third offence or more, then the BAC level does not matter. In the mandatory programme the offender can participate when the suspension period is over, which is a minimum of three years.</li> </ul>
<b>REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS</b>	Consultation compulsory in the voluntary programme
<b>EVALUATION</b>	When implementing the programmes the Danish National Police had expected an annual number of participants of between 500 and 1,000. However, an evaluation showed that there were only 24 participants in the alcohol interlock program. This led to a change of the voluntary programme in 2017: before 2017 an alcohol interlock could replace a licence suspension of maximum two years, now three years of suspension can be replaced with three years with an alcohol interlock. Today approximately 450 drivers are participating in an alcohol interlock programme.

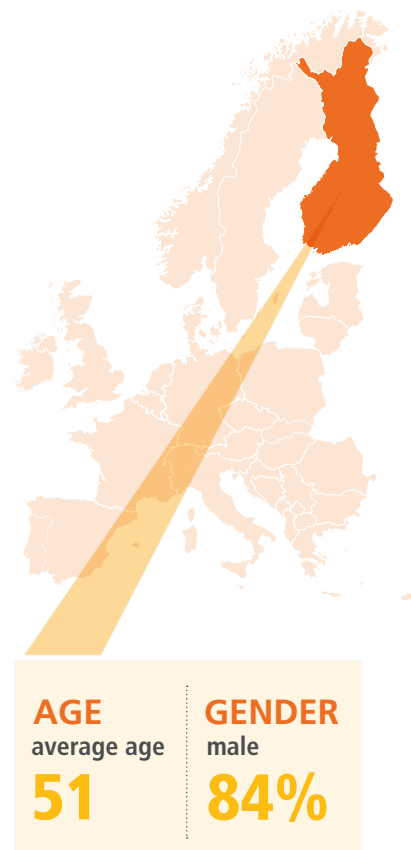
<sup>6</sup> The Danish Transport Authority, Alcohol lock and ANT course, <https://bit.ly/38XAmql>

# FINLAND

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>7</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK COMBINED WITH REHABILITATION

RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION	Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom
TRIAL	2005
ENTRY INTO FORCE	2008
HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?	Approximately 1,000 participants
WHO ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BAC 0.5 - 1.2 g/l : 12-36 months, median 16 months</li> <li>• BAC 1.2 g/l and above: 12-26 months, median 18 months</li> </ul> <p>To enter the programme the offenders have to send their application to the police.</p>
REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS	Requirement to meet a health care professional and get a certificate to be provided to the police
COSTS	<p>Year 1: 2,400 euros</p> <p>Year 2: 1,920 euros</p> <p>Year 3: 1,440 euros</p>
GENDER / AGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average age: 51 years old</li> <li>• 84% male</li> </ul>
PARTICIPATION RATE	85% of participants completed the programme
EVALUATION	<p>Completed in 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,687 drivers</li> <li>• Average duration: 17 months</li> <li>• 5.7% of the drivers reoffended during or after the probation period whereas the usual recidivism rate for drink-driving offenders is 30%</li> <li>• The alcohol interlocks have prevented 12,000 participants from driving under the influence of alcohol</li> </ul>



*Alcohol interlocks have prevented 12,000 participants from driving under the influence of alcohol in Finland, according to the evaluation of 2013.*

<sup>7</sup> Alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights, Traficom, <https://bit.ly/3fflbKE>

# FRANCE

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>8</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION

<b>RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION</b>	French Prefecture
<b>TRIAL</b>	2018: in seven french departments
<b>ENTRY INTO FORCE</b>	Extended to the entire country in 2019
<b>POSITION IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM</b>	Administrative until a judgement from the court
<b>HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?</b>	Since 1 January 2020, and for the first 9 months, 8,104 prefectural decrees restricting driving with an alcohol interlock have been proposed to offenders fined at the roadside by the police, leading to the effective installation of around 1500 devices.
<b>WHO ?</b>	Offenders driving with a BAC above 0.8 g/l The alcohol interlock can be installed for a maximum duration of one year since May 2020 - it was previously six months (can be extended to five years by the judge at a later point)
<b>REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS</b>	Following an alcohol interlock measure as an alternative to licence suspension, the prefecture's medical commission may issue an opinion to the prefect on the return of the driving licence, subject to certain conditions being met by the driver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To install at their own expense an approved alcohol interlock in the vehicle they drive;</li> <li>• To carry out a medical-psychological follow-up i.e. an addiction consultation (follow-up is limited to this mandatory consultation, without any ongoing monitoring during the program and no data analysis)</li> </ul>
<b>COSTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase : 1,300 euros</li> <li>• Rent : 100 euros/month</li> </ul> <p>The installation and operating costs of the device are the responsibility of the driver. The price of installation and dismantling in the vehicle must be added.</p> <p>To facilitate the installation of the devices, the french road safety website provides users with a national map of approved installers by department and region.<sup>9</sup></p>
<b>EVALUATION</b>	<p>No evaluation planned yet but several improvements have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This alcohol interlock programme was decided as an alternative to a driving licence suspension in order to improve the existing judicial system as it was felt that the obligation to drive with an alcohol interlock was coming too late in the process.</li> <li>• In order to combat recidivism, a measure from 9 January 2018, makes it compulsory to install an alcohol interlock in the event of a repeat offence of driving under the influence of alcohol.</li> </ul>



*Since 2019, the French prefects can impose an alcohol interlock as an alternative to a driving licence suspension.*

<sup>8</sup> Sécurité Routière, l'éthylotest anti-démarrage, <https://bit.ly/3jDsFrE>

<sup>9</sup> Map of approved alcohol interlocks installers by department and region in France : <https://bit.ly/3kOWcPw>

# POLAND

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION

ENTRY INTO FORCE	2015
POSITION IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM	Criminal
HOW MANY AI INSTALLED TODAY?	<p>While there is no data available of actual installed alcohol interlocks the number of court orders is available. However, this decision is not binding and the driver can still choose the licence suspension afterwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offence – 94 in 2017, 303 in 2018, 21 in the 1st half of 2019;</li> <li>• Crime – 609 in 2017, 2 180 in 2018, 840 in the 1st half of 2019</li> </ul>
WHO?	<p>Offenders driving with a BAC above 0.5 g/l</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.2-0.5 g/l (offence)</li> <li>• above 0.5 g/l (crime)</li> </ul> <p>Offenders may ask the court for their driving ban to be replaced with an alcohol interlock after at least half of the driving ban period has passed. If they had a lifetime driving ban they can apply for an alcohol interlock after at least 10 years.</p>
REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS	Under the Polish regulation, alcohol interlocks are not part of a rehabilitation programme.
EVALUATION	There are no studies monitoring the effects of implementing this solution.

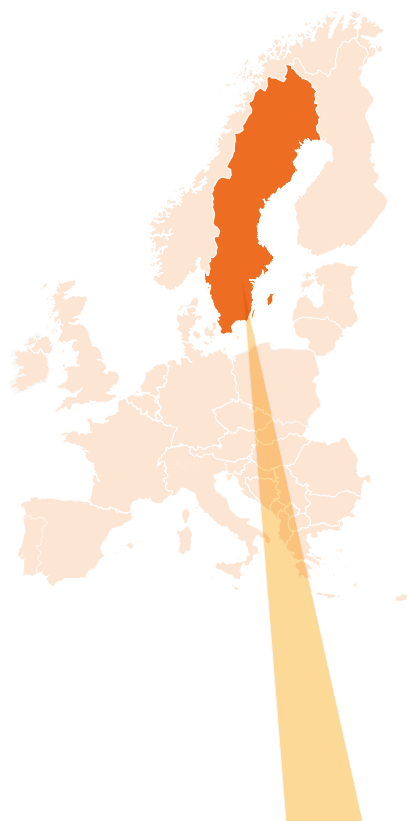


*The Polish alcohol interlocks programme is a voluntary solution for all offenders with a BAC above 0,5 g/l*

# SWEDEN

## OFFENDER PROGRAMME<sup>10</sup>

### ALCOHOL INTERLOCK COMBINED WITH MEDICAL CERTIFICATES



<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>
average age	male
<b>45-54</b>	<b>87%</b>

<b>RELEVANT ADMINISTRATION</b>	Swedish Transport Agency
<b>TRIAL</b>	1999
<b>ENTRY INTO FORCE</b>	2012
<b>WHO ?</b>	<p>Possibility for drink drivers but not compulsory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year programme for drivers convicted with a BAC level between 0.2 and 0.9 g/l;</li> <li>• 2 year programme for convicted repeat offenders (within a five-year period), and offenders with a BAC level of at least 1.0 g/l</li> </ul>
<b>REHABILITATION / MEDICAL ASPECTS</b>	The programme is not designed to include a rehabilitation aspect but, in many cases, it has shown these kinds of effects for the participants anyway. Especially since there is a demand to undergo medical exams, including leaving blood samples before, during and sometimes after participation in the programme.
<b>COSTS</b>	<p>Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year : 2,000 – 2,700 euros</li> <li>• 2 years : 2,800 – 4,000 euros</li> </ul>
<b>GENDER / AGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87% male</li> <li>• Average age: 45-54 years old</li> </ul>
<b>PARTICIPATION RATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30% of offenders entered the programme</li> <li>• 83% of participants completed the programme</li> <li>• 31 % of participants had an alcohol-related diagnosis</li> </ul> <p>Due to an infringement procedure from the EU the new legislation in force as of March 2018 does not allow offenders with a dependency or an addiction to enter the alcohol interlock program in Sweden, unless they can prove that they fulfil all the medical demands beforehand, e.g. prove sobriety six months prior to entering the programme.</p>
<b>EVALUATION</b>	<p>Completed in 2018<sup>11</sup></p> <p>About 3,000 people are currently driving with an alcohol interlock</p>

<sup>10</sup> Alcohol interlock after drink-driving, Swedish Transport Agency, <https://bit.ly/3IMVxzx>

<sup>11</sup> Forsman, Åsa, et al. - Evaluation of a Swedish alcohol interlock program for drink driving offenders : Final report, <https://bit.ly/3piEN5g>



## PART II

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# RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

## 1. LITHUANIA

In 2019 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted an amendment to the law on Road Traffic Safety allowing the Ministry of Transport to launch an alcohol interlock programme as a pathway to a shorter driving ban for high-level drink-driving offenders.

Since 1 January 2020, convicted drink-drivers who have lost their driving license are, after a set period of time, able to apply for their license to be reinstated with the provision that they only drive a vehicle fitted with an alcohol interlock.

To date, 400 drivers have participated in the programme.

Vehicles with alcohol interlocks have been in operation in Lithuania for some time. More than 80 new school buses equipped with the devices have been handed over to municipalities since 2016. In Vilnius and Kaunas passengers are transported by shuttle buses equipped with alcohol interlocks and some freight and passenger transport companies have voluntarily installed the devices on their vehicles.

The Ministry of Health intends to create a new rehabilitation programme, which will include offenders already included in the alcohol interlock programme allowing a medical follow up for drink-drivers.

## 2. ITALY FROM TRIAL TO LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Changes to road safety laws in Italy could lead to the introduction of alcohol interlock programmes for drink driving offenders, as well as updates to numerous road safety rules.

In Italy there were no specific regulations or government-led experiments. For this reason the Fondazione Ania launched a project, to be developed in the professional drivers sector. In the course of 2018, 53 systems were installed on a fleet of buses owned by Bus Company, a public transport company with 400 employees, who use 300 coaches travelling about 15 million km per year.

The purpose of the trial was to :

- Test the alcohol interlock systems and understand their operational functionality
- Provide information to the insurance sector
- Prevent negative consequences of alcohol abuse while driving
- Reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage
- Strengthen the trust of customers and passengers
- Increase the transport sector's awareness about drink-driving
- Demonstrate commitment to road safety

The buses equipped with this system have covered about 10.4 million km. The measurement data are stored in the memory of the equipment and are not transmitted directly to a control centre, as is the case with "black boxes" for example. They are only downloaded in the event of road accidents or suspicion that the driver is using alcohol on duty. Sampling of the systems did not reveal any violations. The drivers involved in the experiment never exceeded the alcohol level required by the Highway Code (0.0 g/l) for professional drivers and company regulations.

According to the draft proposal, offenders driving with a BAC from 0.8 g/l to 1.5 g/l will have to install an alcohol interlock for 2 years, and 3 years with a BAC above 1.5 g/l.

This new legal proposal to introduce alcohol interlocks came from the CNEL (The National Council for Economics and Labor), a state body with the power to propose new legislation, and has been presented to the House of Representatives of the Italian Parliament, marking the first step on the road to adoption. The amendments would supplement article 186 and article 125 of the Italian Driving Code.

### 3. UNITED KINGDOM

In its Road Safety Statement 2019, the UK Department for Transport undertook to investigate the feasibility of using alcohol interlocks in association with drink drive offender rehabilitation programmes. The Department for Transport subsequently awarded the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) a grant to lead a consortium to undertake the research.

A trial of interlock use was conducted in the UK in 2006 and independently evaluated. It was decided not to proceed with wider use. More recently, a small-scale trial by one police force has been launched and is ongoing. The PACTS study has reviewed these trials and also taken into account findings from the trials and programmes in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

With this information, as well as evidence from scientific research, PACTS has explored how an alcohol interlock programme may be introduced into the UK, with consideration for the technical, legal and other essential programme aspects, and overall benefits that might be delivered.

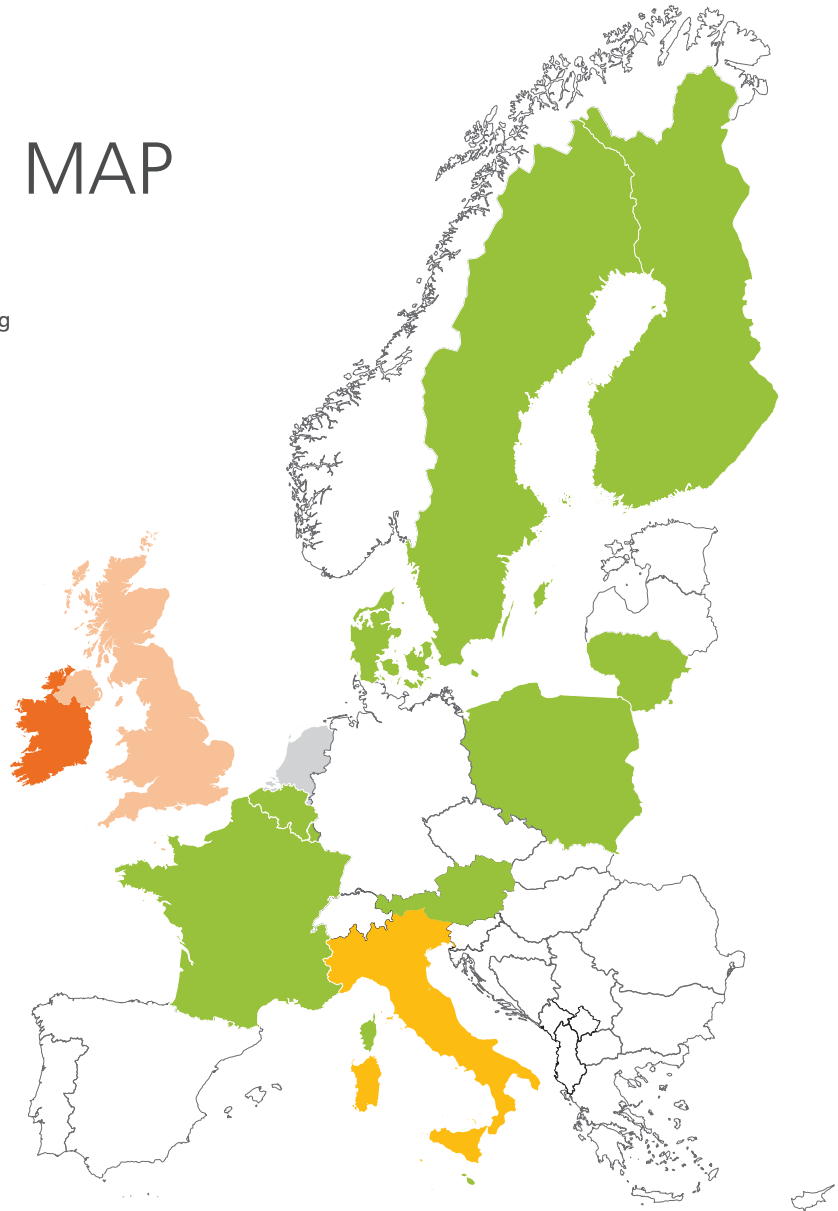
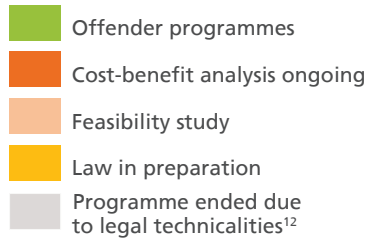
This report is due to be published in early 2021. As part of the recommendations, trials may be proposed as a next step.





## PART III

# EUROPEAN MAP



<sup>12</sup> The programme was placed under administrative law but offenders were sanctioned by the courts as well and this sentence could interfere with the alcohol interlock measure: ETSC (2016) Alcohol Interlocks and Drink-driving Rehabilitation Programmes in the EU. <https://bit.ly/2KTAf6H>

## DISCUSSION: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The national experts that contributed to this research described some of the strengths and weaknesses of the alcohol interlock programmes they have worked on.

Effective programmes showed positive impacts such as:

- securing the jobs of people who relied on being able to drive for work;
- making drivers aware of their responsibilities;
- helping offenders remain integrated in society (although participation is sometimes perceived as a constraint);

Two key elements for a successful programme stood out: rehabilitation measures and affordable costs.

Some countries have adopted rehabilitation measures in combination with alcohol interlocks leading to positive outcomes. According to an evaluation published in 2013, the Finnish programme has prevented 12,000 participants from driving under the influence of alcohol. Various evaluations of driver rehabilitation courses for drink-drivers indicate that the recidivism rate can be reduced by 50%. Experts from countries without rehabilitation or mentoring combined with alcohol interlocks deplored

the lack of monitoring and advocate for the adoption of rehabilitation courses. Belgian researchers concluded that the Belgian alcohol interlock programme should be expanded to include close monitoring. Alcohol interlock programmes should involve not just the installation of the device itself, but also include a coordinated set of activities designed to minimise recidivism.

Experts largely agreed that the high cost for the installation and maintenance of the devices is one of the main reasons for the low participation rate. The costs constitute a real barrier for many offenders to enter an alcohol interlock programme (when they have the possibility to choose between a licence suspension and an alcohol interlock). Lower costs could bring real benefits with an increase of participants and a consequential decrease in re-offending.

Lastly, it has been pointed out that a significant group of potential participants are excluded as the EU directive on driving licences does not allow people with an alcohol dependency to be allowed to continue driving while participating in an alcohol interlock rehabilitation programme. Including them, with medical supervision would increase participation in the programmes and cut recidivism.



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