



June 2021

## DENMARK



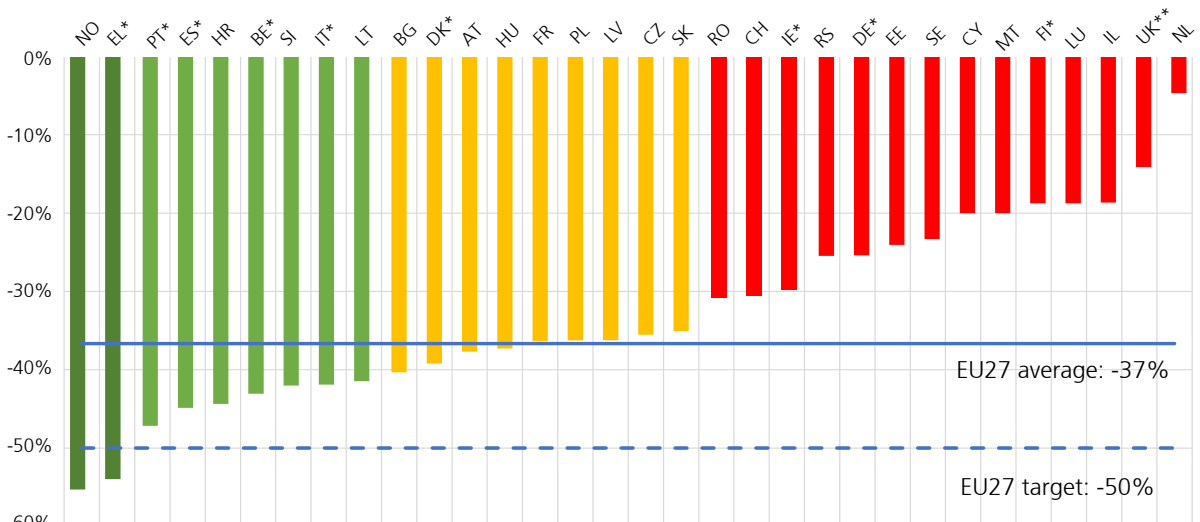
## INTRODUCTION

In terms of road mortality in 2020, Denmark ranks among the good performers with less than 27 deaths per million inhabitants compared to the EU average of 51. However, for overall road safety, Denmark made slow progress in the EU over the period 2010 – 2019 with just a 23% reduction in annual road deaths, similar to its neighbour Finland. A 22% reduction was registered in the period 2019-2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the overall road safety reduction up to 39% for the period 2010-2020

**Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2020.** \*National provisional estimates used for 2020, as final figures for 2020 are not yet available at the time this report went to print.

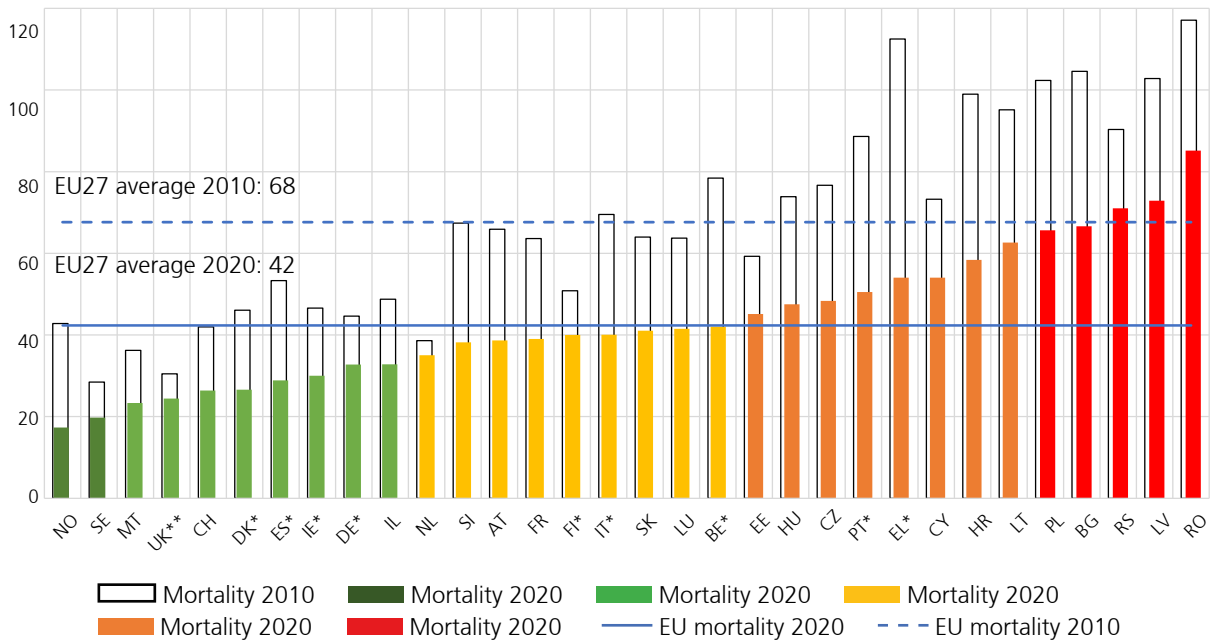
\*\*UK data for 2020 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2020.

The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. The annual numbers of deaths in CY and EE are also relatively small and may be subject to annual fluctuations.



**Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2020 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison).**

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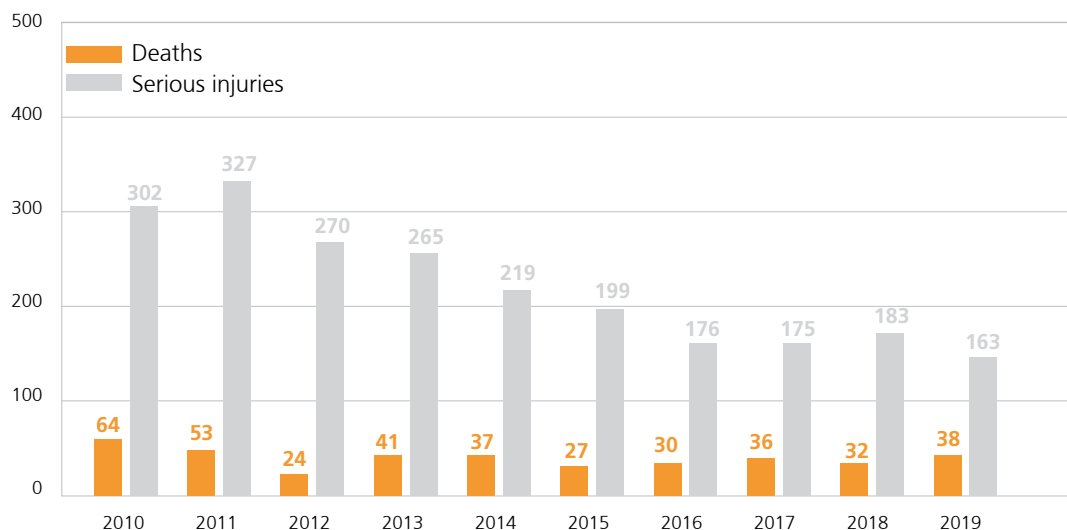


The number of alcohol-related road deaths on Danish roads was cut by half from 64 in 2010 to 32 in 2018. This 6.3% annual average reduction between 2010 and 2018 is the result of a combination of factors: sanctions, more efficient enforcement and a long-term communication strategy aimed at making drink-driving socially unacceptable.

However, between 2016 and 2019, this positive development seems to have stagnated. The official number of alcohol-related deaths in 2019 was 38 while figures for 2020 are not yet available. Part of the explanation could be that through communication, police control and sanctions, Denmark has already succeeded in preventing much of the drink-driving in the general population.

A very small part of drink-driving offenders might have a high or problematic alcohol consumption, meaning that current measures are not sufficient to solve their problem, rehabilitation and treatment are needed to address the issue. According to experts from The Danish Road Safety Council (Sikker Trafik), this is an area that could be considered as a priority in the future.

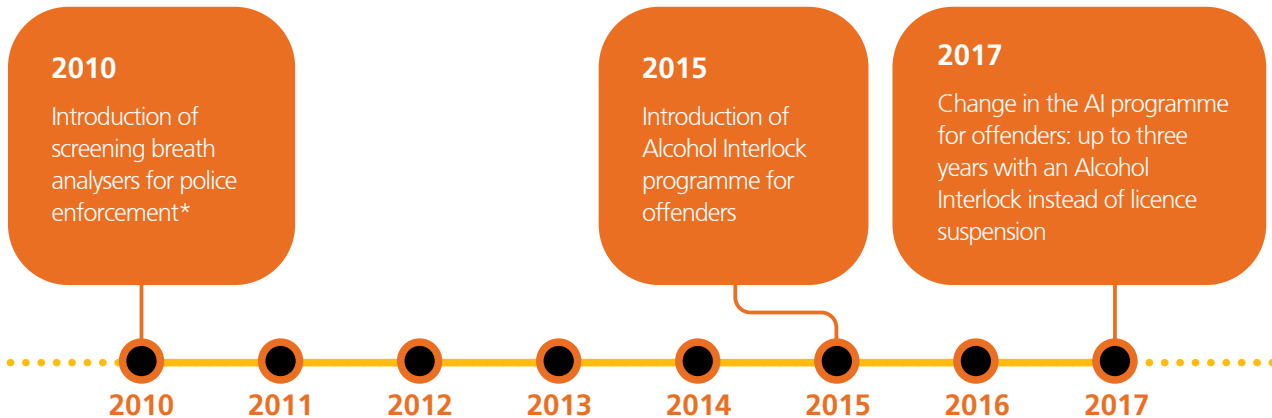
**Figure 3. Number of alcohol-related deaths and serious injuries from 2010 to 2019 in Denmark.**  
\*Source: Sikker Trafik





## NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of national measures to tackle drink-driving:



\*Previously, the police only had breathalysers that measured the approximate Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level. These were rather slow to use (about five to seven minutes per roadside test). The new screening breathalysers show POSITIVE or NEGATIVE and only take about 30 seconds per test. This enables the police to test many more road users. If they are negative, they can continue driving. If they are positive, they will have to breathe in the other type of breathalyser that measures if the level is over or under the legal BAC. If they are over the limit, they must give a blood sample to determine the exact BAC level. It is only the blood level that is used as evidence in courts.

The new Road Safety Action Plan 2021-2030 was published in March 2021 with the following overall targets:

- the annual number of road deaths in traffic should be 90 or below by 2030;
- the annual number of serious injuries in road traffic should be 900 or below by 2030.

The plan also mentions several recommendations concerning drink-driving:

**Enforcement:** maintain a high level of police checks for alcohol;

**Alcohol abuse:** It is recommended to put in place an offender scheme to ensure that offenders get the chance to talk to an addiction counsellor to clarify any alcohol dependence, and that treatment is subsequently offered to those who need it. The goal is to prevent recidivism. A three-year trial (to be completed in 2022) is in place in Denmark and could contribute to identifying the most appropriate and effective method of supporting this category of offenders in medical treatment;

**Campaigning:** continue carrying out campaigns targeted at the general population and young people;

Based on the EU's stated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in road safety, the Danish government adopted the following KPI for drink-driving:

**"The ratio between the number of seriously injured and fatalities in road collisions, in which one or more of the involved persons are affected by alcohol, drugs or medicine, and the total number of seriously injured and fatalities".**

The Ministry of Transport has also set down a national working group in 2020 with the task to analyse drink-driving in further detail and give suggestions for new and more efficient measures to tackle the issue. Findings and recommendations will be delivered to the National Road Safety Commission later this year.



# BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS







The legal limit for **ALL drivers** is:

**0.5g/l**



The limit was adopted in 1998 and no further lower alcohol limit has been specified for any specific driver group.

Denmark has a strict sanctioning system for road offences in general and drink-driving in particular. The sanctions for drink-driving have been increased several times since 2005. Similarly to Finland, Denmark applies an income-related system. The table below shows how drink-driving is sanctioned for first time offences, based on BAC levels:

 BAC level (g/L)	 Fines	 Driving ban	 Imprisonment	 Car confiscated	 Rehabilitation or other
From 0.51 to 1.2g/l	net monthly income x the BAC-level	conditional withdrawal of licence	-	-	mandatory 12 hour course on "Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic" + new theory test and new driving test required
From 1.21 to 2.0g/l	net monthly income x the BAC-level	unconditional withdrawal of licence for three years (can be converted to driving with an alcohol interlock over the same period of time)	-	-	mandatory 12 hour course on "Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic" + new theory test and new driving test required
Above 2.0g/l	one month net income	unconditional withdrawal of licence for 3 years followed by two years with mandatory alcohol interlock or two more years without licence (5 years in total).	20 days conditional prison	vehicle can be confiscated	mandatory 12 hour course on "Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic" + new theory test and new driving test required + 2 years with Alcohol Interlock

For recidivist drivers, the penalty increases depending on the BAC limit, how many times the driver has been caught under the influence, as well as other circumstances:

- driving licence revoked unconditionally for a period of 3 years, 5 years or longer;
- suspended prison sentence; the length depends on the circumstances;
- participation in an alcohol interlock programme;
- fine;
- the driver's car may be confiscated.

The conditions for regaining the driving licence are: participation in the Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic course (ANT) and passing the driving test again.



## ENFORCEMENT

The Danish police can ask any driver to do a breath test, even if there is no suspicion of drink-driving. Since 2010, the Danish police have introduced screening breathalysers, increasing the number of random controls and making them more effective (see above).

Unfortunately, Denmark does not collect any data on the yearly number of police alcohol checks. However, in 2018-2019, a roadside study was conducted by the Danish National Police (publication not yet available online) covering 120,000 randomly selected drivers. The study showed that 0.2 percent of the drivers had a BAC above the legal limit. The survey sample of approximately 120,000 road users led to a total of 235 charges.

Other results from the study:

- The incidence of drink-driving is higher among men than women;
- The incidence is highest in the age group 45-64 years and lowest in the youngest and the oldest;
- The incidence is much higher in moped riders than in others. Van drivers also have a high incidence. They drive under the influence of alcohol approximately 1.5 times more than road users in general;
- Summer months (including September) see a higher number of drivers under the influence. Friday to Sunday are the days when most people drive while intoxicated (especially between Midnight and 6 am);
- The incidence is highest on urban roads and lowest on motorways.

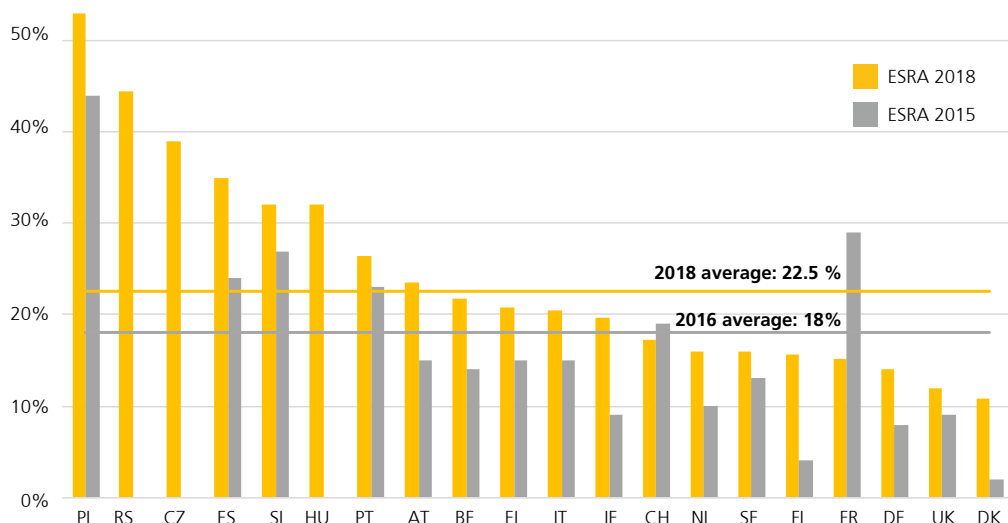


## DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

The E-Survey on Road Attitudes published in 2019 showed that the perceived likelihood of a police drink-driving check was the lowest in Denmark, with only 11% of drivers considering themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving, compared to the EU average of 22.5%.

**Figure 4. Proportion (%) of car drivers who considered themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving.**

Source: ESRA survey (2015 and 2018)



This result was even worse in the previous survey in 2015, where only 2% of drivers thought they would be tested by the police for alcohol, compared to 18% for the EU average.



# REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

**Alcohol Traffic courses:** The Danish alcohol, drugs and traffic course (ANT course) is aimed at offenders wishing to regain their driver's licence following a conviction for drug or drink-driving. ANT courses have approx. 5000 participants per year, of which 75-80 % are drink drivers.

The course is 12 hours long (four 3-hour lessons) and the price is around 400 euros.

The courses are run by the five Danish regions and the teachers/instructors are alcohol therapists or substance abuse consultants. The purpose of the ANT course is to reduce the risk of recidivism and give an insight in and understanding of the physical, psychological and social circumstances regarding alcohol, drugs and traffic.

The course includes the following topics:

1. Law and regulations concerning driving under the influence (DUI);
2. Physical and psychological effects of alcohol and drugs. Effects on the ability to drive safely. Effects of illness and fatigue;
3. Historical, cultural, physical, psychological and social reasons for using alcohol and drugs. How to avoid and prevent DUI. Information on how to get help and counselling, if one has problematic use of alcohol or drugs;
4. Rules, regulations and guidance on how to regain the driving licence after the course.

The courses were evaluated in 2018 by The Danish Center for Social Science Research (VIVE). It appeared that the vast majority of the participants had been satisfied or very satisfied with both the course material, the teachers' ability to convey and create learning as well as with the overall course (ranging from 70 to 90% satisfaction).<sup>1</sup>

**Alcohol Interlock programme for drink-driving offenders:** An alcohol interlock programme for first time high-level offenders and recidivists was introduced in Denmark in 2015. More specifically, it applied to the following categories of offenders:

- 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 their driving licence. However, if the driver has caused personal injury or caused serious danger while driving, they cannot participate in the programme.
- 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.

Consultation is compulsory in the voluntary programme. 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.

Finally, the alcohol issue is also taken seriously in the workplace in Denmark. A no-alcohol policy is implemented in nearly all public and private places of work and an increasing number of employers offer rehabilitation to employees with alcohol addiction, instead of dismissing them.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/10757/2302134>



## CAMPAIGNS

Repeated campaigns have raised significant public disapproval of drink-driving in Denmark. A focus on decisions before driving, serving of alternative non-alcoholic drinks at social events and increased citizens' control have been the areas of focus. Most of the population now has the right attitude and most people are aware and willing to stop others from drinking and driving.

For many years in fact, a strategy for making drink-driving socially unacceptable was put in place and that included:

- Motivate family, friends and colleagues to intervene and prevent drink-driving;
- Publicise risk of being caught by police;
- Publicise sanctions and consequences;
- Promote non-alcoholic alternatives.

One of the latest campaigns run by The Danish Road Safety Council (Sikker Trafik) took place from 2018 to 2020 and is called "There are many ways to stop a drink-driver. What's yours?" The campaign perfectly reflects part of the strategy put in place in Denmark in order to make drink-driving socially unacceptable by encouraging family or friends to take action against a potential driver under the influence.



<https://www.sikkertrafik.dk/kampagner/stop-spritkoersel>



## SOURCES

### **National road safety programme 2020-2030**

<https://bit.ly/34TrijH>

Summary in EN: <https://bit.ly/3fHdWNj>

### **Alcohol and drug Traffic Courses, evaluation study:**

<https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/10757/2302134>

ANT course website:

[www.antk.dk](http://www.antk.dk)

### **ETSC, 14th PIN Annual Report:**

<https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/14-PIN-annual-report-FINAL.pdf>

### **ETSC, Alcohol Interlocks and Drink-driving rehabilitation in the EU (2016)**

[https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016\\_12\\_alcohol\\_interlock\\_guidelines\\_final.pdf](https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016_12_alcohol_interlock_guidelines_final.pdf)

### **ETSC, Progress in reducing drink-driving and other alcohol-related road deaths in Europe (2019)**

[https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/reducingdrinkdriving\\_031219\\_design\\_final.pdf](https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/reducingdrinkdriving_031219_design_final.pdf)

### **Drivers' perception:**

ESRA survey 2018

<https://www.esranet.eu/en/publications/>

### **Campaign:**

<https://www.sikkertrafik.dk/kampagner/stop-spritkoersel>



European Transport Safety Council

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