



# DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

December 2020



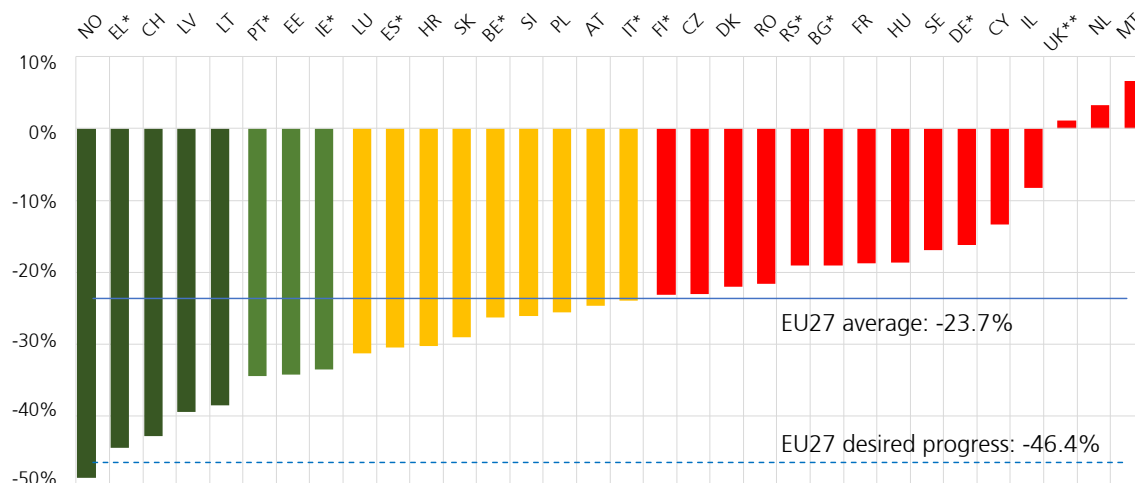
**ITALY**



## INTRODUCTION

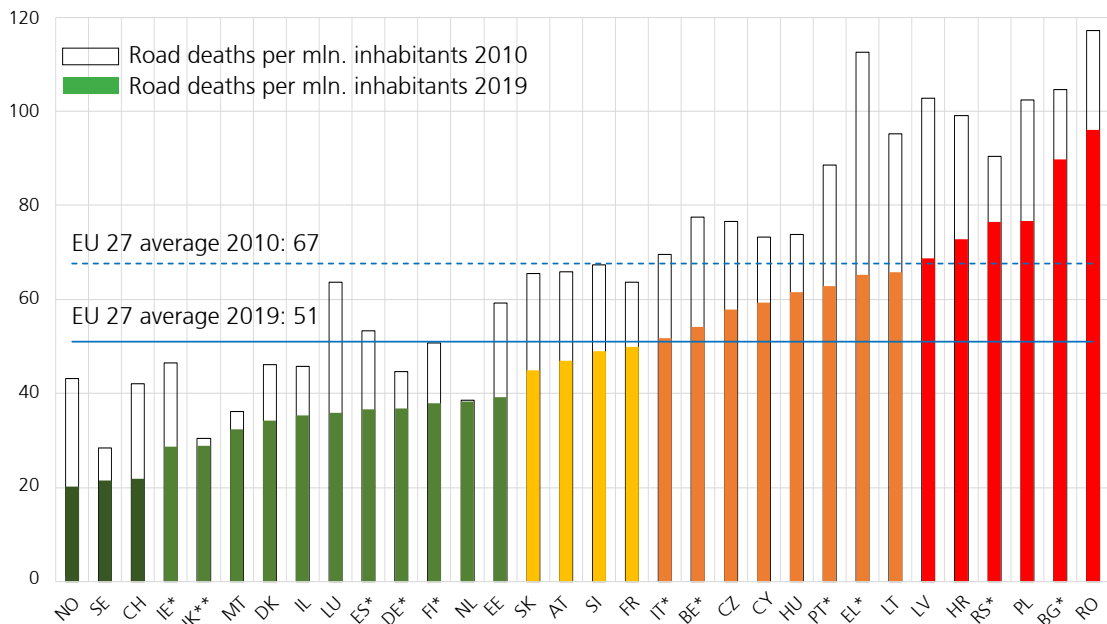
Italy is in line with the EU average, both for the reduction in the number of road deaths from 2010 to 2019 and for road mortality, with respectively a 23% reduction and 52.6 deaths per million inhabitants. A stronger commitment and political will are necessary to improve road safety in the country, where drink-driving remains a serious problem.

**Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2019.** \*National provisional estimates used for 2019, as final figures for 2019 are not yet available at the time of going to print. \*\*UK data for 2019 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2019 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2019.



**Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2019 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison).**

\*National provisional estimates used for 2019, as final figures for 2019 are not yet available at the time of going to print. \*\*UK data for 2019 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2019 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2019.



The first step needed is an improvement in data collection as, unfortunately, the scale of the alcohol-related collision problem across Italy is currently unknown. However, work is underway to fill the gap. The Carabinieri and National Police, who collect about one third of all data on road collisions with injuries, have made available some data for 2019 showing that out of 58,872 collisions with injuries, 5,117 (or 8.7%) involved at least one driver under the influence. The proportion is stable compared to 2018 (5097 drivers found under the influence representing 8.7% of all road collisions), but is higher than in 2017 (7.8%).

The local police from major cities reported 2031 fines related to alcohol-related collisions, which represents 3.9% of all reported road collisions. These numbers were lower in 2017. In 2019 the proportion of fines related to collisions involving alcohol observed by local police is 3.0%. Italy is working to improve the collection of drink-driving death and serious injury data throughout the country.



## NATIONAL POLICIES

Several recent legal changes have been put in place in order to help mitigate drink-driving in Italy, namely:

**MAY 2008**

Stricter penalties introduced in the Highway Code, including the confiscation of the vehicle driven by a person under the influence

**JULY 2010**

The Highway Code was modified to introduce a lower drink-driving limit for young, novice and professional drivers of 0.0 g/l Blood Alcohol Content (BAC).

**JANUARY 2020**

Task to perform alcohol checks and traffic controls extended also to city police\*\*

2009

2008

2010

2016

2020

**JULY 2009**

Dink driving offences occurring between 22:00 to 7:00 face higher sanctions.

**2016**

Vehicular homicide law introduced as a criminal offence\*.

\*Imprisonment is expected for dangerous driving causing death and considered as aggravated if the offender is found under the influence of alcohol as from 0.8 g/l (see details in the following section). The victim may be either a person not in the car with the offender (such as a pedestrian, cyclist, or another motorist), or a passenger in the vehicle with the offender.

\*\*Following a tragic road crash involving a drink-driver who killed seven German tourists, the Italian government announced an agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) to increase road traffic enforcement by engaging city police in tasks previously assigned to traffic police and national police. Local police are now asked to do traffic controls, such as checks on drink-drivers. The measures began in larger cities and are supposed to be rolled out more widely over time.



# BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

Since 2010, the Italian Highway code applies two different Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limits depending on the driver category:

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

**0.5g/l**



The legal limit for **Young (<21years old), Novice (first three years since licence) and Professional DRIVERS** is:

**0.0g/l**

Penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol depend on the alcohol level found during the check, while loss of ten points from the driving licence (Italy has had a penalty point system in place since 2003) is applied for any alcohol level above the legal limit. In case the driver causes a collision, penalties are doubled.

The table below shows in detail the minimum sanctions in place for drink-driving offences:



BAC level (g/L)	Sanction	Driving ban in months	Penalty points	Imprisonment in months	Consequences for vehicle
<b>Young, novice and professional drivers</b>					
0.0 to 0.5g/l	Administrative fine from 164 €	-	5	-	-
0.5 to 0.8g/l	Administrative fine from 712 €	From 4 to 8	10	-	-
0.8 to 1.5g/l	Criminal fine from 1066 €	From 8 to 18	10	Up to 9	-
Above 1.5g/l	Criminal fine from 2000 €	From 16 to 36	10	From 8 to 18	Confiscation
<b>All other drivers</b>					
0.5 to 0.8g/l	Administrative fine from 544 €	From 3 to 6	10	-	-
0.8 to 1.5g/l	Criminal fine from 800 €	From 6 to 12	10	Up to 6	-
Above 1.5g/l	Criminal fine from 1500 €	From 12 to 24	10	From 6 to 12	Confiscation



**BAC**  
**> 0,8g/l**  
**5-10 years**

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**BAC**  
**> 1,5g/l**  
**8 -12 years**

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**Professional drivers**  
**BAC**  
**> 0,8g/l**  
**8 -12 years**

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### **Vehicular homicide**

Since 2016, Italy has included the vehicular homicide offence in its penal code with a penalty of a number of years in prison, depending on the degree of guilt. Tougher measures are applied for drink-driving offences. More specifically:

- Imprisonment from 5 to 10 years is applied in case of vehicular homicide caused by a driver under the influence of alcohol with a BAC higher than 0.8 g/l;
- Imprisonment from 8 to 12 years is applied in case of high level of drink-driving (above 1.5 g/l);
- Imprisonment from 8 to 12 years for professional drivers under the influence, with a BAC above 0.8 g/l

A specific aggravating circumstance is also taken into account if the driver, when responsible for a vehicular homicide, leaves the scene without providing assistance. In this case, the penalty is increased from one-third to two-thirds. The punishment is also increased if the offender does not have a driving licence (or has a suspended or revoked license) or has no vehicle insurance. An increase of the penalty is finally applied in case the driver caused the death of more than one person. The maximum penalty limit is 18 years in prison.



## **ENFORCEMENT**

The blood alcohol level is checked either via a breathalyser or through a blood test. The driver is required to perform the breathalyser test twice, with the second test occurring after five minutes. Refusal is considered an automatic drink-driving offence and sanctioned with the maximum penalty. In case of a road crash, alcohol tests are done only when alcohol is considered the main contributory factor in a fatal or serious collision.

According to data recently released by the traffic police, 1,264,314 drivers were checked for alcohol from 1 January to 15 December 2019, of which 23,800 were sanctioned for driving under the influence, an increase of 2.2% compared to 2018. Particular attention is paid to alcohol checks during weekends, to fight against the "Saturday night effect": among 195,533 drivers checked at weekends, 5.7% tested positive (11,063, of which 9,432 men and 1,631 women). In 2018, the percentage was quite similar, with 5.2% of drivers testing positive.

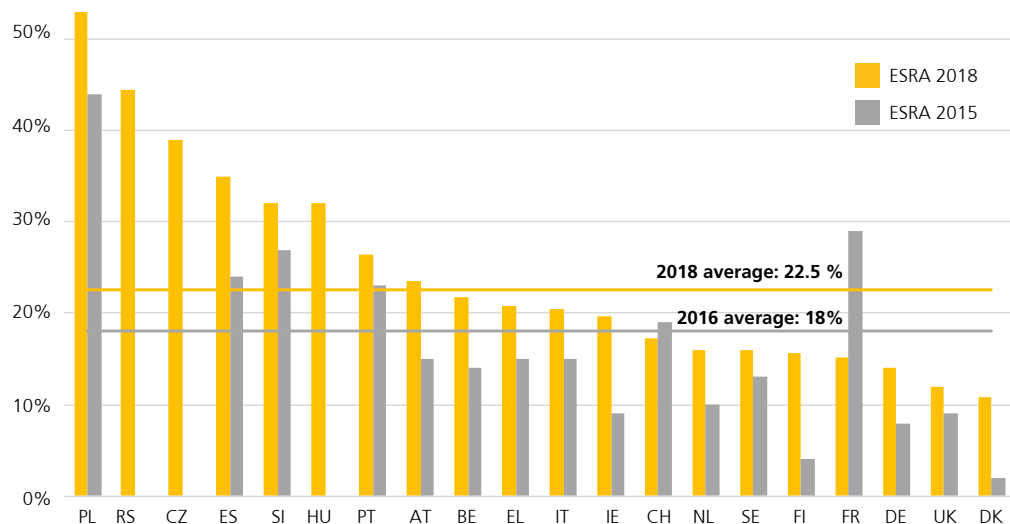


## DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

The perceived likelihood of getting caught for driving under the influence of alcohol is not particularly high in Italy. Twenty percent of Italians thought they were likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving in the E-Survey of Road users' Attitudes (ESRA) carried out in 2018.

**Figure 3. Proportion (%) of car drivers who considered themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving.**

Source: ESRA survey (2015 and 2018)



The perception of being caught in Italy is below the EU average but has increased compared to the previous ESRA survey from 2015 (15%).



## REHABILITATION & ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

Italy has no rehabilitation programmes for drink-driving offenders in place nor any legislation on Alcohol Interlock programmes adopted so far.

In 2020 a new legal proposal to introduce alcohol interlocks for drink-driving offenders came from the CNEL (The National Council for Economics and Labour), a state body with the power to propose new legislation. The draft law was presented to the House of Representatives of the Italian Parliament, marking the first step on the road to adoption.

According to the draft proposal, offenders caught driving with a BAC from 0.8 g/l to 1.5 g/l would have to install an alcohol interlock for two years; 3 years for those with a BAC above 1.5 g/l.

The draft proposal followed an Alcohol Interlock trial carried out by Fondazione Ania in the course of 2018 and targeting the professional drivers sector. 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 system to understand its 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 a commitment to road safety.

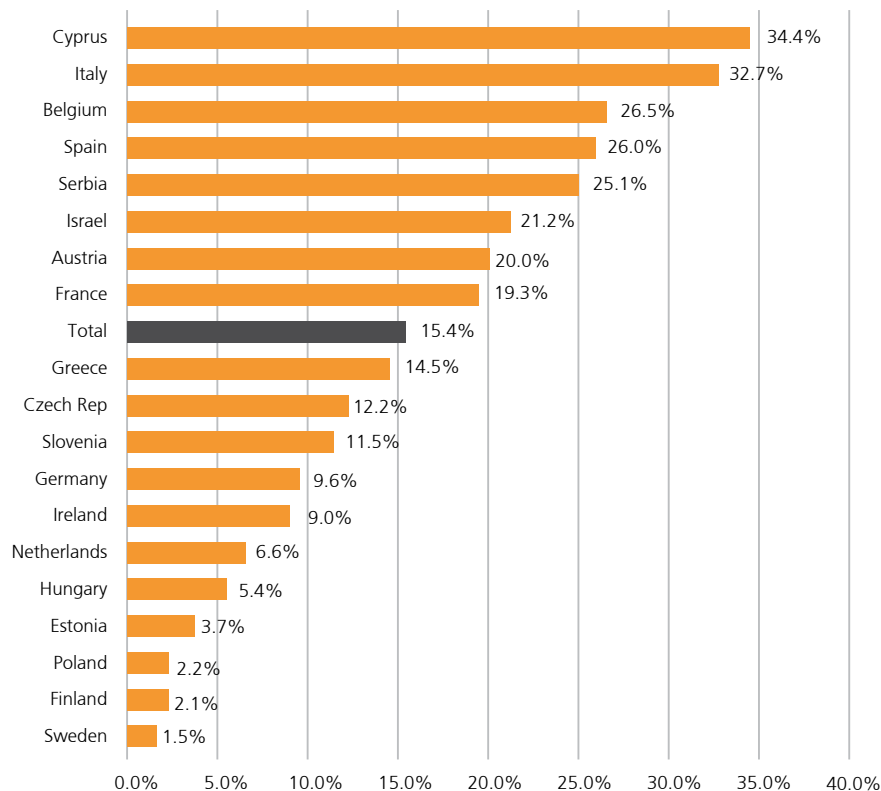
The buses equipped with this system have covered about 10.4 million km. The measurement data are stored in the memory of the equipment and are not transmitted directly to a control centre. As it is the case with electronic data recorders, data are downloaded in the event of a road collision or suspicion that the driver was 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.



## CAMPAIGNS

European surveys have shown the level of drink-driving acceptance in Italy is quite high compared to other EU countries, most likely due to a weak overall road safety culture. In the SARTRE survey on European road users’ risk perception and mobility published in 2012, Italy ranked second among participating countries in relation to drink-driving behaviour, with almost 33% of the interviewees admitting they had driven while being above the legal BAC limit (see figure below).

**Figure 4: SARTRE4 data ‘Number of people who drove after having drunken above the official alcohol limit’**



When asked if they agreed with the idea that you can drink and drive if one drives carefully, Italy appeared on the top of the ranking, with 17% of the respondents agreeing with the statement.

Awareness campaigns on road safety in general and drink-driving in particular are carried out by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport or other entities, such as ANAS (an Italian government-owned company that constructs and maintains the Italian road network), the ANIA Foundation and The Automobile Club Italia.



<https://youtu.be/y1dpguH8Sak>

One of the drink-driving campaigns from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure called "Bevi bevi", was broadcast in the period June - September 2015 through the main national TV channels and radio. It was focused on driving under the influence of alcohol, especially among young people. The spot was broadcasted during summer because it was considered useful to launch a road safety message in the period of greater traffic due to holidays.

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The ANAS campaign was also launched in 2015 and is still ongoing, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and National Police, with the aim of raising awareness on several driving behaviours that are dangerous and can result in a road crash, mainly distraction but also driving under the influence.

<http://www.guidaebasta.it/>



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In 2015, the ANIA Foundation for Road Safety carried out a campaign inspired by the Ten Commandments. The main topics related to road crashes in Italy were touched upon: from the total number of road victims to the main causes of accidents, namely driving in an altered psychophysical state and distraction, with a specific focus on young drivers and cyclists.

<https://www.fondazioneania.it/campagna-di-comunicazione-2015/res/videogallery>



In 2019 the Veneto Region in cooperation with A4 Holding (a company managing A4 motorway in the region) launched "#theblackout" campaign to raise awareness of the risks of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. It is based on the testimony of a real drink-driving offender in prison for having killed his friend - a passenger in his car - and seriously injuring two people in another car. The individual lost his job and separated from his wife.

<https://youtu.be/N2MYe5ol8Tw>

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Also in 2019, The Automobile Club Italia launched #GUIDACONCOSCENZA, a social campaign made up of eight short films with two well-known influencers; the fifth episode addressed drink-driving with a focus on young drivers.

<https://youtu.be/4VLSXWYlg0U>







## SOURCES

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

### **EC, SARTRE4 report (2012):**

<https://bit.ly/3bdFpob>

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

### **Sanctions and penalties:**

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[http://www.poliziamunicipale.comune.verona.it/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=24152](http://www.poliziamunicipale.comune.verona.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=24152)

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<https://bit.ly/3okAXI1>

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<https://www.mit.gov.it/documentazione/i-materiali-della-campagna-sulla-buona-strada-2019>



European Transport Safety Council

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