



DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

December 2020



POLAND



INTRODUCTION

A total of 2,909 people died on Polish roads in 2019. The number of road deaths fell by 47% since 2001 and by 25% since 2010. Despite the progress, Poland's road mortality rate is 77 deaths per million inhabitants, ranking 25th out of the 27 EU Member States and making Polish roads among the most dangerous in the EU. Poland needs to make substantial efforts to improve road safety.

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.

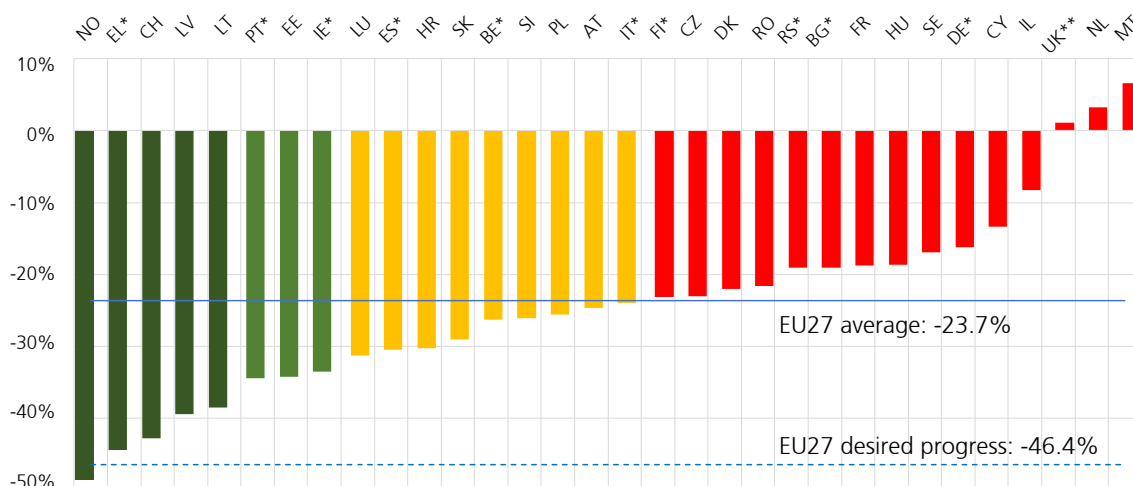
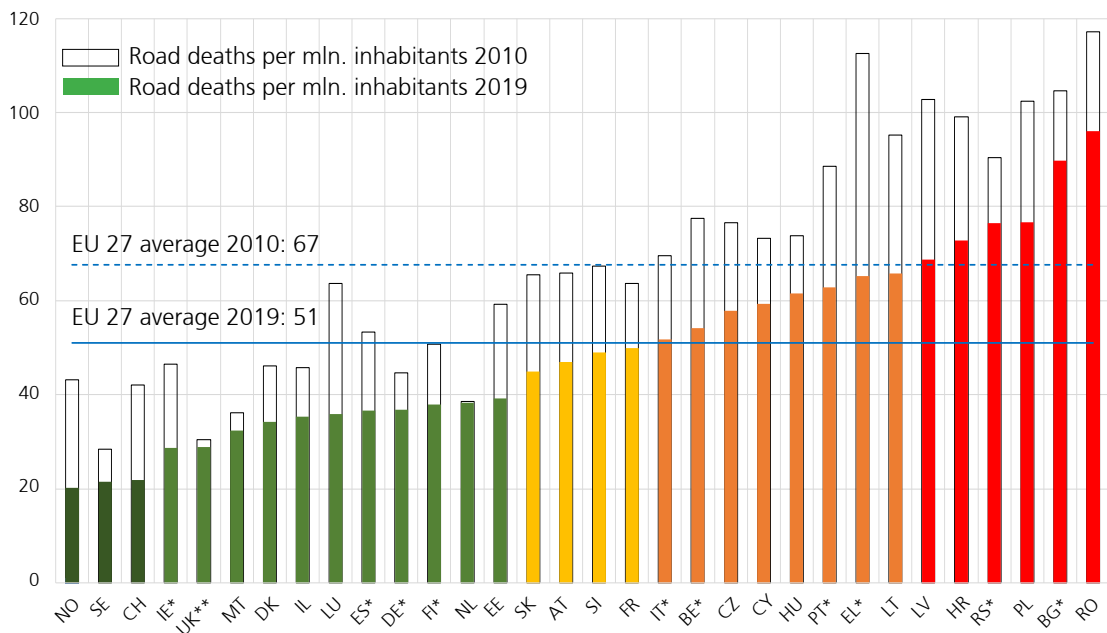


Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2019 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison).

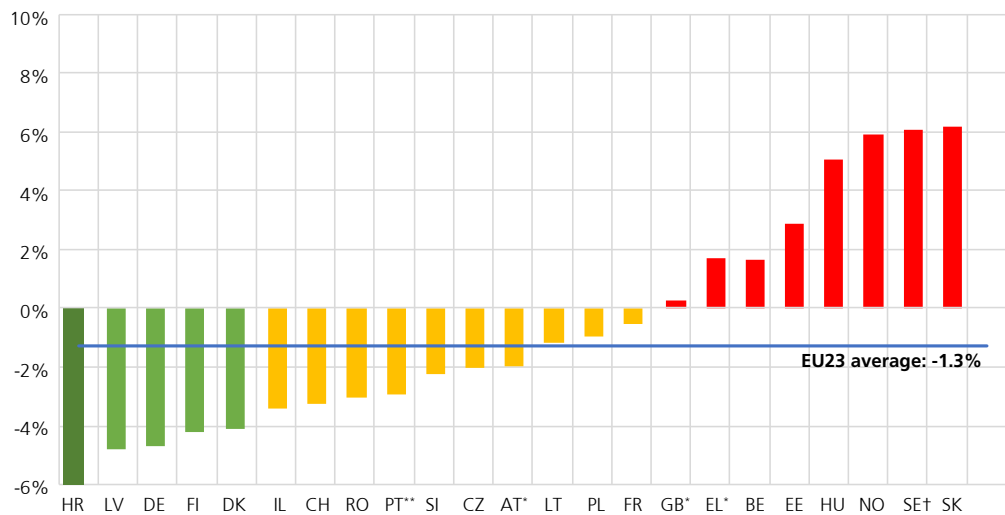
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As regards drink-driving related deaths, the trend has been slightly better than overall progress. This reflects the priority given by the government to prevention policies, with several measures adopted to reduce alcohol impairment behind the wheel over the last decade. A very high level of police enforcement and tougher penalties have shown to pay off in the reduction of alcohol-related collisions. The graph below shows progress in reducing drink-driving deaths has been slightly ahead of overall progress. Between 2010 and 2018, alcohol-related road deaths in Poland decreased by 6% on average annually, moving from 455 in 2010 to 370 in 2018. New figures for 2019 show 326 alcohol-related deaths, according to police data.

Figure 3. Difference between the average annual (%) changes in the number of road deaths attributed to alcohol and the corresponding reduction for other road deaths over the period 2010-2018

*2010-2017 **2010-2015
 SE† - driver deaths only
 BG excluded from fig.3 due to insufficient data. LU and CY excluded from fig.3 as numbers of road deaths are relatively small and are subject of substantial annual fluctuations. IE is excluded as the methodology changed in 2013. RS excluded from fig.3 as the methodology changed in 2016. But BG, LU and CY data are included in the EU23 average.
 EU23 average: EU28 average excluding ES, IT, MT and NL as data on alcohol-related road deaths were not available in these countries.
 GB data used instead of the UK.

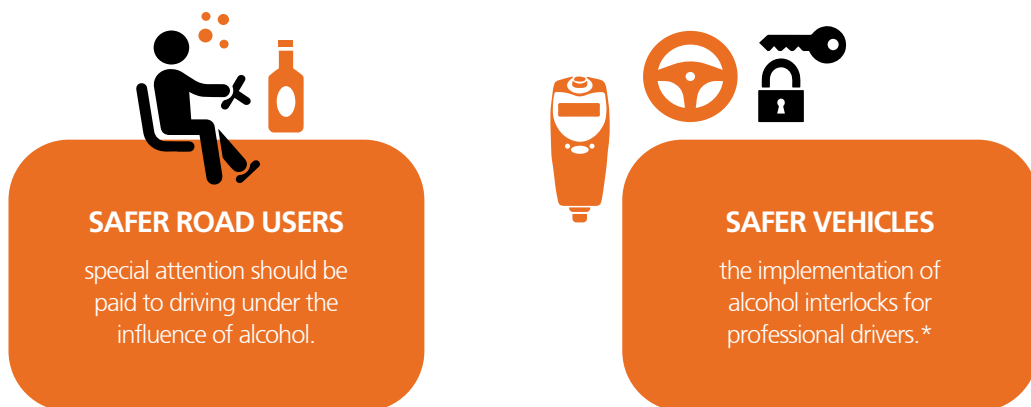




NATIONAL POLICIES

In 2005, Poland adopted Vision Zero for road safety. In 2013, the new National Road Safety Programme 2013-2020 reinforced this guiding philosophy.

The National Road Safety Programme 2013-2020 sets two national targets: reducing the number of road deaths by 50% and serious injuries by 40% between 2010 and 2020. Alcohol is mentioned in the priorities within the following pillars:



* although no legislation on alcohol Interlock for professional drivers is in force in Poland up to now.

Alcohol was also introduced in the list of basic performance indicators used for monitoring the implementation of the National Road Safety Programme:

- Number of deaths in alcohol-related road crashes (deaths/year)
- Rate of drivers under the influence of alcohol or other substances detected during police controls (in %)

A National Programme for Prevention and Solving of Alcohol-Related Problems for the years 2011–2015 was included in the National Road Safety Programme with specific objectives to address the drink-driving problem:

- increase the number of sobriety tests carried out during standard road checks,
- development of a strategy concerning the problem of drink-driving, development and implementation of a unified programme for drivers convicted for driving under the influence of alcohol,
- public education actions concerning the influence of alcohol on the human body and the risk of damage arising as a result of driving under the influence of alcohol.

As from 2015, the Polish government also adopted stricter sanctions for drink-driving; compulsory rehabilitation courses for all drink-driving offenders and an Alcohol Interlock Programme for all drink-driving offenders.

A new road safety strategy is currently being prepared and will cover the period 2020-2030. The date of publication is not yet known.



BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

Poland has one of the strictest laws on drink-driving in the EU.

 The BAC limit is **0.2g/l** for **ALL ROAD USERS**

The legal limit was introduced in 1960 and no further lower alcohol limit has been specified for any specific driver group.

In May 2015, following several dramatic drink-driving collisions that made headlines in the media, Poland toughened its penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol (BAC above 0.5 g/l). Offenders now face a driving ban (for all types of vehicles) from 3 to 15 years (previously from 1 year to 10 years), with reoffenders facing a lifetime driving ban. In addition, under the new regulations, rehabilitation courses tackling alcohol and drugs are now compulsory. The new law also allows the installation of alcohol interlocks in vehicles.

Below is a comprehensive table of all the penalties and sanctions included in the Polish Highway code:



BAC level (g/L)	License suspended/ revoked	Fines (in euros)	Penalty points	Detention short- or long-term	Other
0.2 - 0.5	From 6 months up to 3 years (it is up to the court to assess how long the driving ban will be imposed on the driver).	Fines can go up to 1135 € - or jail (The amount of the fine is decided by the court taking into account the driver's earnings and his or her financial situation).	10	1 month	-
> 0.5	From 1 to 15 years (it is up to the court to assess how long the driving ban will be imposed on the driver).	The court decides on the amount of the fine to be paid, based on a 'daily rate' calculation and taking into account the financial situation of the offender	10	Up to 2 years	A fine from 1135 € (PLN 5000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60000) (for the benefit of the Victims' Aid and Post-Penalty Assistance Fund).
Causing an accident under the influence of alcohol without fatalities	Driving ban from 3 to 15 years	-	-	Prison up to 4.5 years	Financial penalty from 2270 € (PLN 10 000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)
Causing an accident under the influence with injury or death	Driving ban for life	-	-	Prison from 2 to 12 years	Financial penalty from 2270 € (PLN 10 000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)
Causing a catastrophe under the influence with fatalities	Driving ban for life	-	-	Prison from 3 to 12 years	Financial penalty from 2270 EUR (PLN 10 000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)
Recidivism - driving with a BAC >0.5 g/L first repeat offence	Driving ban from 1 to 15 years	Fine	-	Restriction of freedom or imprisonment up to 2 years	Financial penalty from 1135 € (PLN 5000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)
Recidivism - driving with a BAC on alcohol BAC >0.5 g/L second repeat offence	Driving ban from 3 to 15 years	-	-	Prison from 3 months to 5 years	Financial penalty from 2270 € (PLN 10 000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)
Recidivism - driving on alcohol BAC >0.5 g/L third repeat offence	Driving ban for life	-	-	Prison from 3 months to 5 years	Financial penalty from 2270 € (PLN 10 000) to 13,619 € (PLN 60 000)



ENFORCEMENT

Poland has shown that it understands the crucial role of drink-driving enforcement in improving road safety, being one of the EU countries with the highest number of police checks for drink-driving. Police forces in Poland are allowed to conduct random targeted roadside alcohol breath testing.

Roadside drink-driving checks increased by 81% over the period 2010-2017. The police performed almost 18 million drink-driving checks in 2018, i.e. 468 checks per 1,000 inhabitants, which is the second highest drink-driving enforcement rate in the EU. In the European Survey on Road Safety Attitudes (ESRA, 2018), almost 47% of the respondents confirmed that they had been checked at least once in the previous 12 months, the highest percentage compared to the EU average of only 18%.

The latest figures from 2019 show once again the strong commitment of the government and relevant state services to maintain a high level of drink-driving checks. With almost 17 million alcohol tests performed by the police, registering a low proportion of drivers tested who were found to be above the legal drink-driving limit (0.7%), this policy proved to be effective.

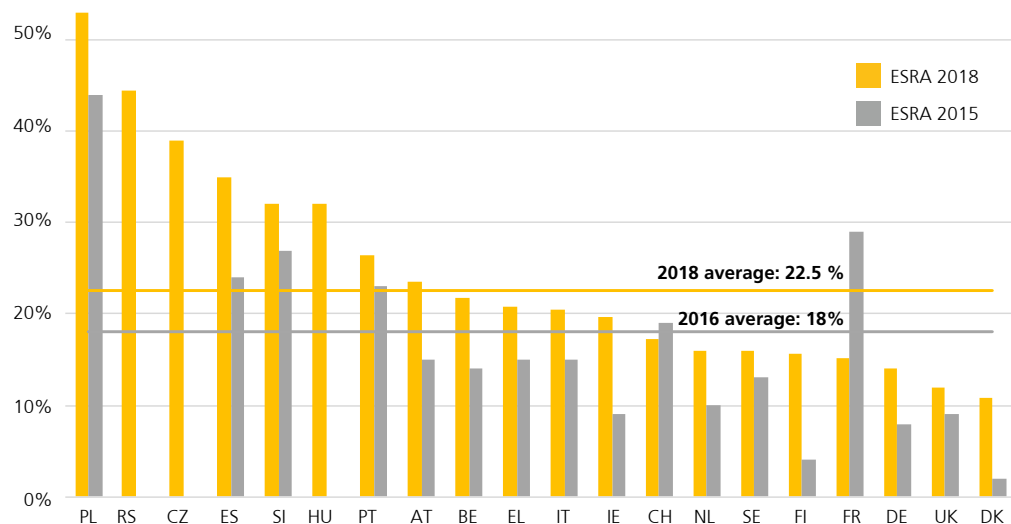


DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

Increases in the number of checks since 2014 in Poland have been shown to pay off as is clearly reflected in both ESRA1 and ESRA2 from 2015 and 2018, two E-Surveys carried out to collect and analyse comparable data on road safety performance, in particular road safety culture and behaviour of road users, such as attitudes towards drinking and driving.

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)



In 2018, more than 53% of drivers surveyed in Poland thought they would be likely to be checked for drink-driving by the police in the last 12 months, the highest percentage among European respondents. As a result, Poland is one of the EU countries in which the perception of being caught for drink-driving is the highest and this has helped in achieving a gradual decrease in the number of detected intoxicated drivers, as well as a decrease in the number of alcohol-related deaths, injuries and collisions.



REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

Since 1st January 2015 a new law took effect under which all DUI drivers will have to take a rehabilitation course on alcohol problems. They must complete the course to be able to claim their driving licence back. Under Polish regulations alcohol interlocks (introduced in May 2015) are not part of a rehabilitation programme, and there are no additional educational programmes for drivers using alcohol interlocks.

The alcohol interlock programme in Poland is a voluntary solution for all offenders who were caught drink-driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) between 0.2 g/l and 0.5 g/l and above 0.5 g/l. Under this regulation offenders may ask the court for their disqualification to be replaced with an alcohol interlock driving licence. This is available to offenders after at least half the disqualification period, and if they had a lifetime disqualification, they can apply to lift the ban after at least 10 years. The decision is taken by the court, if the offender's behaviour during the driving ban suggests that they are no longer a threat to road safety.

The duration of the required alcohol interlock installation period depends on the driving ban a person was given. As an example, someone with a three year driving ban may apply to the court after a year and a half for an alcohol interlock for the remainder of the sanction period (1.5 years). If someone has been given a lifetime driving ban, they are only allowed to drive a car fitted with an alcohol interlock. Polish regulations do not have an option to extend the use of alcohol interlocks and the court may withdraw its permission if the driver commits another driving offence (not necessarily connected with drink-driving). The Polish alcohol interlock programme is placed under criminal law. This means that it can only be imposed by the courts.

Each alcohol interlock installed in a vehicle is calibrated once a year by its manufacturer or an authorised representative. The calibration document is then presented to an authorised vehicle check inspector who issues the final clearance document which means the vehicle is fit for driving. The Polish regulations do not cover alcohol interlock data collection. No institution has been given responsibility for monitoring drivers who have been allowed by the courts to drive cars fitted with alcohol interlocks.

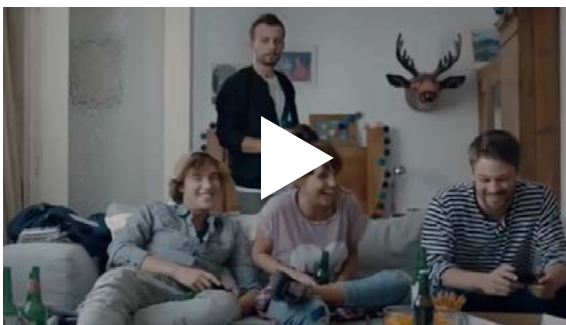
According to the ESRA2 study on Road Safety attitudes published in 2018, 87% of respondents in Poland support the installation of alcohol interlocks for drivers who have been caught drink-driving on more than one occasion.



CAMPAIGNS

According to public surveys, drink-driving is not seen as acceptable in Poland. Within the SARTRE survey on Social Attitudes to Road Traffic Risk in Europe (2012) for example, 91.5% of Polish drivers were of the opinion that car drivers should not be allowed to drink any alcohol when they drive. Furthermore, the survey gives an indication of the perceived social norm on drink-driving in Poland. In the study, 14.1% of drivers stated that they think that most of their friends would drink and drive a car, in comparison with 19 European participating countries where the average was 19.5%.

Drink-driving is one of the main topics of road safety campaigns in Poland. Campaigns are carried out by government agencies, local authorities and NGOs with good acceptance from the public. Drink-driving also has a lot of coverage in the press, television and radio.



<https://youtu.be/vmWFJ3trzW8>

One of the latest campaigns was carried out in 2015 by the National Road Safety Council. The title was "Alcohol and car keys? Out of question!" The campaign was addressed to people who could stop drivers from driving after consuming alcohol, so not directly at drivers but at their friends/family members. It was launched at a moment when the fines for driving after drinking alcohol had increased and when the possibility to change part of the license suspension to driving with alcohol interlock had been introduced. The link to the campaign webpage can be found here:

<https://www.krbrd.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/alkohol-i-kluczki-wykluczone.html>



Polish Breweries have been involved in drink driving prevention campaigns for many years. Since 2014, they have been carrying out a campaign called "I never drink and drive", in partnership with National Police, Parliamentary Group for Road Safety, Partnership for Road Safety, other state and commercial institutions. The goal of the campaign was to create a single, easy to communicate message/graphic logo used as a sign of social support for sober driving and to involve organisations, institutions, companies and drivers in promoting the message "I never drink and drive". Over 3 million stickers with the campaign slogan were distributed to encourage drivers to place them on their cars as a way to show their social criticism towards drinking and driving.

Another campaign "I'm driving. I am sober." is being carried out in various cities across Poland, organised by the Foundation Trzeźwość (Sobriety Foundation) which since 2001 has been organising campaigns related to alcohol in traffic. Their main goal is to promote appropriate driver behaviour (trzezwosc.pl/kampanie).



<https://youtu.be/P8SRml3zMqA>



SOURCES

Polish National Road Safety Programme 2013-2020:

<https://www.krbrd.gov.pl/files/file/Programy/KRBRD-Program-P1a-20140422-S2-K3d-EN.pdf>

Drink-driving national campaigns:

<https://www.krbrd.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/alkohol-i-kluczyki-wykluczone.html>

<https://pijodpowiedzialnie.pl/kampania/>

Driver perception:

ESRA Thematic report Driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs (2018) :

<https://bit.ly/2KO5Ky8>

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

IBSR, Drinking and driving - Learning from good practices abroad (2015):

<https://bit.ly/3gafgY1>

ETSC Drink-Driving Towards Zero Tolerance (2012):

https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Drink_Driving_Towards_Zero_Tolerance.pdf

ETSC, 14th PIN Annual Report (2020):

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

SARTRE4 report (2012):

https://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/sites/roadsafety/files/pdf/projects_sources/sartre4_final_report.pdf



European Transport Safety Council

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