



# DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

October 2021



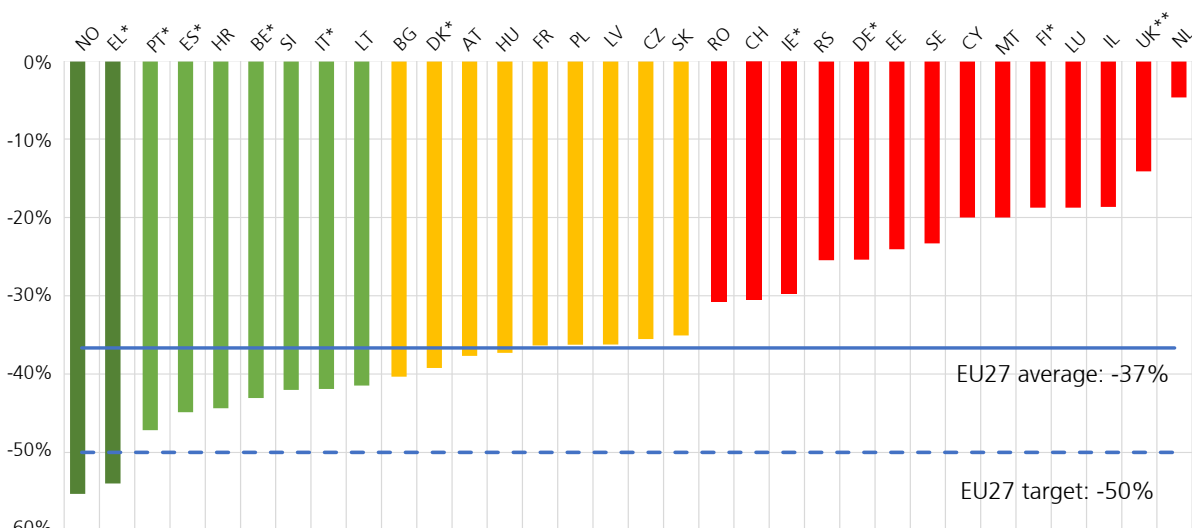
## PORTUGAL



### INTRODUCTION

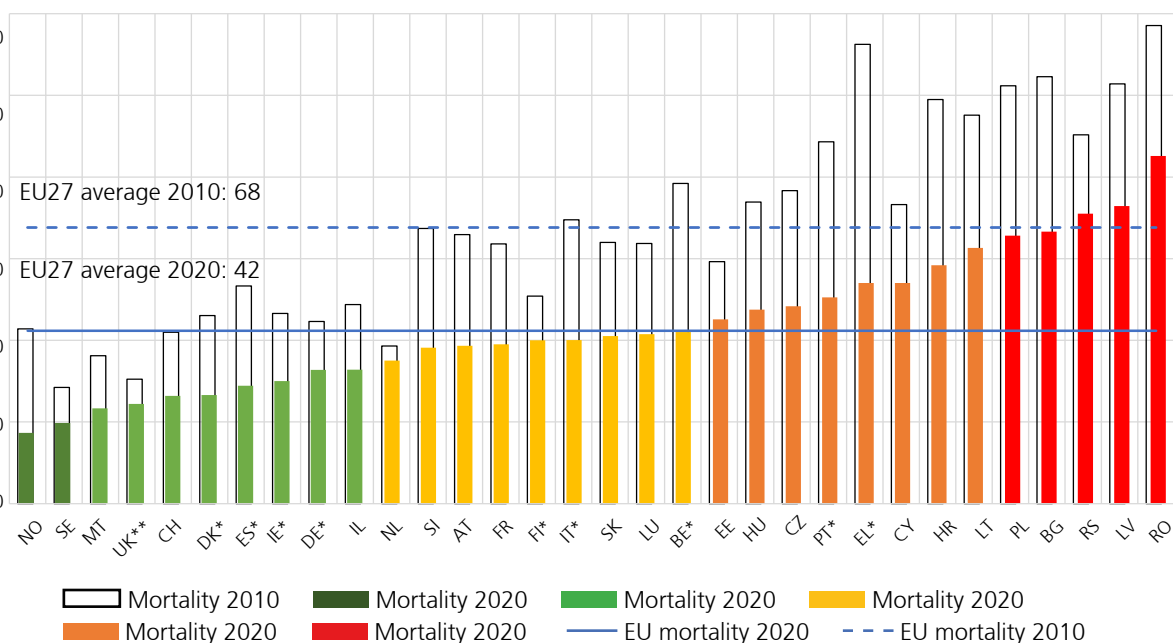
Over the period 2010 – 2020 Portugal made outstanding progress in reducing road deaths compared to other European countries, with a reduction of 46%. However, it should be noted that the pandemic year had a significant impact on the overall result: road deaths decreased by 19% in 2020 compared to 2019. In terms of road mortality, Portugal ranks above the EU average, with around 52 deaths per million inhabitants in 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 numbers of officially-recorded alcohol-related deaths and injuries published by the National Road Safety Authority (ANSR) in 2020 and covering the latest years available, involving at least one driver with a BAC  $\geq 0.5g/l$ , are shown in the table below.

Year	Injury collisions	Fatalities (within 30 days)	Serious injuries (1 day in hospital)
2016	1985	118	284
2017	1989	133	284
2018	2215	133	326

The percentage of drivers that died with a BAC  $\geq 0.5g/l$  in 2019 was 37%, a higher figure than in previous years and similar to that registered in 2010 and 2012.

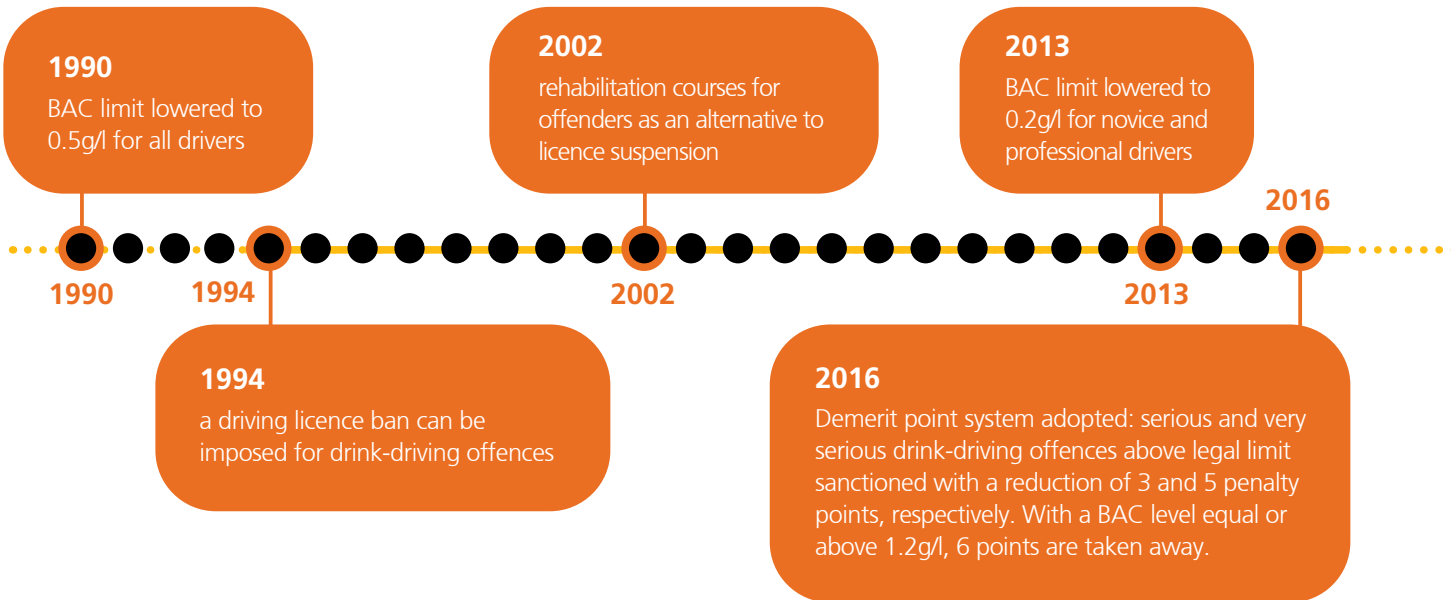
The main outcomes for collisions where drivers were found with a BAC  $\geq 0.5g/l$  between 2016 and 2018 were as follows:

- They had more serious consequences. While the percentage of collisions involving at least one driver that had consumed alcohol was 6.1%, collisions that led to deaths and serious injuries involved much higher proportions of drivers that had done so: 20.9% and 14.6%, respectively;
- They occurred most frequently on weekends;
- They were significantly more frequent during the night, with a higher chance of being fatal between between midnight and 03AM ;
- They were usually single vehicle crashes;
- Most occurred in urban areas, on roads through villages;
- Men were more likely than women to be involved in an alcohol-involved crash, and were also likely to have a higher BAC level;
- Out of the total number of drivers deaths with recorded BAC levels above the legal limit, about 70% had a BAC  $\geq 1.2g/l$  (which is considered a criminal act);
- The 20 to 54 year-old group showed the highest rates of alcohol-related road deaths;
- According to National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INMLCF), the percentage of drivers' autopsies with a BAC  $\geq 0.5g/l$  in 2019 was 37%, a higher figure than in previous years and similar to that registered in 2010 and 2012.



## NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of national measures in Portugal to tackle drink-driving:



In the National Road Safety Plan (PENSE 2020) published in 2017 and covering the period until 2020, several actions on alcohol were included:

- Carry out studies and estimates of risk of driving under the influence of psychoactive substances, namely alcohol and drugs, in particular taking into account the gender dimension;
- Carry out national campaigns to tackle drink-driving, taking again into account the gender dimension;
- Investigate the introduction of alcohol interlocks.

A new road safety strategy is still being developed and should be published by the end of 2021; one key area on road user behaviour is expected to address drink and drug driving.



# BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

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

**0.5g/l**



The legal limit for **professional drivers** (bus and coach drivers for public transport) is:

**0.2g/l**

Below is a table with details on the sanctions in force for drink-driving offences.



BAC level (g/L)



Class of violation



Penalty



Licence suspension

Novice (first 3 years); emergency vehicle, taxi, Bus/coach, HGV, transport of dangerous material vehicle, vehicle for public transport of children Professional	$\geq 0.2 \text{ g} - < 0.5 \text{ g/l}$	Serious	€250-1250 3 penalty points (out of 12)	1 – 12 months
	$\geq 0.5 - < 1.2 \text{ g/l}$	Very serious	€500-2500 5 penalty points (out of 12)	2 – 24 months
Ordinary driver	$\geq 0.5 - < 0.8 \text{ g/l}$	Serious	€250-1250 3 penalty points (out of 12)	1 – 12 months
	$\geq 0.8 \text{ g/l} - < 1.2 \text{ g/l}$	Very serious	€500-2500 5 penalty points (out of 12)	2 – 24 months
All drivers	$\geq 1.2 \text{ g/l}$	Crime	6 penalty points (out of 12)	Up to 1 year prison or 120 days of fine*

\* Portugal applies a day-fine system, corresponding to a value of between 1 euro and 500 euro. The amount of each day and the number of days of the fine are decided by the court. There is also the alternative, at the request of the offender, of having the fine totally or partially replaced by days of work in establishments, workshops or works of the State or other corporate bodies under public law, or private charitable institutions, if this is considered as adequately and sufficiently fulfilling the purposes of the punishment.



## ENFORCEMENT

Between 2010 and 2019 the number of tests carried out to detect drink-driving increased progressively.

With regard to the percentage of offenders with BAC  $\geq$  0.5g/l, in relation to the total number of drivers tested (rate of offenders), there has been a decrease with oscillations since 2009. 2019 saw the lowest value of the last 11 years (1.9%). The year 2017 was atypical, with a higher value.

Year	Tests	BAC between 0.5g/l and 1.2g/l	BAC equal or above 1.2	Total	Percentage of those testing positive
2016	1,638,020	22,600	21,408	44,008	2.7%
2017	1,658,825	20,456	19,891	40,347	2,4%
2018	1,681,992	19,521	17,992	37,513	2.2%
2019	1,818,700	17,870	15,956	33,826	1.9%

Between 2010 and 2019 the total percentage of offenders decreased by half (from 3.8% to 1.9%), while the proportion of offenders with a BAC equal or above 1.2g/l, increased by 11%. In the year 2019, the overwhelming majority of alcohol tests were random (89%), and 74% of the total of drivers with a BAC equal or above 0.5g/l were checked in this way (see below).

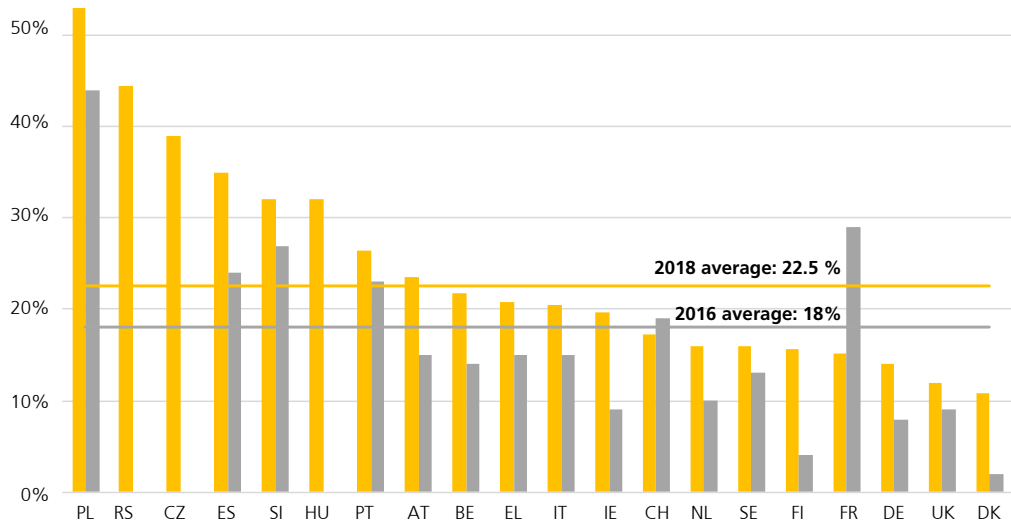


## DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

The E-Survey on Road Attitudes published in 2019 showed that the perceived likelihood of a police drink-driving check was 26.8% in Portugal, 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)



From the same survey, only 0.9% of Portuguese respondents considered it acceptable to drive a car when they may be over the legal limit for drink-driving. However, 14.1% reported this behaviour at least once in the previous 30 days – slightly above the European average of 13.1%.

Portugal is one of the European countries with the highest percentage of car drivers who admitted driving after drinking alcohol (33.9%). However, it is in the 3rd position in Europe for considering such behaviour to be riskier, with 85.1% of the Portuguese respondents considering that driving after drinking alcohol is a frequent cause of road collisions.



## REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

No alcohol interlock programme is in place in Portugal. A proposal for such a scheme was submitted by Prevenção Rodoviária Portuguesa to the Minister of Internal Affairs. Also, a working Group coordinated by the National Road Safety Authority produced a report on this subject as planned in the National Road Safety Plan (PENSE) 2020.

So far, no further steps have been undertaken. It is possible that specific measures on alcohol interlocks will be part of the new national road safety strategy.

In the ESRA survey on Road Attitudes from 2019, 82.8% of Portuguese respondents supported the installation of an alcohol interlock for drivers who have been sanctioned for driving under the influence of alcohol on more than one occasion.



# CAMPAIGNS



In April 2018, the Prevenção Rodoviária Portuguesa (PRP) launched the "O Copo ou a Vida" (A glass, or life) campaign, an initiative that aims to raise awareness among drivers about sober driving and reduce road collisions associated with alcohol.

This road safety campaign was visible on 350 billboards across the country where the maximum speed is 50 km/h, facilitating the visibility of the message.

In the Christmas Seasons of 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 two editions of the campaign "Nestas festas, o melhor presente é estar presente" (In this Christmas Season the best offer is to be present) campaign were carried out by the ANSR.



<http://www.ansr.pt/Campanhas/Pages/Campanha-de-Natal-e-Ano-Novo-2019.aspx>



<http://www.ansr.pt/Campanhas/Pages/Campanha-de-Natal-2018-.aspx>

In June 2019 the campaign "Estrada e Consequência" (Road and consequence) was launched, showing real people who lived the drama of a car crash and went through difficult rehabilitation processes, some of them living with physical marks for the rest of their lives. These dramatic testimonies were shared daily radio stations for 12 weeks, with the aim of alerting and raising awareness of citizens of the importance of adopting preventive and responsible behaviour on the road.



<http://www.ansr.pt/Campanhas/Pages/CampanhaEstradaeConsequ%C3%Aancia6.aspx>



<http://www.ansr.pt/Campanhas/Pages/CampanhaEstradaeConsequ%C3%Aancia3.aspx>

The National Road Safety Authority (ANSR), the National Republican National Guard (GNR) and the Public Security Police (PSP) launched the Road Safety Campaign "Taxa Zero ao volante" (Zero BAC while Driving), part of the National Enforcement Plan of 2021.



Taking place between 6 and 12 July, the campaign aims to alert drivers and all vehicle occupants to the risks of driving under the influence of alcohol. One in four drivers killed in road accidents has a blood alcohol level equal to or greater than 0.5 g/l, and three in four of these drivers have a level equal to or greater than 1.2 g/l.



## SOURCES

### Figures:

<https://bit.ly/36Bcuac>

Driving under the influence of alcohol in Portugal, Prevenção Rodoviária Portuguesa, 2021  
<https://bit.ly/2UciM8F>

### National Road Safety Strategy:

<https://bit.ly/3ySQ7Ji>

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

### ETSC, 15th PIN Annual Report (2021):

<https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/15-PIN-annual-report-FINAL.pdf>

### ETSC, Progress in Reducing Drink-Driving and other Alcohol-Related Road Deaths in Europe (2019):

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### Drivers' perception:

**ESRA survey 2018** <https://www.esranet.eu/en/publications/>

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

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<http://www.ansr.pt/Campanhas/Pages/CampanhaEstradaeConsequ%C3%Aancia6.aspx>

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European Transport Safety Council

ETSC would like to thank João Cardoso from the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering (LNEC), the National Road Safety Authority (ANCR), Alain Areal from Prevenção Rodoviária Portuguesa (PRP) and Rui Ribeiro and Carlos Lopes' from the National Road Safety Authority for contributing to this report.

The SMART project receives financial support from The Brewers of Europe.