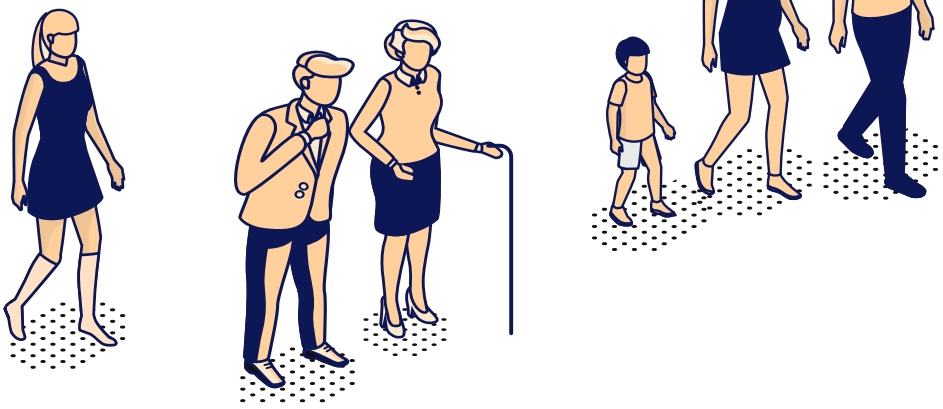
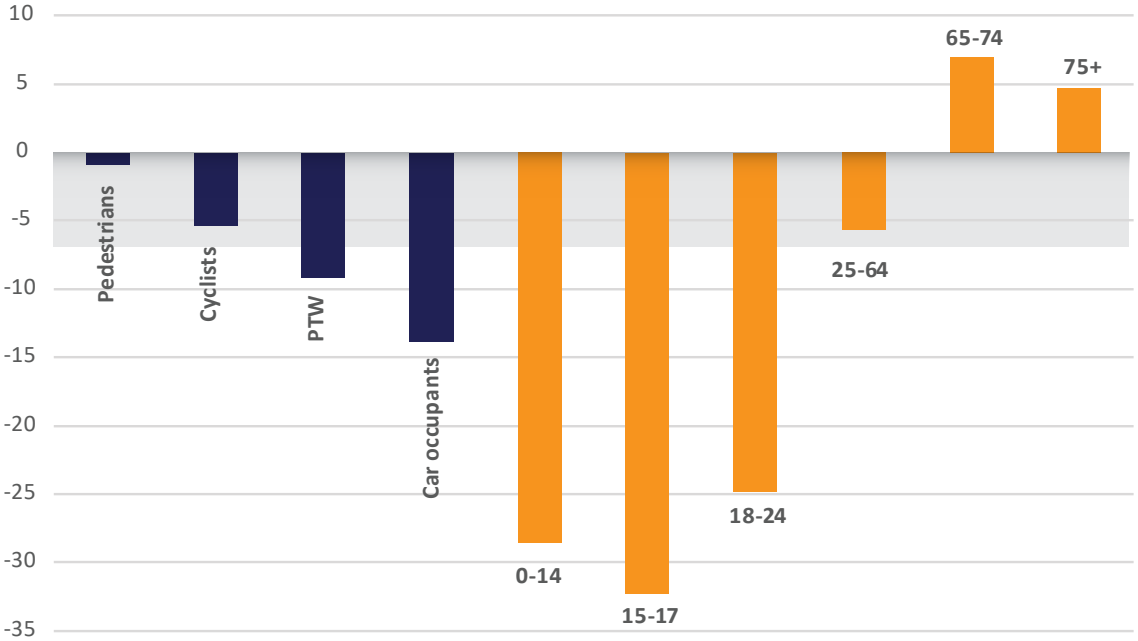
AGE GROUPS



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFER IN TRAFFIC THAN IN 2010

The number of young people killed in road traffic crashes has strongly declined since 2010. Road deaths in the age group 15-17 fell by almost one third (32%) between 2010 and 2018 on average. The reduction for the age group 18-24 years was of 25% (Figure 11). This is between 3.5 and five times the average reduction for the population as a whole (6.9%). This development is encouraging, as young people between 18 and 24 years of age have long had the highest road mortality rate of all age groups in many countries. In the vast majority of countries, this age group still had an above average mortality rate in 2018. In some countries, however, the young population is now less at risk than the general population (Figure 12). This is the case in Korea, where the age groups 18-20 and 21-24 years have a mortality rate half that of the average population. Lower mortality rates for young people are also found in Belgium, Chile, Hungary, Portugal and Switzerland for the 18-20 age group. For the 21-24 age group, Denmark, Finland and Japan saw lower-than-average mortality rates. Additional exposure data are needed to understand this development. Demographic changes, training and education programmes and the trend to take up driving at a later stage may play a role.

Figure 11. **Evolution in road deaths by age group and user type compared to global average,** 2010-18



Note: Road deaths by age group do not include Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Hungary, Netherlands and Slovenia.
Total road deaths and road deaths by road users do not include Argentina, Canada, Colombia and Slovenia.

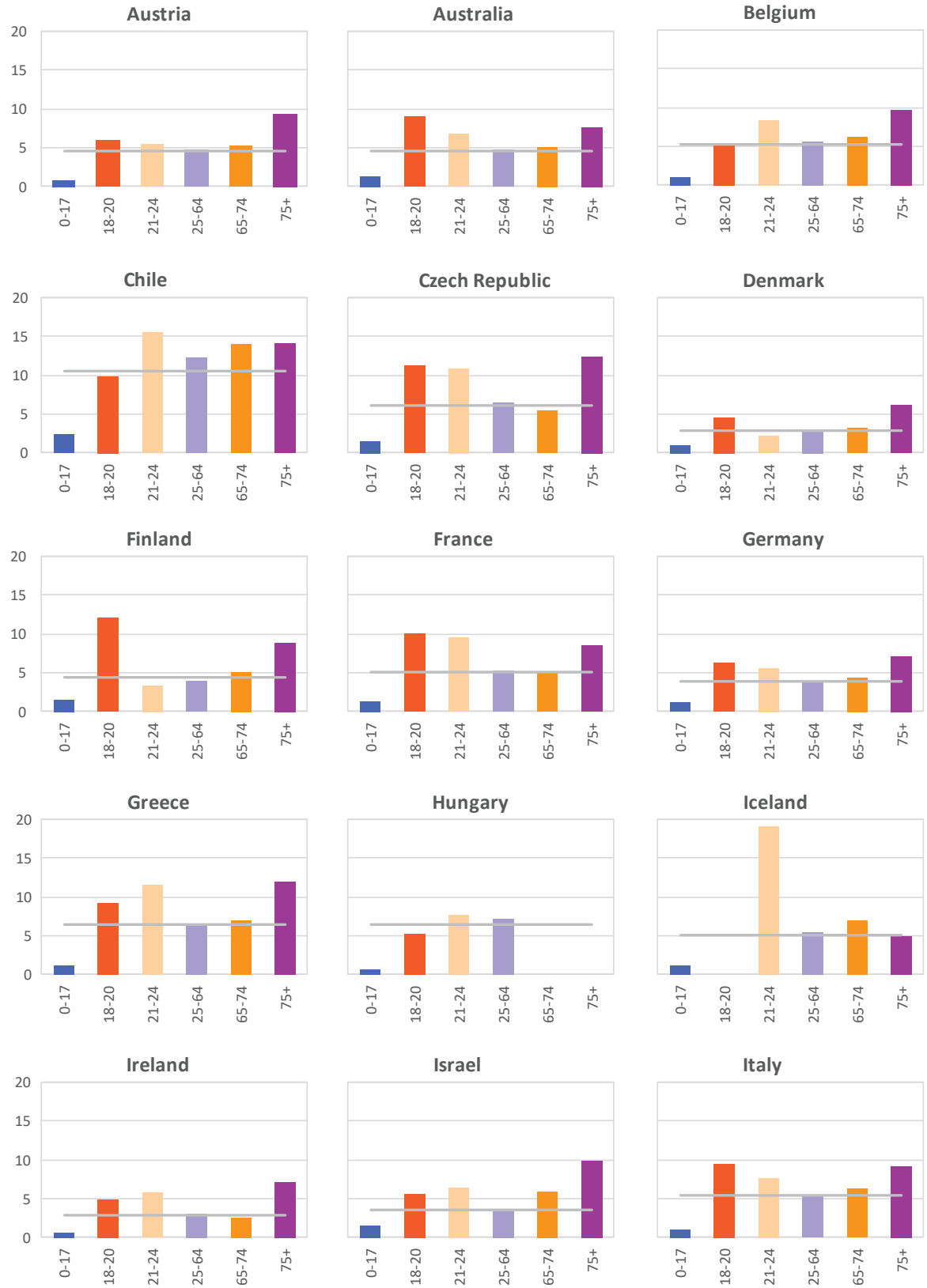
Average reduction By user type By age

The road safety situation continues to evolve favourably for children aged 0 to 14. The number of children killed in road crashes fell by 29% on average across countries between 2010 and 2018, more than four times as fast as for the overall population (Figure 11). Whether the road environment is becoming safer for children or whether other factors are responsible – for instance a reduced presence of children on public roads – could only be assessed properly with more data and further research. Unfortunately, the significant decrease in road deaths among children is largely limited to high-income countries. The safety of children in traffic in low- and middle-income countries remains a major concern. Worldwide, road crashes continue to be the number one killer of children and young people aged 5-29 years, according to the World Health Organization.

Senior citizens are increasingly at risk from road traffic. The senior population is the only age group with a growing number of road deaths since 2010. Traffic fatalities among senior citizens aged 75 or above rose by 4.7% between 2010 and 2018, in stark contrast to the overall average decline of traffic fatalities by 6.9% (Figure 11). The growing share of seniors in the population is one factor behind this development. More active lifestyles well into old age, resulting in longer participation in traffic and thus exposure to its risks may also play a role. Citizens over the age of 75 have the highest traffic mortality rate of all age groups in 13 (42%) of the 31 countries with available data (Figure 12). In Korea, this age group registered 29.7 road fatalities per 100 000 population, four times the national average of 7.3.

ROADS ARE GETTING MORE RISKY FOR SENIORS

Figure 12. **Mortality rate by age group**
Road deaths per 100 000 inhabitants in a given age group, 2018




Japan
Korea
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Netherlands (a)
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Serbia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
United States
0
5
10
15
20
0-17
18-20
21-24
25-64
65-74
75+
Average
Age group
0-17
18-20
21-24
25-64
65-74
75+