ROAD USERS

CRASH DEATHS AMONG CAR PASSENGERS FELL STRONGER THAN FOR OTHERS

Vehicle occupants continue to benefit most from the reduction in road deaths (Figure 7). The number of vehicle occupants killed was 14% lower on average in 2018 than 2010, while the overall decrease in the number of road deaths was only 6.9% (Figure 11). The most significant reductions occurred in Denmark (-53%), Ireland (- 52%), Greece (-51%) and Norway (-50%). Safer roads contributed to this improvement, as well as safer vehicles equipped with crash-preventing technologies such as Electronic Stability Control or impact-mitigation devices such as airbags. There were some exceptions, however: in Chile, car occupant deaths in 2018 were 24% higher than in 2010. In part, this increase reflects a significant growth of the vehicle fleet. In New Zealand (3%) and the United States (2%), the number of deaths among car occupants also rose. In Sweden there was a strong, as yet unexplained increase of 20% in fatalities among car occupants in 2018; in 2019 these fell drastically again and reached a historic low.

The total number of pedestrians killed on the road between 2010 and 2018 fell marginally. However, this is largely attributable to the rise in

pedestrian fatalities in the United States (+46%), where walking trips increased significantly between 1990 and 2017, according to the National Household Travel Survey.[1]
A more favourable development with a 20% overall decrease in the number of pedestrians killed results when the US figures are not taken into account. Fewer pedestrian deaths were recorded in 25 (81%) of the 31 countries with available data. The strongest reductions were observed in Austria (-52%) and Slovenia (-50%). More pedestrian deaths were recorded in Australia (+3.5%), Sweden (+10%), New Zealand (+11%) and the United Kingdom (+14%) (Figures 8 and 11). However, exposure data on the number of pedestrian trips as well as information on the impact of new mobility forms, for example e-scooters, would be needed to assess whether the situation for pedestrians is improving or worsening.

The number of cyclists killed decreased by 5.4% on average between 2010 and 2018 (Figure 11). This is about one-fifth lower than the overall reduction of 6.9% for all road users. A wide disparity between countries exists, however. In 13 (42%) of the 31 countries with available data, the number of cyclists killed was higher in 2018 than in 2010. The largest reductions were registered by Lithuania (-61%), New Zealand (-50%) and Slovenia (-50%). The largest increases occurred in Ireland (up 80%, but from a very low absolute level: five to nine killed), in the Netherlands (+41%), in Norway (40%, up from 5 killed to 7) and the United States (+38%) (Figure 9).

These figures need careful interpretation as the relatively low number of cycling deaths means yearly fluctuations can naturally generate very large percentage changes regardless of the longer-term trend. In absolute numbers, cycling deaths increased from five to nine in Ireland between 2010 and 2018 and from five to seven in Norway.
By comparison, the (already strongly reduced) number of killed cyclists in 2018 stood at nine in Lithuania, five in New Zealand and eight in Slovenia. And, as cycling becomes more popular in many countries, with a significant increase in the number of trips done on a bicycle, exposure rates are changing rapidly. For example, the number of bicycle trips more than doubled in Auckland, Vancouver and New York City between 2010 and 2018, according to the data compiled by the ITF Safer City Streets network.[2]

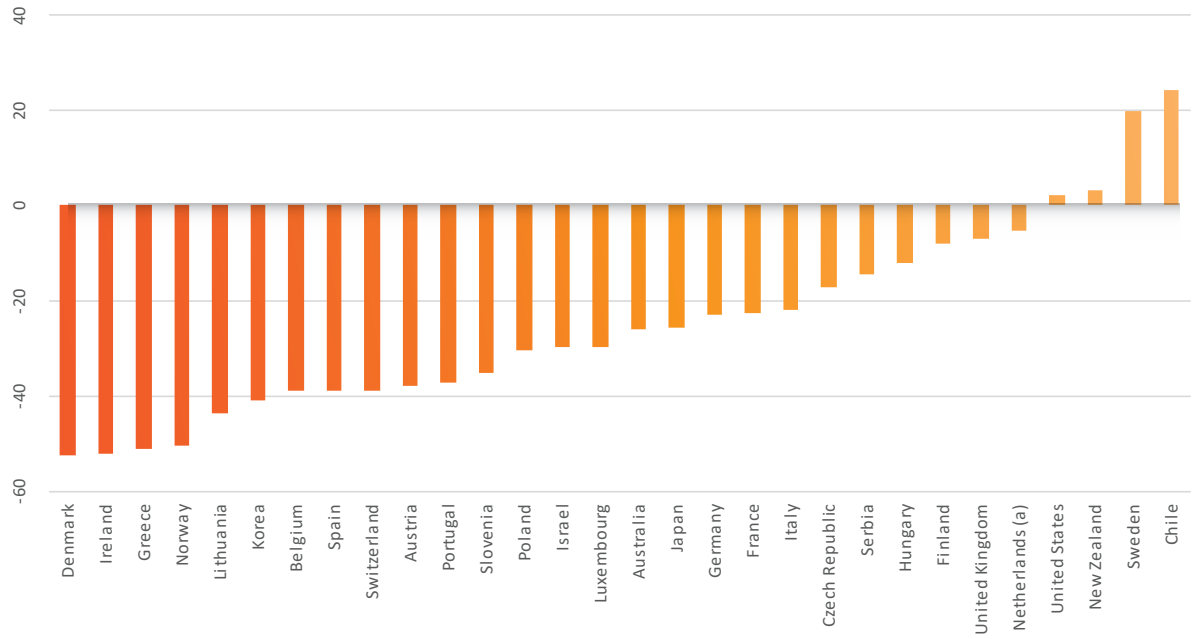
The number of motorcyclists killed fell by 9% on average in 2018 compared to 2010 across the 31 countries with available data (Figures 10 and 11). Decreases were registered in 22 countries (71%), with the largest reductions in Greece (-46%), Norway (-39%), Japan (-32%) and Korea (-32%). The largest increase was seen in Chile (+64%), where motorcycle use is growing rapidly and where motorcyclists represented 5% of all road deaths in 2010 but 9% in 2018.
Explaining road safety trends seen in the figures for road deaths by user group requires exposure data. Looking at vulnerable road users, for example, exposure data include the number of trips made on foot or by bicycle. The emergence of new modes of transport such as e-scooters must also be considered. Changes in exposure as a result of decreasing activity, for instance fewer pedestrians taking a walk, may explain a reduction in road deaths rather than a reduction in risk. This may be the case, for example, for young pedestrians, for whom data from several countries indicate that they walk less than previous generations. Inadequate disaggregation of data can limit the exposure data available, particularly in relation to emerging modes of transport.

For instance, an increase in the number of pedestrians injured may be related to the increased use of e-scooters, which are usually categorised as pedestrians in road statistics. The lack of standardised exposure data hinders more in-depth analysis of trends across countries. Where national data are available, the online country profiles that complement this report (see www.itf-oecd.org/road-safety-annual-report-2020).

1. Federal Highway Administration (2018), Summary of Travel Trends: 2017 National Household Travel Survey.

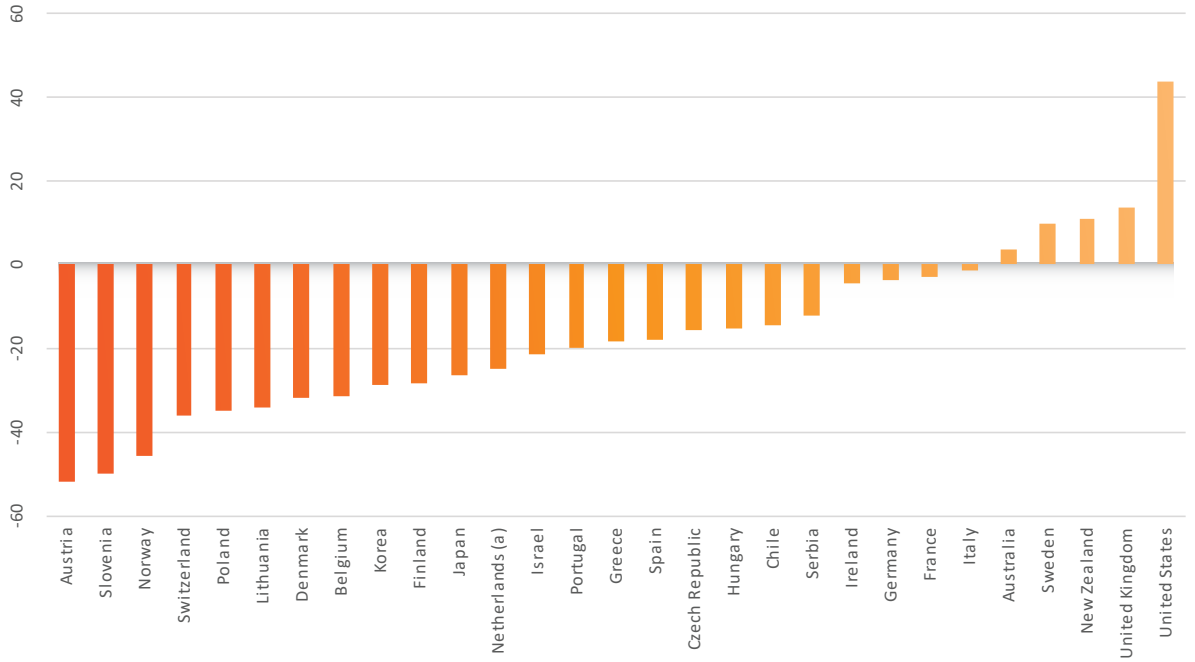
2. ITF (2020), Monitoring Progress in Urban Road Safety.

Figure 7. **Percentage change in the number of car occupants killed,** 2010-18



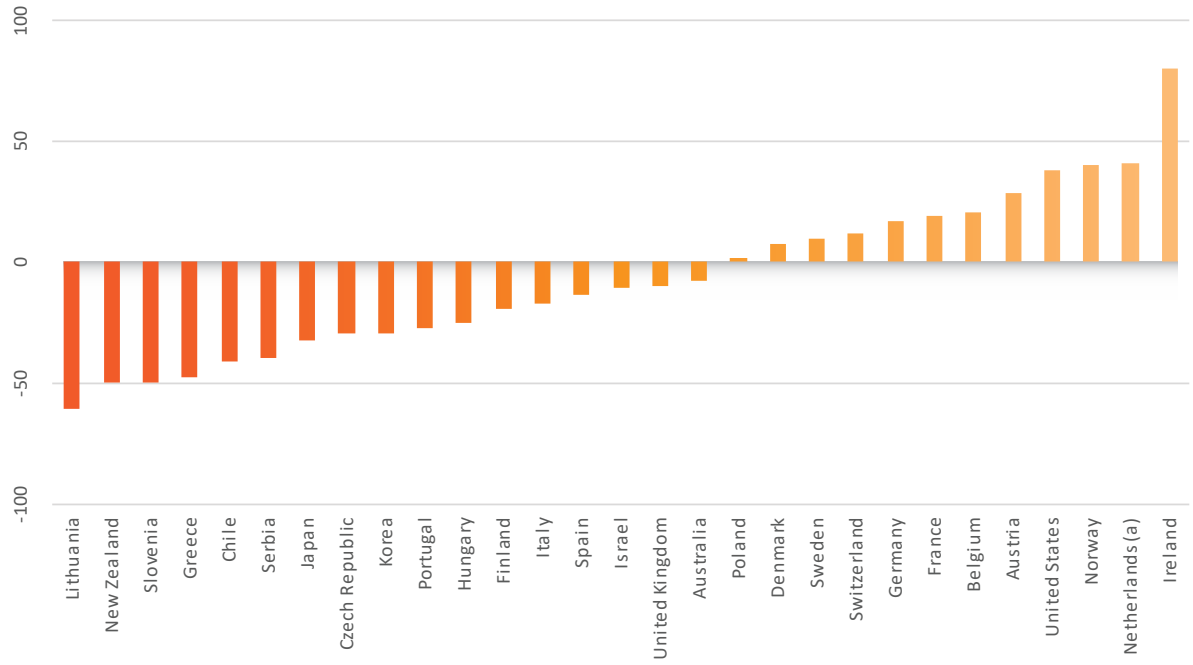
Iceland and Luxembourg is not shown because numbers are too small to provide meaningful analysis.
(a) Real data (actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).

Figure 8. **Percentage change in the number of pedestrians killed,** 2010-18



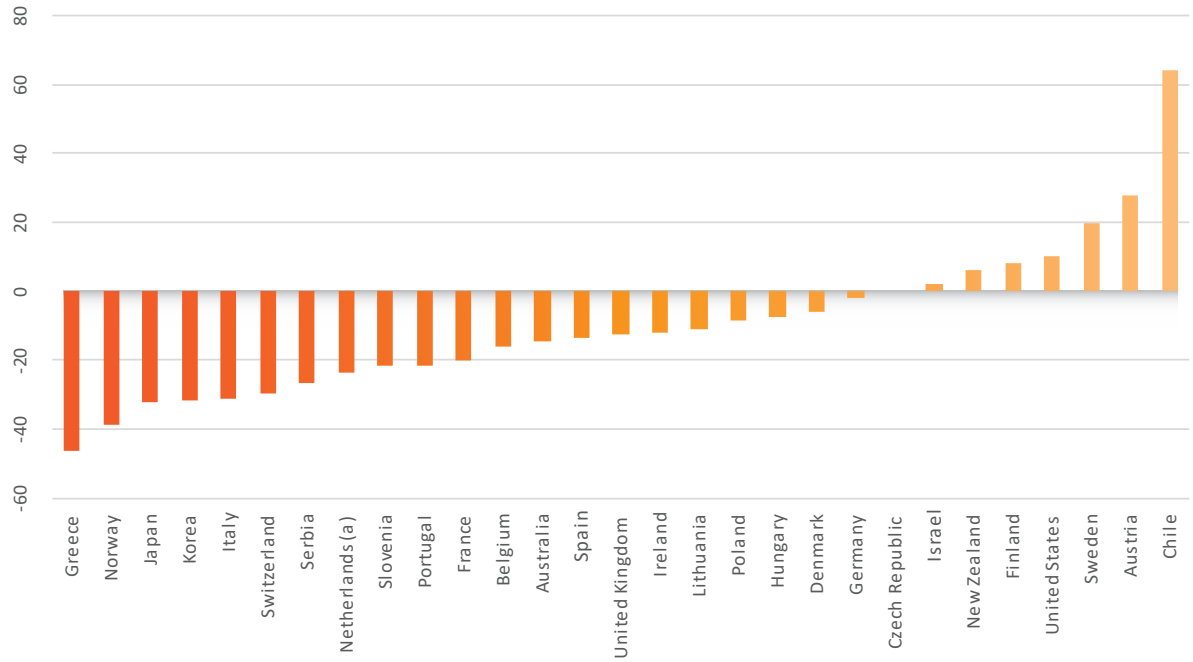
Iceland and Luxembourg is not shown because numbers are too small to provide meaningful analysis.
(a) Real data (actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).

Figure 9. **Percentage change in the number of cyclists killed,** 2010-18



Iceland and Luxembourg is not shown because numbers are too small to provide meaningful analysis.
(a) Real data (actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).

Figure 10. **Percentage change in the number of riders of powered two-wheelers killed,** 2010-18



Iceland and Luxembourg is not shown because numbers are too small to provide meaningful analysis.
(a) Real data (actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).