

# STRATEGIES, TARGETS, LEGISLATION



## MANAGING SPEED IS KEY

**National road safety strategies are in place in all member and observer countries of IRTAD.**

Table 6 provides an overview of national strategies and targets as well as those currently in place at international level. Most countries now have a long-term vision supported by interim targets for reducing the number of road deaths and serious injuries. More and more countries also now implement targets for a set of road safety performance indicators. The online country profiles that complement this report provide additional details.

**Speed management is a critical element of any road safety strategy.**

Reducing speed is essential to achieve less frequent and less severe road crashes. Setting appropriate speed limits and enforcing them is thus a core strategy for fewer road deaths and serious injuries. Table 7 summarises the prevailing speed limits. The default speed limit for passenger cars in urban areas is 50 km/h in most countries covered by the IRTAD database. Lower speed limits are often in force in residential areas or around schools; typically 30 km/h. Several cities around the world have adopted a default

speed limit of 30 km/h for their streets, among them Oslo in Norway, Toronto in Canada, Munich in Germany, or Madrid in Spain. Relatively high default speed limits in urban areas also exist in some countries however: for instance 60 km/h in South Africa, Colombia (although the capital Bogotá recently adopted a 50 km/h limit), and Poland (during night time). On non-motorway roads outside built-up areas, speed limits typically vary between 80 km/h and 100 km/h. These are the roads with the highest risk of fatal crashes. On motorways, maximum speed limits vary between 90 km/h and 140 km/h. In Germany, there is no general speed limit on motorways. Instead there is a maximum recommended speed of 130 km/h, and local speed limits apply on a large part of the German motorway network.

**Enforced limits for drivers' blood alcohol content (BAC) are fundamental for preventing drink-driving crashes.** General BAC levels exist in all member and observer countries of IRTAD. The most common maximum authorised BAC level is 0.5 g/l. However, limits vary between 0.0 g/l in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Uruguay, to 0.8 g/l in Canada, Jamaica, Malaysia, the United Kingdom (excluding Scotland) and the United States. Most countries also apply lower BAC levels for novice, young, and professional drivers (Table 8).

**Seatbelts are among the most effective tools to save the lives of vehicle occupants.**

Using seatbelts reduces the severity of injuries in case of a crash. The wearing of seat belts in front seats is mandatory in all countries covered by the IRTAD database. Solely in the United States, one state, New Hampshire, has not enacted a seatbelt law for adults. Almost all countries covered in this report now also legally require the use of seatbelts in rear seats. The one notable exception is Cambodia, where the use of seat belts on rear seats is not yet mandatory on the whole road network. However, a law to effect this is in preparation. In the United States, 19 states do not have laws requiring seatbelt use in rear seats.

**Seatbelt wearing rates in countries vary widely.**

There is no internationally agreed methodology to measure seatbelt use and available data are based on national surveys. While they should not be directly compared, they nevertheless provide an indicative overview on seatbelt use. Based on this, wearing rates in front seats typically range between 80% and 100%. That said, they can be significantly lower. The wearing rate in front seats was estimated to be only 56% in Mexico and 55% in Argentina in 2018, for example (Table 9). Most countries with a high level of seatbelt wearing in front seats also have a high use rate for seatbelts in rear seats, even if slightly lower. Yet in many countries, seatbelt

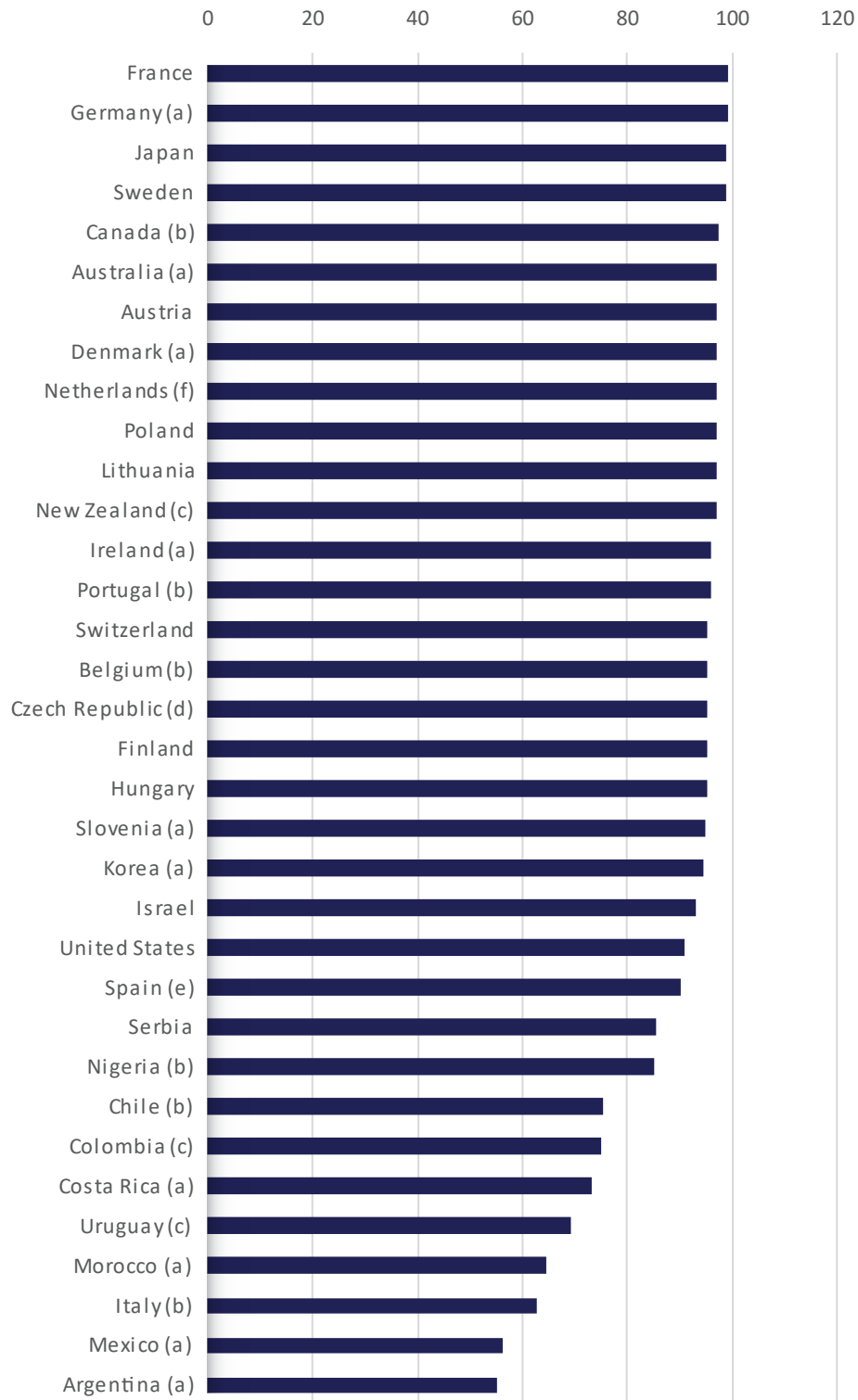
use in rear seats is much lower than in front seats. Rear seat passengers have wearing rates below 80% in about half of the 36 IRTAD member and observer countries which collect this indicator. In ten countries, only 40% or less use seats belts when seated in the rear of a vehicle (Figures 14 and 15). Many lives could be saved if the rate approached 100%.

**Helmets protect a particularly fragile and critical body part for riders of two-wheelers.**

Motorcyclists, moped riders, and cyclists are among the most vulnerable road users in a crash. The use of helmets on motorcycles and mopeds is hence compulsory in all member and observer countries of IRTAD. In the United States, laws vary by state. The overall helmet use rate is generally high, with many countries reporting nearly 100% compliance for motorcyclists. In the United States the rate is about 70%. Helmet use for cyclists is not compulsory in most countries; however the mandatory use of helmets by children is becoming more frequent. Table 10 presents the status of helmet laws and the use of helmets by motorcyclists and cyclists.

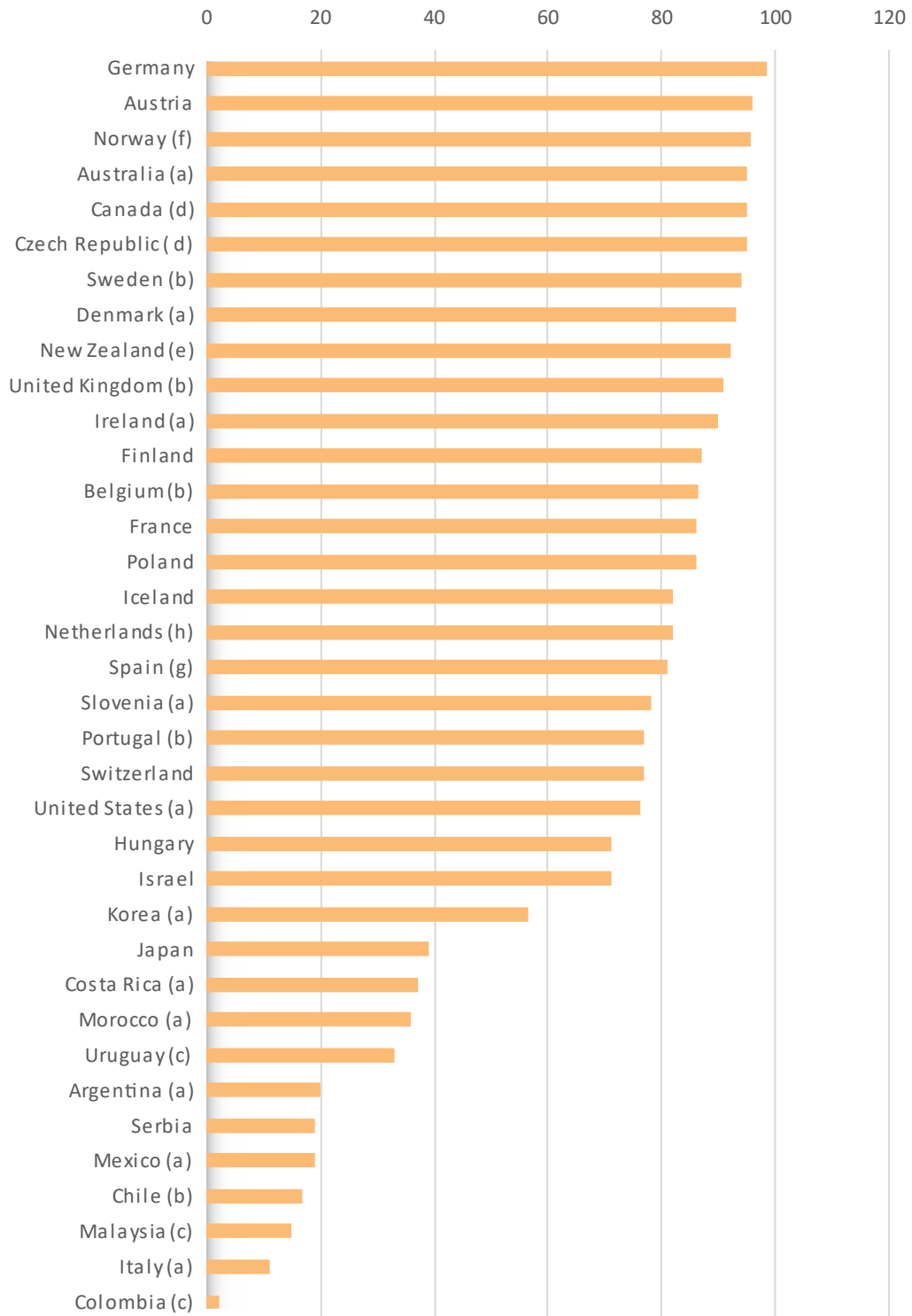
## SEATBELT USE CAN STILL IMPROVE

Figure 14. **Seatbelt wearing rates in front seats, 2019 or latest available year**

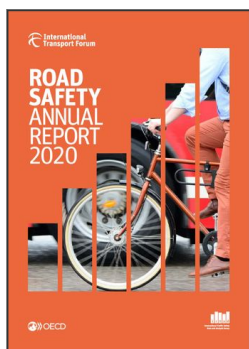


Note: (a) 2018 data. (b) 2017 data. (c) 2016 data.(d) 2015 data. (e) 2012 data. (f) 2010 data.

Figure 15. **Seatbelt wearing rates in rear seats, 2019 or latest available year**



Note: (a) 2018 data. (b) 2017 data. (c) 2016 data. (d) 2015 data. (e) 2014 data, (f) 2013 data. (g) 2012 data. (h) 2010 data.



**From:**  
**Road Safety Annual Report 2020**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/f3e48023-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

International Transport Forum (2020), "Strategies, Targets, Legislation", in *Road Safety Annual Report 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/44a63a36-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.