

TRENDS



TEN COUNTRIES HAD THEIR FEWEST ROAD DEATHS EVER

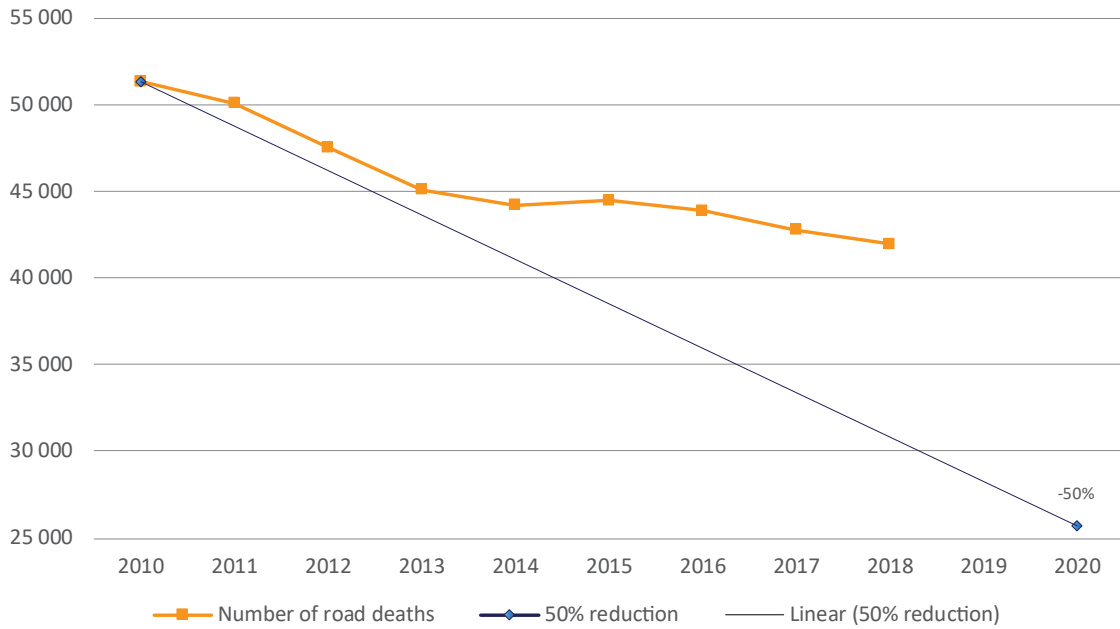
The number of road deaths in 2019 in most countries was lower than the 2016-18 average, according to preliminary data for last year. Twenty-two of the 30 countries (73%) with provisional or final data available for 2019 saw a reduction, while eight countries (27%) registered an increase (Table 2). On average, the number of road deaths fell by nearly 5% in the countries covered by the IRTAD database against the 2016-18 average. Sweden (-21.6%) saw the strongest reduction, followed by Korea (-18%) and Switzerland (-17.4%). The number

of road deaths increased in Denmark (+7.2%), in the Netherlands (+3.3%) and in Belgium (+2.9%). This analysis excludes the smallest countries with low absolute numbers of road deaths, where small changes in absolute numbers result in large fluctuations in percentage terms.

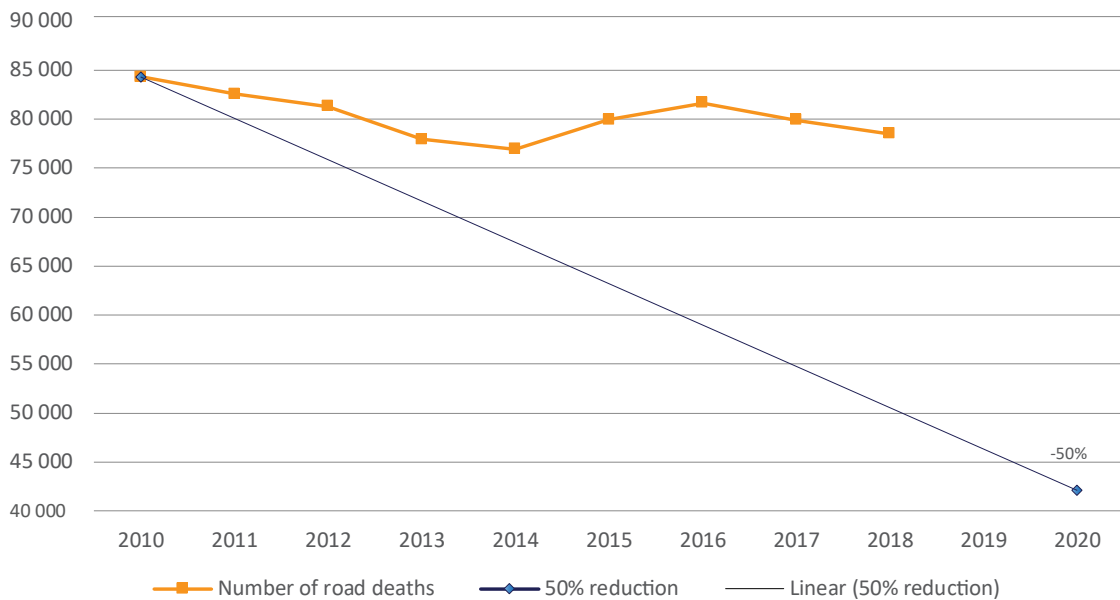
Ten countries reached the lowest number of road deaths in 2018 since systematic recording began: Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Lithuania and Slovenia.

Figure 1. Aggregate evolution in the number of road deaths in IRTAD countries, 2010-18

a. Number of road deaths (excluding the US)



b. Number of road deaths



Data for Argentina in 2016 are an estimate. Data for Colombia are not included.

In 23 countries, roads became safer in 2018 than they had been on average during 2015-17, according to final, validated data (Table 3). Compared to the average for 2015-17, the number of road deaths decreased in 23 (68%) out of the 34 countries with validated data.

Across all 34 countries, the number of road deaths decreased by 2.5% on average in 2018 compared to the average for the three previous years. Slovenia (-22.9%), Ireland (-16%) and Lithuania (-15.6%) recorded the largest decreases, while Sweden (24.5%), Portugal (15.2%) and New Zealand (10.9%) had the highest increases.

The number of people killed in crashes has decreased in all countries over the past eight years from 2010 to 2018. Overall, there were 6.9% fewer traffic fatalities in 2018 than 2010. The rate of progress has slowed during this period, however. In around half of the countries the number of road deaths has not significantly fallen since 2010 (Figure 3). The United States, as the most populous among the countries included, heavily influences the data. Without the US, the average reduction in road deaths was 18.3% (Figure 1).

Behind the average figures lie significant disparities between countries' longer-term road safety performances. Benchmarked against 2010 data, the number of traffic deaths fell in 26 (76%) out of 34 countries

in 2018 (Figure 2). The most significant reductions were achieved by Norway, Greece and Lithuania. Norway nearly halved its number of road deaths from 208 to 108 in the period 2010-18. Greece reduced the number of traffic fatalities from 1 258 to 700, a drop of 44%. In Lithuania, the number of road deaths decreased by 42% over the same period. Four countries managed to reduce traffic fatalities by more than 30%: Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark and Korea. On the other hand, eight countries registered an increase in the number of road deaths in the same period: Colombia (+25%), Sweden (+22%), the United States (+11%), Argentina (+8%), the Netherlands (+6%), New Zealand (three more deaths) and Iceland (ten more deaths, but based on a very low level in 2010 with only eight road fatalities).

The rate of reduction in road deaths has slowed in recent years in most countries, despite the overall positive trend. The average annual reduction in the number of road deaths was of 3.3% in the period 1998-2008, but only 2.3% in the period 2008-18.

IRTAD member countries have reported a number of overarching factors that help contextualise recent trends in road safety performance in addition to factors at work at the national level (see Box).

FEWER PEOPLE ARE KILLED IN CRASHES, BUT THE RATE OF REDUCTION HAS SLOWED

TRENDS IN CONTEXT

Factors that help contextualise recent trends in road safety performance in addition to factors at work at the national level

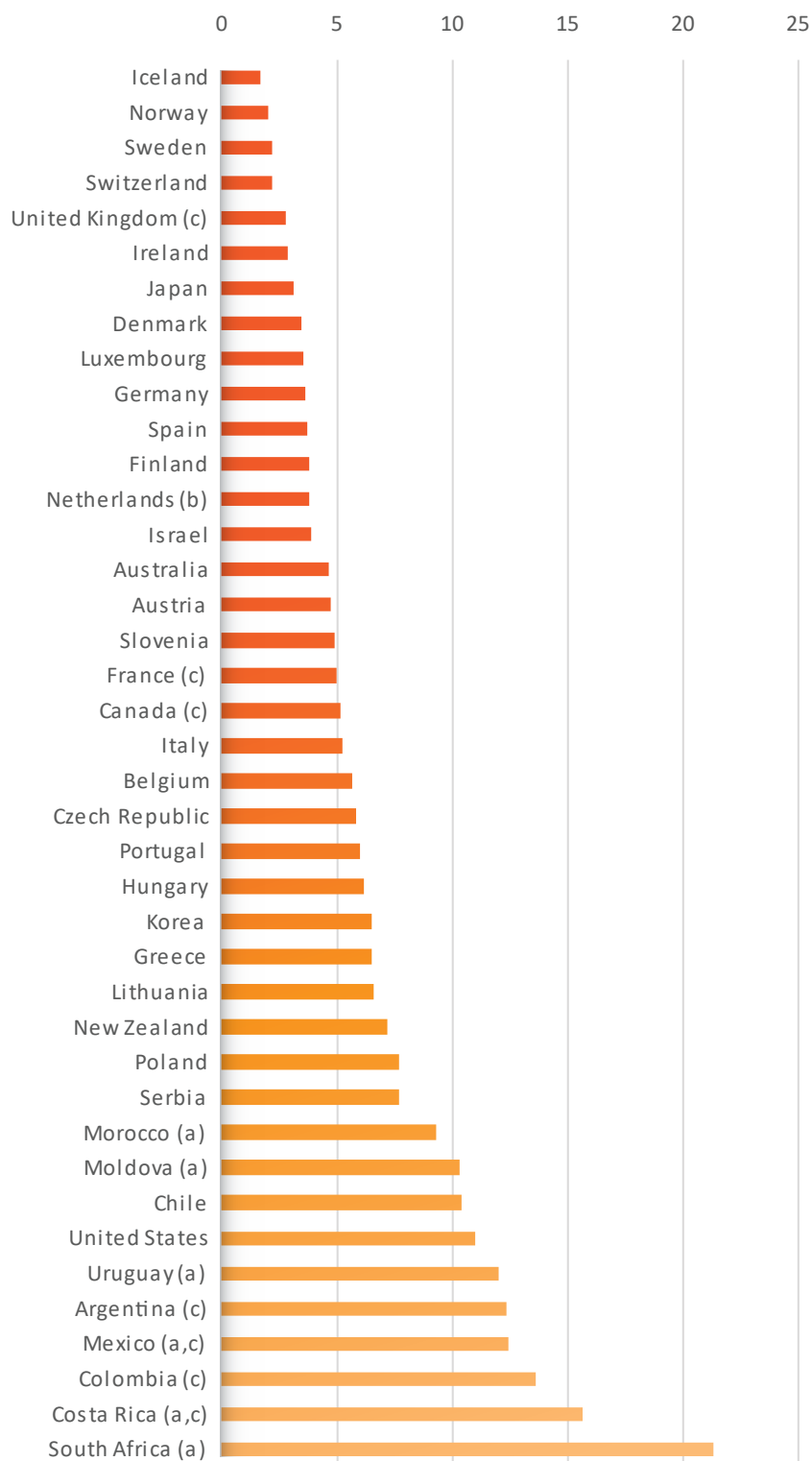
- **Changes in demographic composition**, coupled with greater mobility among the senior population, result in a higher proportion of senior citizens and a lower proportion of younger age groups among traffic fatalities. Several countries report higher risks for people aged 75 and above, in particular among cyclists and e-cyclists.
- **Distraction** is reported to be a growing issue in many countries, despite difficulties in measurement. Distraction, usually through mobile phone use, concerns not only car and truck drivers, but also cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists.
- **Speeding and drink driving** remain two key factors in fatal crashes. All countries report that speeding is a contributing factor in 15% to 35% of fatal road crashes. Similarly, driving under the influence of alcohol is a factor in 10% to 30% of fatal crashes in all countries.
- **The development of new mobility forms** such as scooters, both conventional and electric, or e-bikes entails new road safety challenges. Crash statistics do not yet allow for a clear distinction of these new mobility forms, but a large number of countries have recorded new types of crashes involving these devices.

Figure 2. **Percentage change in the number of road deaths, 2010-18**



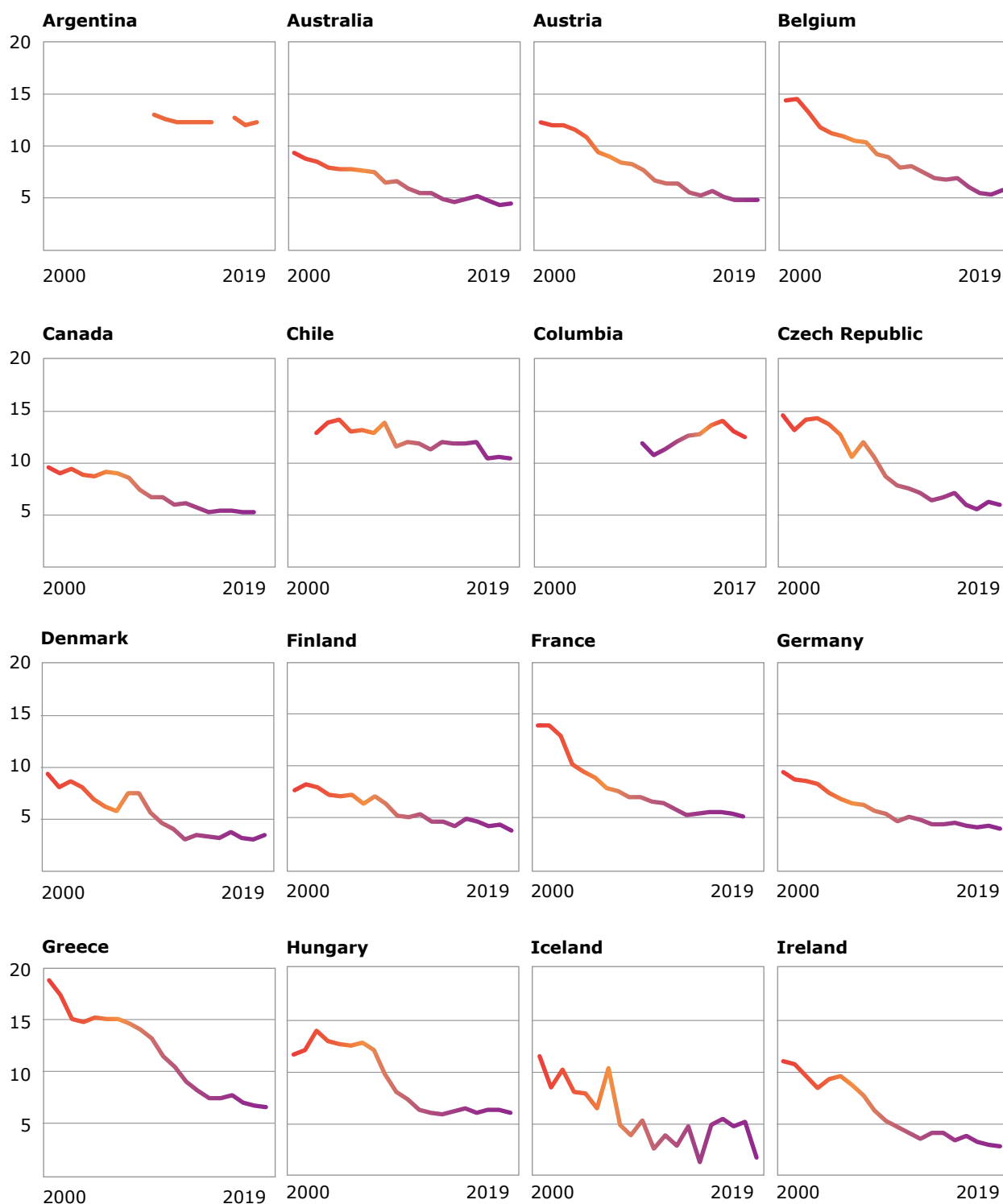
Iceland is not shown because numbers are too small to provide meaningful analysis.
 (a) Data as provided by the countries and not validated by IRTAD.
 (b) Real data (actual numbers instead of numbers reported by the police).

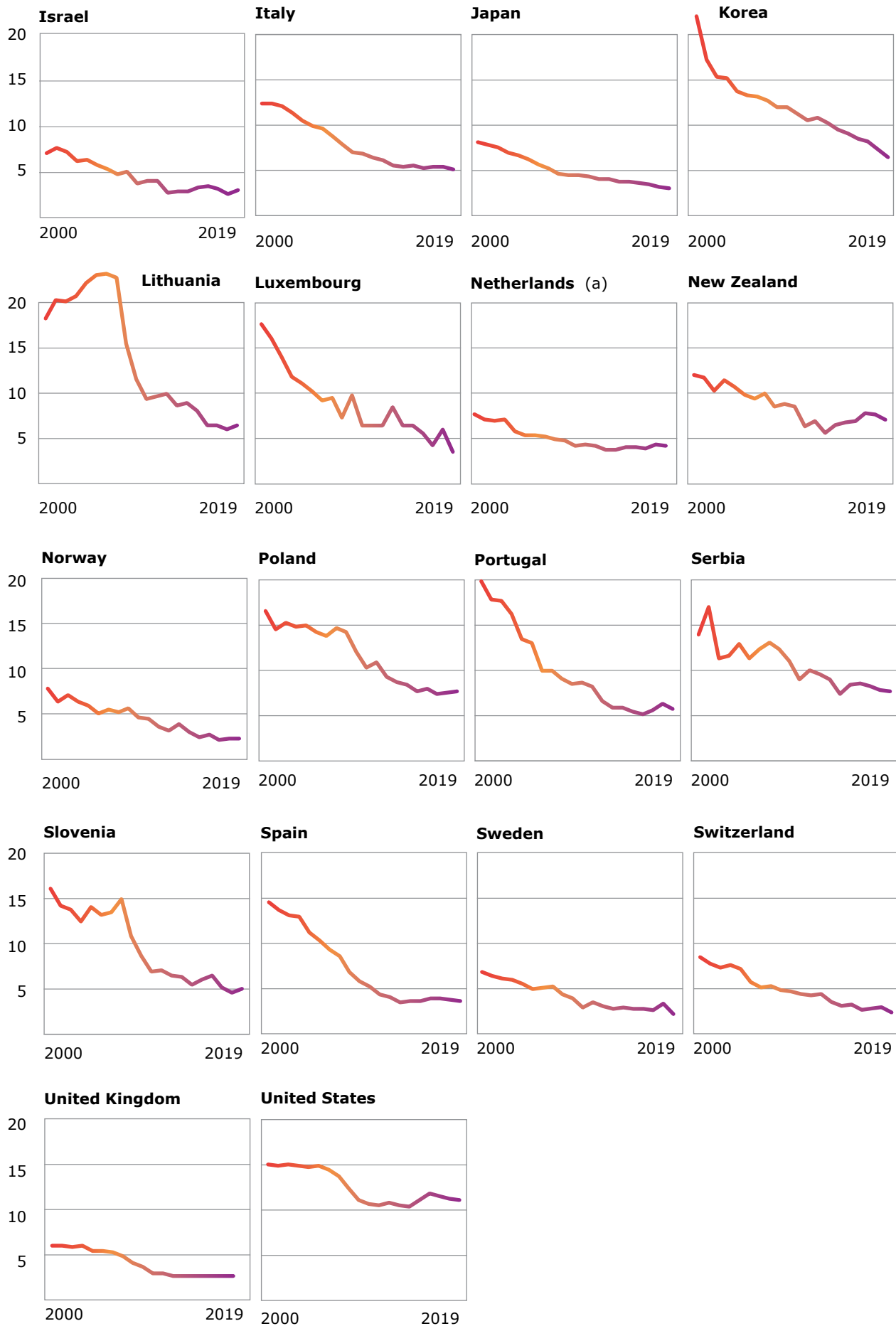
Figure 3. Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants, 2019 or latest available year



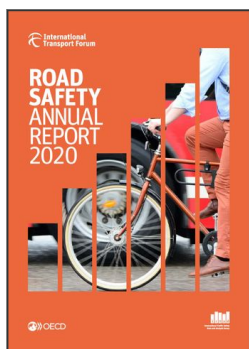
(a) Data as provided by the countries and not validated by IRTAD.
 (b) Real data (actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).
 (c) 2018 data.

Figure 4. Evolution of road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants, 2000-19





(a) Real data (Actual numbers instead of reported numbers by the police).



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