

# IRELAND LEADS THE WAY IN EUROPE ON ROAD SAFETY

Ireland has won this year's European Transport Safety Council's Road Safety Performance Index award, for demonstrating its drive to cut the number of road deaths through a strategic multi-agency approach put in place by the Irish government to tackle the problem.

Ireland has made great progress on road safety in recent years, while at the same time recognising areas where it still needs to do more, such as improving the safety of cycling, according to Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC).

Speaking at the presentation of the ETSC award to Transport Minister Shane Ross in Brussels on 19 June, the ETSC Executive Director commented: "What stands out is the strategic approach: analysing the data, setting targets, and making sure the job gets done.

"If every country in Europe could get to the same level of safety as Ireland, we could cut road deaths by 40%. As it is, many countries are standing still and even going backwards. We can learn a lot from Ireland's approach – it's a model for the European Union."

## A DRIVEN PERFORMANCE

Ireland was the second safest EU Member State in 2018, in terms of road mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) and has moved up five places in the ranking of EU countries since 2010 when it then held seventh place.

In terms of numbers killed on our roads, Ireland has cut the annual number deaths by more than 30% since 2010. By comparison, deaths increased in other relatively safe countries over the same period including Sweden and the Netherlands.

According to the ETSC, Ireland's performance has been driven by the establishment of the Road Safety Authority, a long-term strategic plan to cut road deaths with specific targets, regular evaluation and follow-up, plus a multi-agency approach to delivery across government.

The ETSC has also pointed to the considerable efforts put in place by Ireland to tackle dangerous speeding, as well as drink-driving, on our roads in recent years.

## PROGRESS ON ROAD SAFETY

Progress in Ireland stands in contrast to relative stagnation in the EU as a whole; the numbers killed on EU roads fell by just one per cent last year, and by just four per cent over the last five years, according to the latest ETSC Road Safety Performance Index Annual Report.

The ETSC says the EU target to cut road deaths in half over the decade to 2020 now looks out of reach, and suggests that meeting that target would require an unprecedented 21%



**Pictured at the presentation of the ETSC's Road Safety Performance Index award to Ireland in Brussels were (l-r): Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director; Herman De Croo, ETSC President; Shane Ross, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport; Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport, and Moyagh Murdock, CEO of the Road Safety Authority.**

reduction per year in 2019 and 2020.

In many Member States, road safety has been deprioritised in recent years, with cuts to traffic police enforcement, and a failure to invest in safer infrastructure.

The EU's biggest and boldest recent road safety initiatives – an update to minimum vehicle safety standards and a significant increase in the scope of infrastructure safety management rules – were only finalised within the last 12 months, after several years of delay.

ETSC is calling on the new European Parliament and Commissioners to now step up progress on road safety, as it maintains that these new measures will also take several years to take full effect.

At the ETSC awards event in Brussels on 19 June, the European Commission announced the publication of a Road Safety Policy Framework for 2021-2030 – a follow-up to an action plan published in May 2018.

It gives an indication of future policy initiatives, including a set of key performance indicators for EU Member States on issues including speeding, drink driving and distraction. To download the report visit [www.etsc.eu/pin13](http://www.etsc.eu/pin13)