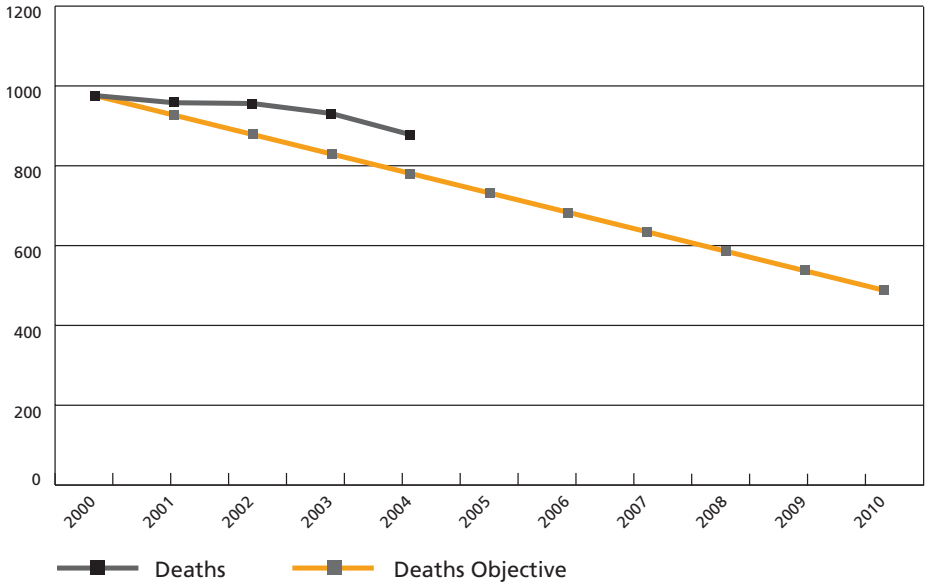
6 Country pages

6.1 AUSTRIA



General Road Safety: Progress is being made towards achieving the Austrian 2010 target. Austria had 108 deaths per million in 2004 which is at around average in the EU 25. Austria's first strategic Plan for Road Safety 2002-2010 was developed by the Ministry of Transport and adopted in January 2002. It sets out different tasks related to the three enforcement priorities covered in the Recommendation. A monthly enforcement plan is drafted by the Police Traffic Department at a federal level under agreement with the federal government. The plan sets out exactly where, when and how enforcement is undertaken with what technical support equipment.

Speed: Austria currently undertakes priority based high visibility speed enforcement. Police employ fixed cameras, section control points, mobile radar devices, onboard video cameras in police cars and laser measuring devices for speeding enforcement. Fixed camera sites and section control sites are clearly signposted. Metal figure cut outs of police further increase the perception of police enforcement. Speed enforcement is targeted to high risk accident sites but is undertaken on the whole road network. Enforcement is more intense during the more accident prone summer months and in urban areas.

Alcohol: Since 1998 the Austrian legal blood alcohol level has been 0.5%. A special limit of 0.1% exists for provisional driving licence holders, those training to get their licences, bus and heavy goods vehicle drivers and mopeds under 20 years of age. Drivers with over 1.2 0.5 mg/ml BAC receive rehabilitation and further training before being allowed to drive again. Drivers with over 1.6 0.5 mg/ml BAC have to undergo a traffic psychological examination. Offences for driving under 0.8 0.5 mg/ml BAC, but over the 0.5% limit are now part of the new penalty point system. New legislation was introduced in 2005 to enable random breath testing with the benefit of new roadside testing equipment. Drink driving enforcement is carried out at all times but is more frequent during evening, night time and early morning and at high risk accident sites. In case of an accident all persons concerned are always tested for alcohol, if this proves to be positive the driver faces a criminal sanction.

Seat belts: Seat belt checks are undertaken in combination with other checks on all roads at all times by the police and traffic police. Increased seat belt enforcement actions linked to campaigns are held during the year. Some include actions whereby those who were found not to be wearing seatbelts were able to immediately try the effect of the force involved with being involved in an accident on so-called seat belt sleighs which are set up by the roadside. The shift in focus is now to enforcing low seat belt wearing rates in urban areas and especially also to focus on child restraints. The level of sanctions for non seat belt use (concerning adults) remains very low at 35 €, although this does include a slight increase in 2005 from 21 €.

Follow-up of offences: All detected speed, alcohol and seat belt offences are followed up by the competent traffic authority. Sanctions are given according to severity and previous convictions are taken into account. For speeding offences detected by safety cameras, there is an owner responsibility. In addition to a fine the driving licence is withdrawn for at least three months for exceeding the 50 km/h limit outside built-up areas.

Austria introduced a new penalty point system for driving offences on 1st July 2005. The model uses the "three strikes and you are out" concept. If a driver commits the same or another traffic offence for the second time within two years, he or she will face specific measures such as driver improvement or re-education courses, depending on the nature and severity of the offence. In case of a third offence within two years, they will loose their driving licence for at least three months. Sanctions covered include driving under influence of alcohol and child safety restraint use. Speeding was not included as a de-merit offence and speeding sanctions remain among the lowest levels in Europe

Information: Campaigns are run by different actors which include the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Interior, the Traffic Department at a federal state level, and road safety NGOs. A total of six to eight nation-wide campaigns are run annually covering the issues of speeding, drink driving and non seat belt use. Campaigns are run and diffused via the TV, radio and print media as well as via Internet. Special campaigns are run focusing on child safety restraints at the start of the school year.

Bi-annual press conferences are also held presenting the findings and analysis of road accident data. The Ministry of Interior publishes weekly accident statistics on its web-site including information such as where the accident happened, who was involved and what the likely cause of the accident was. The accident figures are also compared with the exact findings of that week, the previous, enabling comparisons to be made.

In conclusion, Austria's enforcement levels for drink driving have increased as have the offences. The number of deaths attributed to drink driving has gone down slightly. Speeding offences have increased slightly and speed compliance has improved on rural roads. Seat belt wearing rates are at around 75% in the front and 55% in the back seat, neither numbers of checks nor offences are collected

Recommendations:

- Include speeding and seat belt offences in the new penalty point system.