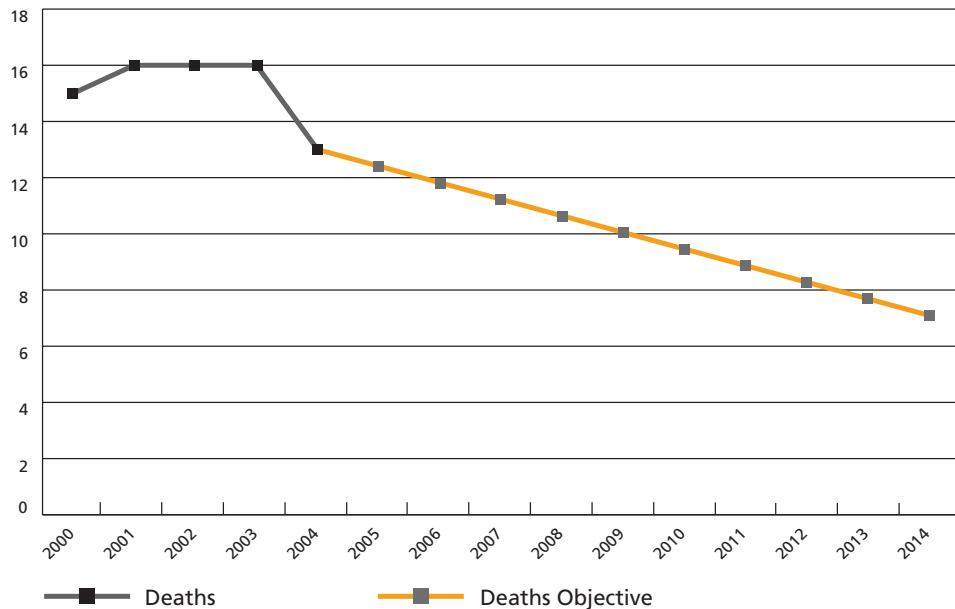


## 6.17 MALTA



**General Road Safety:** Malta has the lowest fatality rate in the European Union with a level which has hovered between 16 and 13 in the past four years. The Malta Transport Authority was set up in 2002 and has the aim of regulating all land transport in Malta. A White Paper set objectives for land transport policy in 2004. A National Road Safety Council has been set up to prepare the first ever Road Safety Strategy for Malta. A target was set in 2004 for a 50% reduction in deaths by 2015.

The police are vested with the authority for the enforcement of traffic rules. They organise road safety education activities in schools and with the local councils and organise special campaigns at Christmas time. Local governments prepare enforcement guidelines to be carried out by their wardens.

**Speed:** Malta employs a mixture of mobile and fixed camera devices to enforce speed limits. Speeding enforcement focuses on high risk accident spots and on motorways and arterial roads.

Malta introduced three fixed speed cameras at the start of this year at two high risk accident sites. One camera was put in place following an assessment of a bridge structure in the framework of an EU funded transport project. Engineers advised a drastic reduction of the speed limit from 80 km/h to 45 km/h. The camera was put in place to enforce this change in speed limit. Over 3,000 motorists were fined during the first three months. There has been a clear reduction in speeds. Another camera has been installed with a further four planned.

**Alcohol:** In Malta, the legal blood alcohol level is 0.8 mg/ml. The new penalty point system attributes the highest sanction possible to a drink driving offence. Drink driving is enforced both randomly and on an evidential basis. Drink driving enforcement is carried out during evening, night time, early morning and at other times as well. Enforcement focuses on high-risk roads near discos and bars and on other roads.

**Seat belts:** New legislation extending compulsory seat belt use in the rear and proper child restraint use came into force in January 2004. The introduction of new legislation was preceded by an intensive information and education campaign in the media. This included the distribution of information leaflets to every household. Since 2002 local Council Wardens have had the responsibility of enforcing seat belt wearing and have the power to stop and fine offenders. Part of the pre-legislation introduction phase, involved local Council Wardens and police checking seat belt use.

**Follow-up of offences:** A penalty point system exists for novice drivers during the first three years after they have gained their licence. For speeding offences, the legal responsibility rests with the owner where recognition problems arise. Police no longer have to give evidence in court. In the case of a minor speeding offence it is left up to the discretion of the police as to whether or not they charge the offender or give a verbal warning.

**Information:** Nationwide campaigns on alcohol and seat belt use were run in the media and were linked to increased police enforcement in 2004. The campaigns are currently undertaken by the police and the Malta Transport Authority. The recent drink driving campaign has employed very graphic images which has received positive feedback from the press and public. There are plans to pool resources between different organisations to run road safety campaigns. This would be particularly useful to overcome part of the high cost of running TV adverts as part of road safety campaigns. The presence of automated speeding cameras and mobile camera speed checks are indicated on the roadside.

In conclusion, speeding offences nearly tripled between 2003 and 2004 although the impact on fatality figures and speed compliance is not possible to assess as these data are not collected. Drink driving checks are not collected but twice as many drink driving offences occurred in 2003 in comparison with 2004. Seat belt offences were about the same and wearing rates are high in the front but back seat wearing rates still need improvement.

**Recommendations:**

- Extend automatic speed enforcement network.
- Reduce legal BAC limit to 0.5 mg/ml and continue to test randomly and on evidence.
- Implement new road accident data form by police and publish numbers and cause of death.