



EUROPEAN CITIES REPORT FEWER ROAD DEATHS AFTER LOWERING URBAN SPEED LIMITS

A growing number of European cities are reducing urban speed limits to 30 km/h in targeted areas as part of wider efforts to improve road safety and support the EU's "Vision Zero" objective of eliminating road deaths by 2050. According to a survey of cities across Europe, around three-quarters of those that introduced lower speed limits reported reductions in road deaths and injuries. Most cities applied the measures gradually in residential districts, school zones, and historic centres rather than across entire urban networks, with many now operating large portions of their roads below the traditional 50 km/h limit.

The findings suggest that lower speed limits can improve safety without causing major disruption to traffic flow or travel times. City authorities reported fewer accidents, fatalities, and serious injuries, as well as lower vehicle speeds and reduced noise pollution. The study also found little evidence that 30 km/h zones significantly increase congestion, although some manageable impacts on public transport were noted. Despite these reported benefits, many cities encountered political and public resistance during the implementation process, highlighting the challenges of introducing stricter traffic-calming policies even when safety outcomes appear positive.

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E-SCOOTER SAFETY RULES DIVERGE ACROSS EUROPE AS NATIONAL MEASURES AND INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS FILL EU REGULATORY GAP

Across Europe, e-scooter safety policy is increasingly being shaped at national and industry level due to the lack of common EU rules. In Belgium, authorities have introduced a new measure making helmets mandatory from September for e-scooters capable of speeds above 20 km/h, following growing concern about rising injuries and fatalities. At the same time, a major shared mobility operator has begun deploying new e-scooters in Brussels equipped with artificial intelligence that can detect pavement riding and automatically reduce speed when misuse is identified. Meanwhile, an industry coalition representing micro-mobility providers reports a slight decline in serious injury rates in 2025 based on aggregated usage data. These developments highlight a fragmented landscape where safety improvements depend on a mix of national regulation, voluntary operator action, and industry reporting rather than unified European standards.



However, the Belgian approach also illustrates inconsistencies: shared e-scooter users will be exempt from the helmet rule because their vehicles are voluntarily capped at 20 km/h, while users of faster private scooters will be required to wear helmets. Safety organisations argue that the European Union should introduce harmonised technical standards—such as a 20 km/h factory speed cap—and consistent rider rules on helmets, age limits, and pavement use, supported by EU-wide guidelines. They also note that current safety technologies, like automated pavement-detection systems, lack common European standards, and that existing industry data may not be independently verified. With the EU still not having acted on technical standards or rider rules, and some Member States calling for harmonisation, the result is a patchwork of regulations that may slow overall safety progress.

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EU DELAYS MANDATORY ABS FOR SMALL MOTORCYCLES DESPITE STRONG SAFETY EVIDENCE WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES MOVE AHEAD

The European Commission is facing criticism for failing to extend mandatory anti-lock braking systems (ABS) to small motorcycles, despite longstanding evidence that the technology can reduce crashes by around 30%. Although EU law already requires ABS on larger motorcycles, the smallest category (typically up to 125cc) remains exempt and can instead use less effective braking systems. A 2020 Commission-commissioned study concluded that extending the requirement would deliver major safety benefits far outweighing costs, yet the corresponding report and legislative proposal have still not been delivered, years after the legal deadline.

Officials have recently cited limited resources and competing priorities as reasons for the lack of progress, even though the supporting evidence has been available for years.



Safety organisations argue that this inaction reflects a broader pattern of lower priority given to powered two-wheeler safety in the EU, despite riders accounting for a significant and rising share of road fatalities. They also highlight that other basic safety measures, such as periodic technical inspections for smaller motorcycles, remain absent in many cases. Meanwhile, countries such as India and Singapore are moving forward with plans to require ABS, strengthening the contrast with Europe's slow legislative process. Critics argue that the evidence and cost-benefit case are already clear, and that continued delay is increasingly difficult to justify given the proven safety gains.

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AUSTRIA APPROVES MAJOR TRAFFIC LAW REFORM FOCUSED ON ROAD SAFETY AND MODERN MOBILITY

Austria's parliament has approved a wide-ranging reform of the country's traffic legislation aimed at improving road safety, modernising mobility rules and giving cities stronger tools to manage urban traffic. The reform includes changes to road traffic regulations, vehicle legislation and driving licence rules, with the first measures entering into force in May 2026. Authorities describe the package as one of the most significant transport safety reforms in recent years, designed to address emerging forms of mobility while improving quality of life in towns and cities.

The new rules introduce stricter requirements for e-scooters and e-bikes, including expanded helmet obligations for younger riders, tougher technical standards for e-scooters and lower alcohol limits for users. The reform also clarifies that electric mopeds will be legally treated as motor vehicles and therefore banned from cycle paths from October 2026. In addition, municipalities will be allowed to use camera-based access management systems to enforce restricted traffic zones under new data protection safeguards. Alongside these measures, Austria has also approved legislation supporting intelligent transport systems, requiring navigation services to display official road closures in order to reduce diversion traffic through residential areas.

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FRANCE EXPANDS TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR DRIVERS USING MOBILE PHONES BEHIND THE WHEEL

Several French departments have introduced stricter penalties for drivers caught holding a mobile phone while driving, allowing authorities to suspend licences immediately without waiting for a court decision. The measure, already implemented in multiple regions including Charente-Maritime since May 2026, forms part of wider efforts to strengthen enforcement against distracted driving. Previously, using a phone while driving carried a standard national penalty consisting of a fine, penalty points and the possibility of a licence suspension. Under the new approach, administrative suspensions ranging from 15 days to six months can now be imposed directly by local authorities.

The measures are intended to address the growing role of distraction in road accidents. According to French road safety authorities, using a phone while driving significantly increases crash risk, while reading a message can multiply the likelihood of an accident dramatically by taking the driver's eyes off the road for several seconds. Officials also note that a large majority of drivers admit to using their phones while driving. With more than 3,500 road deaths recorded in France in 2025, authorities argue that stronger enforcement is necessary to reduce fatalities and improve driver attention on the road.

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PORTUGAL ANNOUNCES TOUGHER TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AND NEW ROAD SAFETY MEASURES

Portugal is preparing a series of stricter traffic and road safety measures aimed at reducing road accidents and improving enforcement across the country. Among the announced changes is the reactivation of the national traffic police unit that was dissolved in 2007, alongside plans for a new highway code and stronger policing powers. Authorities also confirmed that roadside traffic controls will no longer require prior public warning, with officials arguing that enforcement must become more visible, effective and uncompromising in order to improve driver behaviour.

Additional measures include the installation of more speed cameras, broader criteria for withdrawing driving licences and tougher penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol. The government also plans to extend the legal time limits for prosecuting traffic offences. At the same time, officials acknowledged delays in the country's National Road Safety Strategy but stated that the legislative process is already underway and approval is expected soon.

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AFRICAN NATIONS ENDORSE CONTINENT-WIDE PLANS FOR SAFER AND CLEANER TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

African transport and energy ministers have approved two major continental frameworks aimed at transforming mobility through greater support for walking, cycling, and electric vehicles. The initiatives seek to reduce road deaths, lower air pollution and fuel import dependence, and strengthen local industrial capacity across one of the world's fastest-growing regions. Rather than treating active mobility and vehicle electrification separately, the frameworks promote an integrated approach to transport challenges such as congestion, unsafe roads, high logistics costs, and limited public transport access. The move also aligns with the early stages of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035), signalling Africa's intention to participate more actively in the global transition toward cleaner and more resilient transport systems.



The policies could have significant implications for infrastructure development and investment across the continent. Walking and cycling already represent the primary mode of daily transport for more than one billion people in Africa, yet many urban areas still lack safe pavements, crossings, and cycling infrastructure. At the same time, electric mobility is increasingly being viewed as a way to reduce dependence on imported fuels while supporting domestic manufacturing and renewable energy use. Several countries have already begun implementing related measures, including electric bus systems, incentives for cleaner vehicles, and safer street design projects. If effectively implemented, the frameworks could improve public health, economic resilience, and urban mobility while creating new opportunities in infrastructure, manufacturing, and clean transport industries.

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FUEL CRISIS ACCELERATES INTEREST IN ELECTRIC TRUCKS ACROSS AUSTRALIA'S FREIGHT SECTOR

Interest in electric trucks is rising in Australia as fuel supply disruptions linked to geopolitical tensions push diesel prices higher and strain transport operators. Freight companies report increased inquiries from customers and investors, with some manufacturers noting a surge in demand as operating costs for conventional diesel fleets continue to climb. The shift comes as electric heavy-vehicle technology begins to demonstrate viable ranges and operational performance for certain freight tasks, particularly in regional and urban delivery routes.

Despite this growing interest, the industry remains in an early stage of electrification, with diesel still dominating long-haul freight due to infrastructure gaps, high upfront costs, and range limitations for heavy loads. However, recent advances such as rapid battery-swapping systems and successful long-distance pilot deliveries suggest the technology is gradually becoming more practical. Analysts and industry leaders expect adoption to expand first in short-haul and last-mile logistics, while full-scale transition for long-distance freight is likely to take many years.

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CHINA PAUSES NEW AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE PERMITS FOLLOWING ROBOTAXI DISRUPTION, TIGHTENING OVERSIGHT OF SECTOR

China has reportedly suspended the issuance of new permits for autonomous vehicles following a disruption involving robotaxi services operated by a major technology company in Wuhan. The incident, in which services abruptly stopped last month, has triggered an ongoing regulatory response, including an investigation by local authorities. As a result, companies in the sector are temporarily unable to expand their fleets, launch new pilot programmes, or enter additional cities, according to the report. The suspension reflects growing caution among regulators as autonomous driving systems are deployed more widely in complex urban environments.

Despite the pause in new approvals, several other autonomous vehicle operators have stated that their services continue to run normally in major Chinese cities, with ongoing expansion plans unaffected for now. Authorities have also instructed local governments to increase safety oversight and conduct inspections of intelligent connected vehicle testing. The move highlights a broader regulatory tightening aimed at ensuring safety standards keep pace with rapid technological deployment in the autonomous driving industry.

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RAJASTHAN LAUNCHES MAJOR MOTORWAY MODERNISATION PROGRAMME BACKED BY INTERNATIONAL FINANCING

The Indian state of Rajasthan is undertaking a large-scale motorway modernisation programme aimed at improving transport efficiency, road safety and regional connectivity through a combination of infrastructure upgrades, institutional reform and innovative financing. Supported by a \$225 million international financing package, the initiative seeks to modernise around 800 kilometres of key motorways that serve important agricultural, industrial and tourism corridors. Authorities hope the project will reduce travel times, improve logistics performance and strengthen economic competitiveness in one of India's largest and fastest-growing states.



A central feature of the programme is a new “Road as a Service” approach, which focuses on long-term performance, maintenance and user experience rather than simply road construction. The project also introduces a financing structure designed to attract greater private investment while easing early-stage financing pressures on public authorities. In addition to improving road quality, the initiative places strong emphasis on digital traffic management, road safety measures and climate-resilient infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme weather conditions. Supporters argue that the programme could become a model for future transport projects in India by combining infrastructure development with financial innovation, sustainability and broader social goals such as improving access to jobs and services.

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