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One in three road deaths in the first half of 2020 due to inappropriate speed; more cyclists involved in accidents

Vienna, 2020-10-22 – In the first half of 2020, inappropriate speed killed 55 people and was the number one cause of fatal road accidents in Austria, as Statistics Austria reports. Although in the first half of 2020 fewer people died in road traffic accidents than in the same period in 2019, seven more people died as a result of inappropriate speed than in the first half of 2019. In previous years, inattention or distraction was the most frequent cause of fatal road accidents.

While in 2019 23% and in 2018 22% of fatal accidents were caused by inappropriate speed, in the first half of 2020 it was 38%. 49 of the 55 people died (almost 90%) were drivers of the vehicles and at the same time the person presumably causing the accident. The majority drove a car (24 people) or motorcycle (17 people), three people a bicycle (two of them an electric bicycle), three people a truck and one person each a tractor and a carriage. In addition, four passengers and two pedestrians lost their lives in accidents caused by inappropriate speed. An even more significant increase of fatal accidents due to inappropriate speed was seen during the lockdown from mid-March to the end of April 2020 (calendar weeks 12 to 17): 14 persons were fatally injured in this period – thus, the proportion of fatal accidents due to inappropriate speed rose to 44%.

Fewer road traffic fatalities during lockdown; increase in Salzburg

In the first half of 2020, a total of 152 persons died in road traffic accidents in Austria, 44 persons less (-22%) than in the first half of 2019 (196 fatalities, see table 1); although this decrease is mainly due to the lockdown. In calendar weeks 12 to 17, a total of 36 people was fatally injured in accidents (see table 2), 13 persons less than in the same period in 2019 (-27%, 2019: 49 fatalities). There was a strong decrease in fatalities in this period in Tyrol (no fatalities), Carinthia (1 fatality, -80%) and Styria (5 fatalities, -55%), while in Salzburg the number of fatalities increased (6 fatalities, +200%).

The number of injured (15 524) also decreased significantly in the first half of this year (-25%), in particular in the calendar weeks 12 to 17 (-60%). On average, 70 fewer persons were injured per day during the lockdown than in the same period in 2019, when an average of 116 people were injured each day.

More than half of the fatally injured cyclists rode an electric bicycle

Although the number of fatalities and injuries decreased in the first half of 2020, the number of cyclists involved in accidents rose by 9% (see table 3). 17 cyclists died in road traffic accidents in the first half of 2020 (2019: 16), more than half of them (53%) on an electric bicycle.

More road deaths in alcohol-related accidents

The number of alcohol accidents continues to rise. While in the first half of 2018 5.9% of all accidents involved an drunk person (driver or pedestrian), the proportion rose to 6.7% in the first half of 2019 and to 7.1% in the first six months of 2020. In the first half of 2020, 14 people died in alcohol accidents; (9% of all road traffic accidents), this is by 40% more than in the first half of 2019 (10 people).

No fatally injured children

In the first half of 2020, no children (0–14 years) were fatally injured and no fatal accidents on the way to school of six to 15-year-olds were reported. However, 841 children were injured in traffic accidents; a decrease of 35% compared to the same period of the previous year.

For more detailed results and further information concerning statistics of road traffic accidents please refer to our [website](#) or the [German version](#).

Information on methods, definitions: In 2012, a change in the survey method took place. The survey based on paper questionnaires was replaced by electronic police reports. Since then, the results also include accidents which become known later as well as additional injury reports.

Injury accident: any accident involving at least one road vehicle in motion on a public road, resulting in at least one injured or killed person.

Person killed: any person killed immediately or dying within 30 days as a result of an injury accident.

Table 1: Road traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities, first half 2016–2020

Road traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities	2016 ¹⁾	2017 ¹⁾	2018 ¹⁾	2019 ¹⁾	2020 ¹⁾	Changes 2019 to 2020 in %
Road traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities in total						
Accidents	17 200	17 017	17 145	16 187	12 525	-22.6%
Injuries	21 740	21 528	21 821	20 602	15 524	-24.6%
Fatalities	190	170	197	196	152	-22.4%
Injured and fatally injured children (0–14 years)						
Injured children	1 346	1 300	1 419	1 294	841	-35.0%
Fatally injured children	4	3	1	8	-	-100.0%

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, road traffic accidents. – 1) preliminary results.

Table 2: Road traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities, calendar weeks 12 to 17 (during COVID-19 exit restrictions) 2020 compared to 2019

Road traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities	2019 ¹⁾	2020 ¹⁾	Changes 2019 to 2020 in %
Accidents	3 831	1 734	-54.7%
Injuries	4 886	1 959	-59.9%
Fatalities	49	36	-26.5%

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, road traffic accidents. – 1) preliminary results.

Table 3: Casualties (injuries or fatalities) by mode of transport, first half of 2020

	Car	Bicycle ²⁾	Motorcycle/Moped	Pedestrian	Truck ³⁾	Other transport mode	Total
Casualties ¹⁾	7 732	3 640	2 227	1 179	425	473	15 676
Changes 2019 to 2020 in %	-31.3	8.6	-30.6	-31.5	-23.0	-34.0	-24.6

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, road traffic accidents. – 1) preliminary results. – 2) incl. electric bicycle, electric scooter. 3) incl. articulated vehicles.

For further inquiries please contact Directorate Spatial Statistics, Statistics Austria:
 Eveline PFEILER, Tel.: +43 (1) 71128-7223 resp. eveline.pfeiler@statistik.gv.at and
 Brigitte ALLEX, Tel.: +43 (1) 71128-7553 resp. brigitte.allex@statistik.gv.at

Media owner, producer and publisher:
 STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Federal Institution under Public Law
 1110 Vienna, Austria, Guglgasse 13, Tel.: +43 (1) 71128-7777
presse@statistik.gv.at
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