

THE VINCI AUTOROUTES FOUNDATION PUBLISHES THE RESULTS OF THE 5TH EUROPEAN BAROMETER SURVEY OF RESPONSIBLE DRIVING

Connected objects, rudeness and drowsiness while driving: given that Europeans struggle to make their roads calm and safe, can passengers play an active role in encouraging responsible driving?

On the eve of the summer holiday departures for most European countries, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation is releasing the results of the 5th European Barometer survey of responsible driving. How do Europeans view their own driving? How much do they interact with connected objects while driving? What steps do they take to prevent dozing off behind the wheel? Do passengers actively engage with drivers to encourage them to adopt safer driving habits? Conducted by Ipsos on a sample of 11,038 people in 11 European Union countries, this vast survey has identified risky driving behaviors and best practices to help direct safety messages where they are most needed in each country.

EUROPEAN DRIVERS ARE AWARE OF THE DANGER OF DISTRACTION...



54%
identify it as one of the main causes of road fatalities

7%
say they have had or almost had an accident caused by using a mobile phone while driving

84%
say they are ready to never use their phone again while driving to help bring down the number of road fatalities

... BUT THEY REMAIN TOO DISTRACTED BY CONNECTED OBJECTS



45%
telephone using Bluetooth



41%
adjust their GPS while driving



16%
indicate events using an app



30%
telephone without a hands-free kit or use earbuds or earphones



24%
write or read texts or emails

Although they are aware of the dangers of driver distraction, Europeans keep on using connected objects while they are driving

Europeans see distraction as one of the main causes of road fatalities (54%; 3 points less than in 2017) along with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (56%; unchanged). It is even the main cause of fatalities quoted in the Netherlands (72%), Italy (69%), United Kingdom and Greece (57%). In fact, 1 out of every 2 Dutch respondents view texting while driving as the riskiest driver behaviour (52% of respondents compared with the European average of 34%).

While 84% of Europeans claim they are ready to stop telephoning while driving (with or without a hands-free kit) to bring down the number of road fatalities, the use of connected objects while driving is steadily increasing. Although the level differs between countries, the use of connected objects while driving is still alarming⁽¹⁾:

- ▶ **45%** (+2 pts) **telephone without Bluetooth** (53% in Greece against 38% in the United Kingdom, even though this habit has increased 7 points in a year). One out of 2 European drivers aged under 35 engage in this risky practice⁽²⁾;
- ▶ **41%** (+2 pts) **set their GPS while driving** (51% in Germany

and Poland against 29% in Spain)

- ▶ **30%** (-2 pts) **telephone without a hands-free kit** (51% in Greece against 12% in the United Kingdom);
- ▶ **30% use an ear bud**, ear phones or headphones (52% in Greece against 12% in France);
- ▶ **24% send and receive texts and emails** (33% in Italy against 13% in the United Kingdom), and 38% among European drivers aged under 35;
- ▶ **16% use an app to let other drivers know about road incidents** (27% in Poland against 7% in the United Kingdom). It is therefore not surprising that **7% of Europeans (and 11% of drivers under 35) have had or have almost had an accident caused by using a mobile phone in the car**. The figure is 13% in Italy, where 1 out of 3 drivers admit they send or receive texts and emails while driving.

1. At 130 km/h, the stopping distance in response to an incident is 100 metres more on average (that is an extra 33%) compared to when not engaged in a telephone conversation. Source: 2014 study by the University of Strasbourg's Ci2N institute for the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation.

2. Irrespective of whether drivers are using a hands-free kit or not, they absorb 30% less information than those who are not telephoning. Source: 2014 study by the University of Strasbourg's Ci2N institute for the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation.

Increasing driver rudeness and too much dangerous behaviour make other drivers feel unsafe

European drivers are not calm: **81%** (+1 pt) say they have been made to feel afraid by the aggressive behaviour of another driver. This figure rises to 87% for French, Spanish and Greek drivers.

The figures for all aspects of rudeness listed in the questionnaire have increased, without exception, but with notable differences between countries:

- ▶ **56%** (+2 pts) admit to swearing at other drivers (71% of Greeks compared with 28% of Swedes)
- ▶ **50%** (+4 pts) admit to sounding their horn excessively at drivers who annoy them (66% of Spaniards compared with 31% of Swedes)
- ▶ **32%** (+1 pt) admit to deliberately tailgating the car in front when the driver annoys them (52% of Greeks compared with 23% of Slovaks)
- ▶ **34%** (+3 pts) undertake on the inside on the motorway (46% of Dutch compared with 17% of Slovaks)
- ▶ **17%** (+2 pts) are quick to get out of their car to argue with another driver (29% of Poles compared with 8% of British).

The most courteous drivers are the Swedes (on average 1.3 instances of driver rudeness out of the 5 types tested), Slovaks (1.5) and the British (1.7). The least courteous are the Greeks (2.4 instances of driver rudeness on average), Spanish (2.2) and Italians (2.1); three countries in which the average number of instances of driver rudeness is increasing. The French rank among the most uncivil of European drivers for certain types of rude behaviour: swearing at other drivers and deliberately tailgating (2nd place, behind the Greeks) or sounding their horn excessively (2nd place, behind the Spanish). France also ranks 4th, just behind Italy, as the country with the highest average number of instances of driver rudeness.

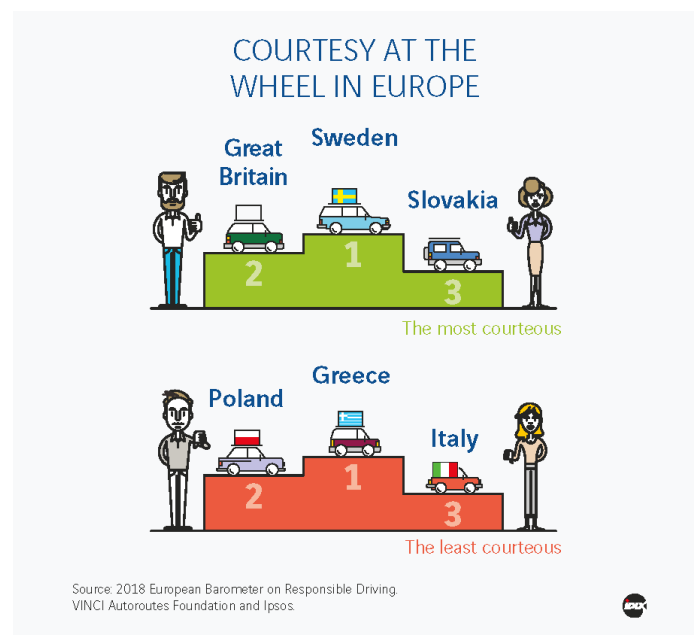
A majority of European drivers also admit breaking certain basic road rules:

- ▶ **89%** admit they exceed the speed limit (93% in Sweden and Germany)
- ▶ **63%** admit they fail to keep a safe distance with the car in front (78%; +3 in Sweden);
- ▶ **56%** (+1) forget to indicate when overtaking or turning (63%; +3 in France);
- ▶ **55%** (+1) drive in the middle or outside lane despite the inside lane being free (up to 78%; +1 in Greece);
- ▶ **55%** (+2) forget to slow down around road works (67% in Belgium) despite the potential risk for contractors ;
- ▶ **21%** admit that they sometimes drive without attaching their seatbelt (49% in Greece);

- ▶ **11%** drive in the emergency stopping lane on the motorway despite it being reserved exclusively for emergency stopping and emergency services (27% in Greece; -1).

Little inroad is being made in the figures for drink driving as **10% of European drivers still say they knowingly get behind the wheel when over the limit** (28% in Greece and 23% in Belgium where the limit is 0.5 g/l) and 4% even when they feel the effects of alcohol. This conduct is matched by drivers' statements concerning the number of standard drinks they have had before they decide not to drive (**1.9 drinks on average**) and which is very often above the nationally accepted limit, even in those countries where the declared average is the lowest: Slovakia (1.1 drinks on average before deciding not to drive), whereas drivers are not allowed to drink at all in this country, and Sweden (1.1 drinks on average), putting them, here again, above the national limit of 0.2 g/l, or one drink at the most.

This indulgence has serious direct consequences as **7% of European drivers have had or have nearly had an accident attributable to excessive alcohol consumption** (9% in Greece and 8% in Belgium).

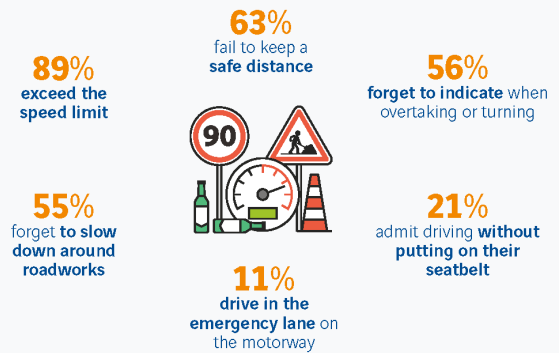


“It is always the others who are dangerous”

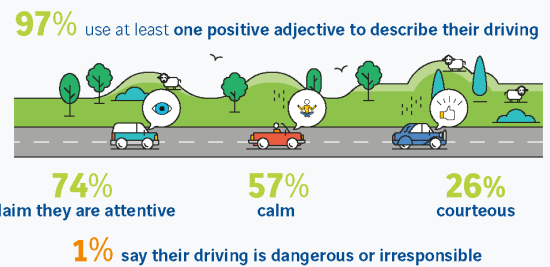
Even though Europeans admit that they behave dangerously, they judge their own attitude behind the wheel very positively. 97% use at least one positive adjective to describe their driving and they claim to be attentive (74%), calm (57%) and courteous (26%). Contrariwise, very few claim to be stressed (11%) and virtually never aggressive (3%), irresponsible (1%) or dangerous (1%).

But, when judging other drivers' behaviour, European drivers are far less indulgent, as 83% use at least one negative adjective to describe others' driving: 47% consider them irresponsible, 34% stressed, 31% aggressive and 30% dangerous.

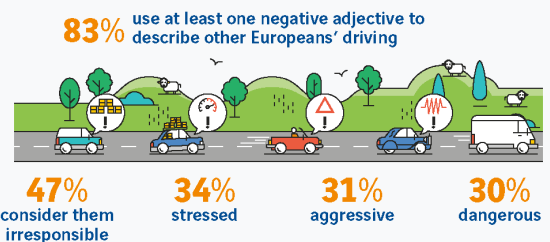
WHILE MANY EUROPEAN DRIVERS BREAK THE ROAD RULES...



...THEY TEND TO JUDGE THEIR OWN DRIVING POSITIVELY...



...AND IT IS “ALWAYS THE OTHERS” WHO ARE DANGEROUS



Source: 2018 European Barometer on Responsible Driving, VINCI Autoroutes Foundation and Ipsos



The crucial role of passengers in improving driver behaviour

Currently, almost 1 European driver out of 2 does not think that the presence of passengers can influence their driving: 49% say that they are no more or less careful when driving alone all with passengers.

And yet, the passenger is sometimes a witness to the driver's behaviour and also a protective observer ready to intervene for his or her own protection, that of the driver and of any other passengers, by asking the driver to behave more responsibly:

- ▶ 82% of Europeans (86% of women) have had occasion to ask drivers to slow down because they were exceeding the speed limit;
- ▶ 74% (78% of women) have prompted drivers to take a break after driving for two hours if they have not done so themselves;
- ▶ 69% have asked them not to answer a call or read a text;
- ▶ 62% have asked them not to park in a mobility space even if there were no other spaces available.

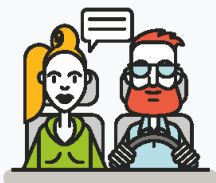
This observer role is particularly crucial in countries with the highest incidence of dangerous driver behaviour. For example, Greek passengers are the Europeans who most often ask drivers to behave more responsibly with respect to all

positive corrections listed, with the exception of asking them to move into the inside lane on the motorway, which suggestion is most frequently made by Spanish passengers.

However, passengers can also have a negative influence by encouraging drivers to adopt risky behaviour. For example:

- ▶ 35% have refused to stop or extend a break so as not to waste time;
 - ▶ 32% have told the driver to double park for a few minutes;
 - ▶ 32% have told the driver to speed up so as to arrive at the destination sooner;
 - ▶ 18% have told the driver to answer his or her own call.
- These negative encouragements are most frequently made by men, young drivers, as well as... Greeks who are simultaneously the champions of good and bad advice.

IN MOST CASES A WITNESS AND A PROTECTIVE PRESENCE...



82%
of Europeans ask the driver to slow down if he or she exceeds the speed limit

74%
prompt the driver to take a break after driving for 2 hours if he or she has not done so spontaneously

69%
tell the driver not to answer the phone or reply to a text

62%
tell the driver not to park in a space for persons with reduced mobility, even if there is none other available

56%
tell the driver to move out of the passing lane on the motorway if the other lane is clear

... BUT SOMETIMES A DANGEROUS CO-PILOT



35%
refuse to stop or extend a break so as not to waste time



32%
encourage the driver to speed up so as to arrive at the destination sooner



32%
tell the driver to double park for a few minutes



18%
tell the driver to answer the phone

Focus on... driver drowsiness: still underestimated and insufficiently managed

► Despite awareness of this risk, drivers are still taking too many risks of falling asleep at the wheel

36% of Europeans identified drowsiness as one of the main causes of fatalities on motorways, but this figure is down slightly on 2017 (-2 pts). For the French, who seem to be particularly aware of this risk, drowsiness remains the most frequently quoted (52%) cause of motorway fatalities, and rightly so.

Yet, 44% (+3 pts) admit that although they felt very tired, they still got behind the wheel because they had to. This is the case of 53% of Germans (+2 pts) and Greeks (+5 pts). Additionally, **the rate of driver drowsiness-related incidents is on the rise**: 26% (+1 pt) of Europeans feel they may have dozed off for a few seconds while driving (33% in France compared with 16% in the United Kingdom, and 16% (+2 pts) admit having veered into the emergency stopping lane or onto the road shoulder as a result of a moment of distraction or dozing off (26% in France compared with 9% in Greece and the Netherlands).

These driver drowsiness-related events are far from being anecdotal, as **9% of Europeans have had or have almost had an accident as a result of dozing off** (13% in Greece). This is more than the accidents or near accidents caused by telephoning while driving or the excessive consumption of alcohol (7%).

► Sleep debt is worse around holiday departures

28% (+1 pt) of European drivers say they sleep six hours or less on weeknights, that is one hour less than recommended by specialist sleep doctors. **This chronic sleep debt is made worse around holiday departures because of the associated additional lack of sleep**: 80% of drivers go to bed later or get up earlier than usual (almost 1 Polish driver out of 2), 76% finish getting ready later on the eve of their departure (88% of Greeks) and 67% leave at night time (almost 8 Poles out of 10).

This situation is compounded **by excessively long drive times that continue to grow with the average pause taken after 3**

hours 16 minutes driving, 2 minutes more than in 2017 and 10 more than in 2016 (and up to 4 hours 16 minutes for Poles, but 2 hours 48 minutes for French drivers). Only 26% of Europeans comply with the recommended pause every two hours, a figure that has remained unchanged.

► Best practices to prevent driver drowsiness need to be adopted more widely

Best practices for combating the risk of driver drowsiness are adopted by many Europeans but unfortunately too few still fail to comply. In fact, the figures are slightly worse:

- **83%** (-1 pt) of Europeans **schedule their departure time to coincide with when they are the least tired** (94% of Greeks but only 62% of Dutch)
- **75%** (-2 pts) **set back their departure time when they are too tired** (87% of Poles but only 45% of Dutch)
- **72%** (-1 pt) **swap drivers during the trip** (75% of Swedes but only 59% of British)
- **58%** (-2 pts) **have a nap during their break**, with the Belgians (83%) setting the example, but only four Greeks out of 10 adopt this practice, despite it being the most effective way of preventing driver drowsiness.

Despite 17 hours without sleep having the same effect as 0.5 g of alcohol in the blood, driver fatigue does not yet seem to be taken as seriously by European drivers for the protection of others, as **38% of Europeans do not insist on preventing an overly tired driver from getting behind the wheel** (compared with 16% for someone over the drink driving limit).

For this reason, on the eve of the departure for the summer holidays, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for responsible driving is reminding everyone – drivers and passengers – of a few simple rules to limit the risk of driver drowsiness, which remains the principal cause of motorway fatalities:

- **Get a full night's sleep the night before setting off**
- **Avoid travelling at night (between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am)**
- **Stop for regular breaks on long trips, at least every two hours**
- **Stop on a rest area as soon as the first signs of fatigue appear and take a short nap**
- **Remember to swap drivers regularly.**

Survey method

For this Barometer survey of European driving habits, Ipsos carried out an Internet survey between 19 January and 27 February 2018, on a sample of 11,038 Europeans aged 15 and over, with at least 1000 respondents in each of the survey countries. The quota method was used to ensure the representativeness of each national sample.

About the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for Responsible Driving

Created in February 2011, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for Responsible Driving is a laboratory, observatory and source of information specifically focused on improving road safety. It aims to help bring about changes in driver behaviour and to encourage drivers to contribute to their own safety. Its actions include: information campaigns to raise awareness of road risks; funding for innovative scientific research in certain areas of risky driver behaviour that have not been sufficiently explored or are poorly identified by road users; and, finally, to fund initiatives by non-profit associations or citizen initiatives aimed at encouraging responsible driving.

<http://fondation.vinci-autoroutes.com> and Twitter account: **@FondationVA** (in French only)

<http://roulons-autrement.com> and Twitter account: **@RoulonsA**

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