

The ESRA2 survey: Comparing Australian road safety performance with European countries

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Abstract

ESRA (E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes) is a joint initiative of research organisations and road safety institutes from 46 countries globally. The overall aim is to provide a solid contribution to a joint monitoring system on road safety attitudes and behaviours for policy measures. The next edition (ESRA3) of this survey will be launched in 2021. This presentation will highlight the Australian results of the current survey in comparison to the results of 20 countries in Europe and other selected countries (benchmark).

Background

ESRA is a joint initiative of road safety institutes, research organisations, and authorities to establish comparable and reliable road safety performance indicators based on opinions and self-declared behaviour of road users. The initiative is coordinated by the Vias institute (Belgium) and funded by the partners' own resources. It covers countries all over the world. Figure 1 provides an overview of the evolution of this project. A first edition of the ESRA survey (ESRA1) was conducted in three waves between 2015-2017¹ (ESRA1; Meesmann, Torfs, Nguyen, & Van den Berghe, 2018; Torfs, Meesmann, Van den Berghe & Trotta, 2016). The current paper focusses on the first wave of the second edition of the ESRA survey, which was conducted in 32 countries in 2018 (ESRA2_2018; Meesmann & Torfs, 2019). The intention is to expand the ESRA2 survey to additional countries in 2019.



Figure 1: Evolution: Geographic coverage of the different ESRA surveys (2015-2018)

Method

ESRA2 is an extensive online panel survey, using representative samples (N=1,000) of the national adult population in each participating country. A common questionnaire was developed in 42 language versions. The subjects covered in the survey are amongst others: ‘self-declared behaviour’, ‘attitudes and opinions towards unsafe traffic behaviour’, ‘enforcement experiences’, and ‘support for policy measures’. The fieldwork of the ESRA2 survey was conducted in December 2018. In total, the ESRA2 survey covered more than 35,000 respondents from 32 countries across five continents, including 968 respondents from Australia and 23,027 respondents from 20 European countries. (Meesmann, U., & Torfs. K., 2019). Figure 2 shows the geographic coverage of the ESRA2_2018 survey.

Results

This presentation will highlight the Australian results of the current survey in comparison to the results of 20 countries in Europe and some selected other countries (benchmark). The main focus of the current abstract lays on the most striking differences between Australia and the European mean based on the new Australian country fact sheet (Vias institute, 2019). ESRA2 results are consistent with the results of the previous ESRA1 survey (Belgian Road Safety Institute, 2017). The ESRA2 results show again that in all participating countries driving too fast is the most frequently reported unsafe traffic behaviour. The differences with respect to self-declared behaviour and enforcement between Australian and European countries are striking. Comparing the Australian results with the European results (20 countries) reveals that Australians report safer driving behaviour in most aspects which were assessed in the ESRA2 survey (such as fewer speeding offences for all road types, less use of a hand-held mobile phone while driving, and increased seat belt use in the back of a car).

The largest difference between the two regions which has been observed is in the number of reported alcohol checks. In Australia, 47% of the car drivers report having been checked for alcohol in the last 12 months, in Europe this was only 18%. For drugs the difference is smaller: for Australia it is 11%, and for Europe it is 4%. Interestingly the perceived likelihood of getting checked by the police concerning most investigated traffic offences is higher in Australia than in Europe.

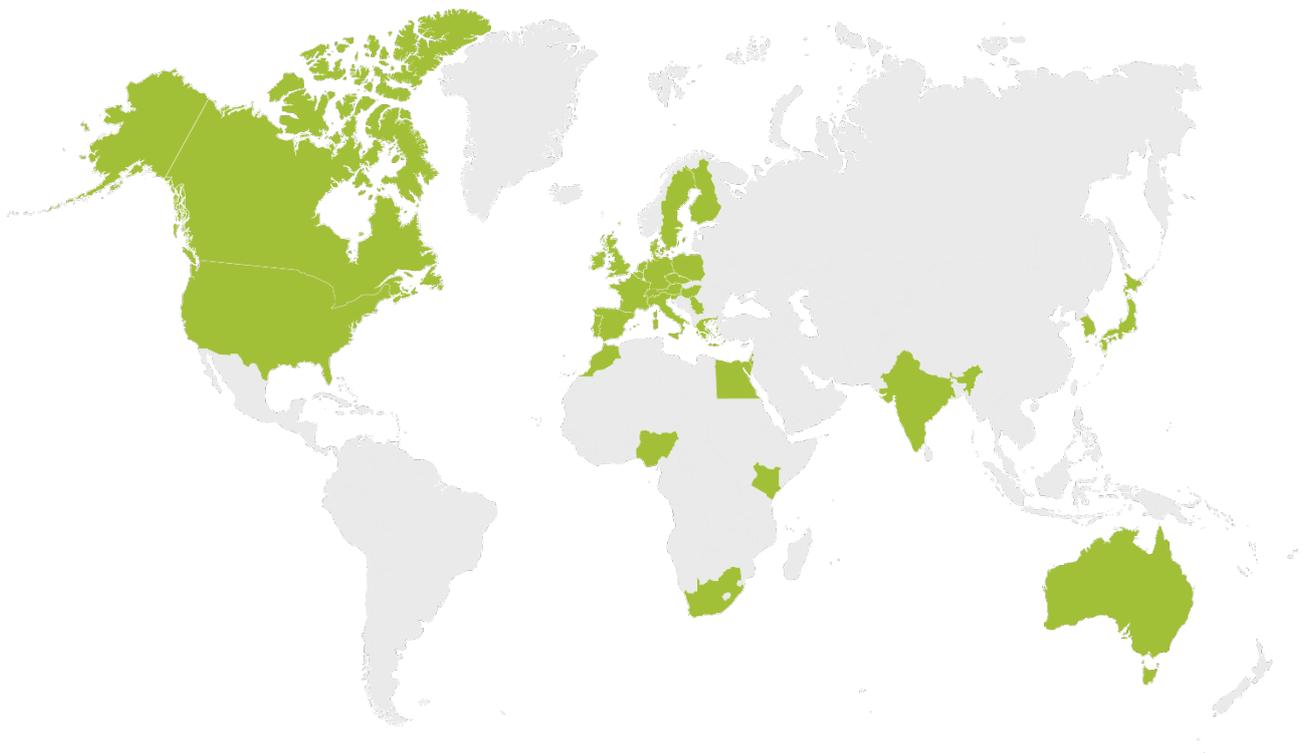


Figure 2: Geographical coverage of the ESRA2 survey

Conclusions

The fast growth of the ESRA initiative shows the feasibility and added value of a joint data collection by a network of road safety organisations. ESRA has become a global initiative which has already conducted surveys in 46 countries across 6 continents (ESRA1, ESRA2). The intention is to repeat the measurements on a triennial basis and to develop a time series of road safety performance indicators. The next edition (ESRA3) will be launched in 2021. More information can be found at: www.esranet.eu.

References

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