

# TACKLING INJURIES AMONG ADOLESCENTS





### The AdRisk Project

The Community Action on Adolescents and Injury Risk (AdRisk) project responds to the call for an integrated approach to reduce the injury risk among adolescents. AdRisk defines adolescents as young people aged 15-24. The project focuses on national policy and strategy development, situation analysis, network development and the provision of tools and good practices. AdRisk refers to the 2006 EC Communication "Actions for a safer Europe" which defines injury and accident prevention as a priority for the Public Health Programme.

### Mission and vision

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of adolescents aged 15-24 by encouraging the creation of stimulating environments and learning opportunities where they can fully explore and develop their physical, psychological and social skills and competencies, without undue injury risks. Our vision statement is:

**Risk taking is fun: Better be safe than sorry!**

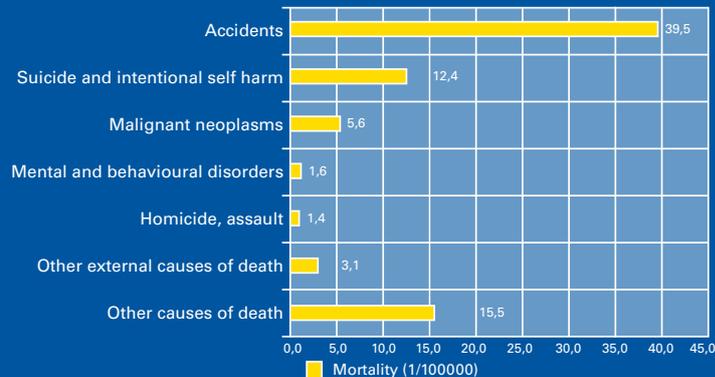
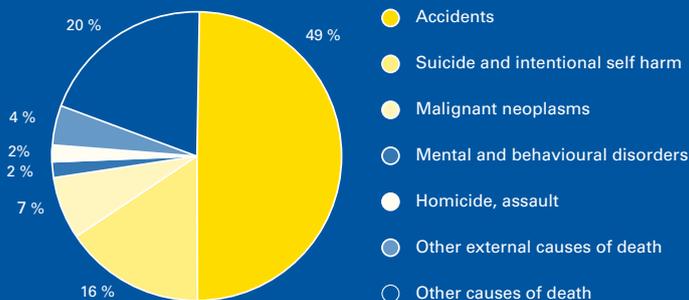
# Objectives

The main objectives of the AdRisk project are to:

- 1 **Advocate** the importance of injury prevention and safety promotion for adolescents aged 15-24 at both European and national level, and for consistency of policies and educational programmes used throughout Europe that impact on the safety of young people.
- 2 **Mediate** the different interests in society regarding youth injury prevention and safety promotion with coordinated actions by all concerned: governments, health, and other social and economic sectors, nongovernmental and voluntary organisations, local authorities, business, and the media.
- 3 **Provide strategy recommendations and tools** to different stakeholders to promote injury prevention among adolescents with specific focus on risk-taking behaviour.
- 4 **Strengthen** actions for empowering young people to cope with risks and to explore their potential without undue injury risks.

# Rationale

According to Eurostat there are 58 million adolescents aged 15–24 in the EU which is 12.7 % of the total population. In Europe unintentional and intentional injuries account for 65 % of all deaths among adolescents. Injury is also the leading cause of hospitalisation in this age group accounting for 20 % of all visits to Accident & Emergency departments in most EU-Member States. For example, the mortality rate of adolescents in accidents (39.5/100,000) is considerably higher than the mortality rate of the whole population (34.6/100,000). In addition, the mortality rate of adolescents in attempted suicides, ranked second in the categories of causes of death among young people aged 15–24, and other causes of injury is also slightly higher than that of the whole population.



The high injury-related mortality and morbidity rate among adolescents can be partly explained by their risk-taking behaviour and lifestyles which may include experimentation with and consumption of alcohol and drugs, and their vulnerability to violent acts and emotional crises.

Road accidents, sport and leisure accidents such as drowning, interpersonal violence, work related accidents and self-harm are the five main problem areas which have been identified. Whereas significant progress has been made in preventing injury deaths and disability in most other age groups, adolescents remain at excess risk from injury. Injuries among adolescents are unfortunately often neglected. For instance, for work injuries youth incidence rates are twice as high as that of adult employees. For traffic injuries, the rate of injury per kilometres driven is many times higher for adolescents than for adults and their susceptibility to alcohol intoxication related crashes is far higher than among adults.

## Scope

The project focuses on risk-taking behaviour of adolescents in the age group between 15-24. AdRisk analyses the risk factors that lead to injuries among adolescents and how to make an impact on these factors to be able to reduce injuries.

In order to understand the nature of risk-taking behaviour a thorough understanding of the



problems and situations facing adolescents is required. Within the adolescent population there are many different sub-groups, all of which require different approaches.

AdRisk wants to supplement existing programmes and create added value by looking at aspects that are not yet covered. Certain fields such as road and traffic safety are well advanced, other areas need further investigation.

## Time for a new approach

By nature adolescents engage in lifestyles and activities that are challenging and thrilling. These experiences enable them to develop skills and competencies in a critical stage of their personal development. Therefore, stimulating environments in community and leisure settings are necessary to provide learning opportunities in view of helping adolescents develop skills and competencies that are essential in adult life.

Adolescents living in a transitory period of their lives need tools to understand that their life-style and behaviour make them subject to risks, and therefore to injuries, and the accompanying burden. Adolescents need to be included in interventions in a strong participatory manner. Ideally, young people should be provided with arguments and tools to allow them to assess and cope with risk-taking in order to reduce the toll of injuries.

Many of the prevention programmes aimed at adolescents are repressive and see young people as passive subjects, failing to involve the target group in a constructive way. New approaches are needed to prevent injuries among young people. The AdRisk project intends to tackle injuries among adolescents by empowering young people to help themselves in making the right choice when dealing with risks.

Through the efforts of the AdRisk project we will advocate for a safer environment for adolescents throughout Europe and involve younger people more in creating a safer environment that continues to challenge their skills. AdRisk will help empower adolescents to make the right choices for themselves.

# Issues that we will address

- 1 What are the specific risks of this age group?
- 2 Why are the risks above average (Situation analysis)
- 3 What are the policies to address the problem?
- 4 What works? (Identification of good practices)
- 5 What can be done at European level/Member State level? (European Strategy)
- 6 How to promote national actions? (Partner Network, guidelines for National Action Plans, toolbox, start of implementation)

## How we will work

The AdRisk project will collaborate with partners in Member States for the exchange of information on good practices and actual policies within the framework of a partner network, supported by our web platform Youth – Risk - Injury Prevention on ([www.adrisk.eu.com](http://www.adrisk.eu.com))

Based on the situation analysis, strategy recommendations will be provided to the governments. National and youth-related agencies will be encouraged to develop national programmes for action on injury prevention among adolescents and integrate youth into existing programmes.

# How national partners will be supported

The project will provide guidelines for national action plans. Competent national stakeholders will be supported with know how and seed money to develop a national consultation process and national action plans on youth and injury prevention.

## Toolbox

The project will provide a toolbox consisting of resource materials, products, videos and training guides that can be used for national campaigns. The toolbox will be ready in 2008, pilot materials will be made available as from September 2007.

# How can you benefit from AdRisk network

Be part of a unique project:

By contributing to the knowledge transfer within AdRisk you can be part of a unique European wide project and platform under the umbrella of Eurosafe, an unbiased third party made up solely of injury prevention and safety promotion practitioners. Via our network you get your voice heard in Europe in view of enhancing the reputation and scope of your own organisation.

Improve your networking:

You can take advantage of the EuroSafe platform and annual conferences and seminars to meet your peers in Europe, to exchange information, to develop contacts through networking that are extremely beneficial for benchmarking research, intervention practices and as a resource to validate your policy decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes.

Access to information:

You will get a one-stop site for information professionals to quickly find useful information on injury risks and safety practices through EuroSafe's website and networks ([www.eurosafe.eu.com](http://www.eurosafe.eu.com), [www.adrisk.eu.com](http://www.adrisk.eu.com)). You will be informed about recent research, good practices, prevention strategies, tools and guidelines collected all over Europe, and benefit from lessons learned in other Member States.





## How can you help us Share experience:

Leadership opportunities:

The experience you may have acquired in the field of injury prevention among adolescents and the activities you may have undertaken with a view to influence risk taking behaviour and changing attitudes may be exchanged, shared and spread through our network. The second step is to make this knowledge and expertise available throughout Europe.

Give your input:

You could help us identify relevant operators and practitioners, actions, programmes, projects, campaigns or any kind of initiative, as the knowledge transfer is crucial in setting up effective and efficient actions throughout Europe.

## Join the Adrisk network

Please consult our website: [www.adrisk.eu.com](http://www.adrisk.eu.com)

To register for the network and for further information, please contact: [Adrisk@kfv.at](mailto:Adrisk@kfv.at)

# Timeframe for milestones

Guidelines for national action available	October 2007
National partner applications	July 2007 – February 2008
Start toolbox pilot activities	October 2007
Delivery of situation analysis report and communication plan	May 2008
Official presentation of key recommendations and strategy to stakeholders	June 2008
Toolbox available	June 2008
National action plans initiated	October 2008

## Contact AdRisk

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[www.adrisk.eu.com](http://www.adrisk.eu.com)





### Co-ordination, partners and Funding

The project has been initiated by EuroSafe, the European Association for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, and is led and co-ordinated by the Austrian Road Safety Board, (Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit) in Vienna. The project is carried out in collaboration with the National Public Health Institute Finland, the National Center for Public Health in Hungary, the Azienda ULSS 20 Verona in Italy, and the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands.

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