

## Press Release

Survey by DEKRA Accident Research in six European capitals

# Pedestrians Crossing Streets: Distraction by Smartphone poses risks

- Almost 17% of pedestrians use their smartphone in road traffic
- Younger age groups generally more frequently distracted than older ones
- Cellphone use lowest in Amsterdam and highest in Stockholm
- DEKRA calls for focused attention on road traffic

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**Many pedestrians in Europe are distracted by their smartphones while crossing the street, according to an international survey by DEKRA Accident Research in six European capitals. Almost 17% of the nearly 14,000 pedestrians monitored used their smartphone in various ways while in road traffic.**

Following an initial small-scale pilot study in Stuttgart, teams from DEKRA Accident Research conducted the survey in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Rome and Stockholm. In each capital, pedestrians were observed at three different downtown locations, and their smartphone use was documented. The surveys were performed at busy intersections and pedestrian crossings near the city center, at public-transport stops and at train stations, where levels of pedestrian density are at their highest.

Across all cities and age groups, just under 8% of pedestrians were seen texting while crossing the street. A further 2.6% made calls, and around 1.4% did both at the same time. Around 5% wore earplugs or headphones without speaking, so were probably listening to music. As expected, younger pedestrians tended to use their smartphone more frequently than older ones, with use being most intensive in the 25-to-35 age group at 22%. Gender-specific differences were apparent: While texting was most common among female pedestrians, men listened to music much more.

"Making calls, listening to music, using apps and texting all cause a risk of distraction in road traffic," said Clemens Klinke, a member of the DEKRA SE Management Board in charge of the Automotive business unit. "Many pedestrians clearly underestimate the dangers for their own safety if they divert their attention from events on the street in this way."

On the whole, there were few differences between the six European cities observed. The most striking finding here is that in Amsterdam, smartphone use

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across all age groups was less frequent than in any of the other cities assessed. The overall rate there was 8.2%, compared to 10.6% in Rome. Brussels (14.12%), Paris (14.53%) and Berlin (14.9 %) yielded very similar results, while use was by far the highest in Stockholm at 23.55%.

### **Survey teams observe extreme examples**

"Our survey teams reported some extreme individual instances of distraction," said DEKRA Management Board member Klinke. "One thing that was observed repeatedly was groups of young people looking at a smartphone together while crossing the street. In one case, the entire group actually collided with a cyclist."

There are other examples: A woman pushing a baby carriage across a pedestrian crossing at a set of traffic lights while texting on her smartphone without looking at the traffic lights as she crossed. A man pushing a baby carriage, holding a child by the hand and crossing the road with his smartphone jammed between his shoulder and his ear. A woman talking on the phone and running across the road to catch the streetcar without looking around first.

"One incident in Stockholm made a particular impression: A young girl stood in the middle of the road, got her cellphone out and started texting. It wasn't until a bus driver sounded his horn that she realized where she was standing and moved on," Klinke explained. "The teams from our Accident Research unit constantly observed situations like these."

### **One in ten traffic fatalities caused by inappropriate passenger behavior**

A look at the accident statistics shows that around 22% of all people who die in traffic accidents in the European Union are pedestrians. Most of these pedestrians are killed within towns and cities – in Germany, for instance, the proportion is 70%.

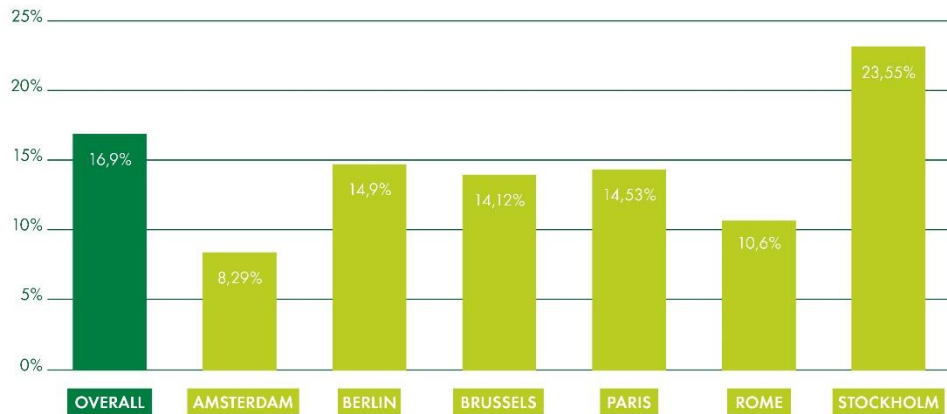
The figures relating to inappropriate pedestrian behavior also stand out: According to the German Federal Statistical Office, approximately 10% of deaths on German roads are caused by pedestrians acting inappropriately.

Around half of these cases involve passengers failing to pay attention to vehicles on the road. Even though children are a common cause of accidents here, there are believed to be a large number of unreported cases in the other age groups that are linked to smartphone-related distraction.

The recommendation of the DEKRA experts is clear: "When you are in among road traffic as a pedestrian, you should keep your undivided attention on the traffic in the interest of your own safety," said Clemens Klinke. "After all, as an unprotected road user, you face a much higher risk in the event of an accident. And distraction caused by smartphone use should never be underestimated."

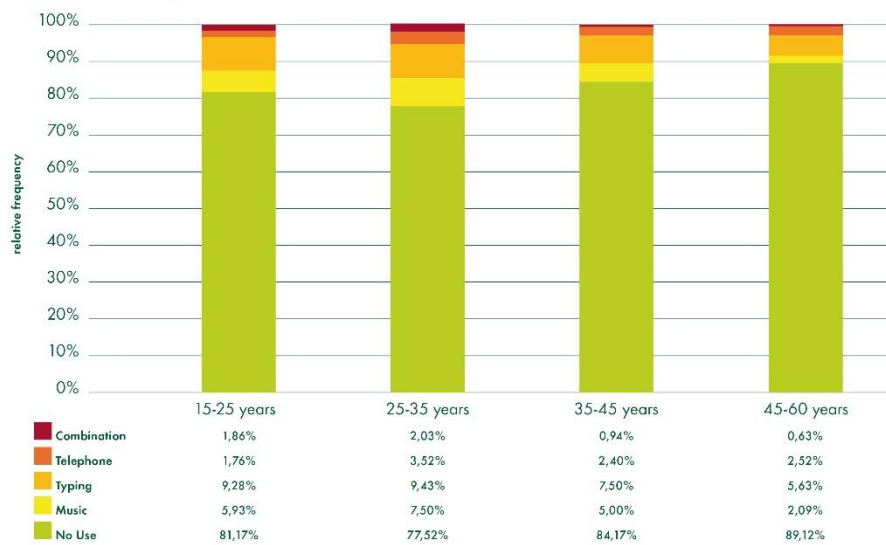
The issue of distraction is one of the topics emphasised in the European Road Safety Report to be published by DEKRA in the coming weeks.

## Pedestrians' Smartphone Use Cities



Source: DEKRA Accident Research  
Survey of 13,822 pedestrians in 6 cities

## Pedestrians' Smartphone Use Age Groups



Source: DEKRA Accident Research  
Survey of 13,822 pedestrians (in total) in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Rome and Stockholm

### **About DEKRA**

*DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for 90 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world's leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and manages the Group's operating business. In 2015, DEKRA will generate sales totalling approximately 2.7 billion Euros. The company currently employs more than 37,000 people in more than 50 countries on all five continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they work for safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, safety consultancy, testing and certification of products and systems, as well as training courses and temporary work. The vision for the company's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe world.*