

## Management summary

This project investigated what proportion of traffic fines imposed on Dutch motorists abroad was ultimately paid by these offenders.

The collection of traffic fines lies primarily with the member states themselves. As a result, there is no insight into the number of traffic fines imposed and paid by Dutch nationals abroad. At the start of the study, it was unclear what relevant data was available in other member states, which organisations within those member states had the data and whether they were willing to share it. The first part of the study - the preliminary investigation - therefore took stock of what the relevant organisations were, and to what extent they were willing to provide data on traffic fines to Dutch citizens.

Member states generally appear *willing* to share the necessary data. Relevant authorities in France, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg and Slovenia have information on both the number of traffic fines imposed and paid and are willing to share this information. The exceptions are Italy (implicit refusal: no response after repeated requests through various channels) and Austria (data fully available but only the five-year average is shared). However, not in all cases the data are also fully *available*. The relevant organisations in the Czech Republic have indicated their willingness to cooperate in the present study, but do not have data at all at national level. In Hungary, it was not clear to us what data are available (and where). In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, limited data are available. In Germany, individual Länder are responsible for collecting traffic fines. At the federal level, no data are available on the number of traffic fines imposed and paid. The federal authority did indicate that several Länder have relevant information and would probably be willing to share it.

Based on this information, the supervisory committee and the client (WODC) decided to conduct the main study. In this main study, the data identified in the preliminary study were actually requested in all countries that had indicated that they were able and willing to provide all or part of these data. In addition, follow-up requests were made to authorities in Italy and Spain, and all German Länder were written to. The report details the results of the main survey by country and federal state.

From 12 member states or federal states the shares of traffic fines paid by holders of Dutch license plates are eventually known. This percentage share ranges from 63% (Latvia) to 100% (Slovenia). **The average share of paid traffic fines by Dutch is 83%**, and excluding the outlier Slovenia 82%.

As a benchmark, collection rates for 2020 are available for a number of Member States (Belgium, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria, Spain) from all foreign (non-resident) motorists. **The willingness to pay of Dutch motorists is generally high (>80%) compared to motorists from other countries (50-70%)**. Interestingly, willingness to pay is also higher in countries that send many traffic fines to the Netherlands (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Germany). This is a strong indication that the Dutch indeed have a relatively high willingness to pay.

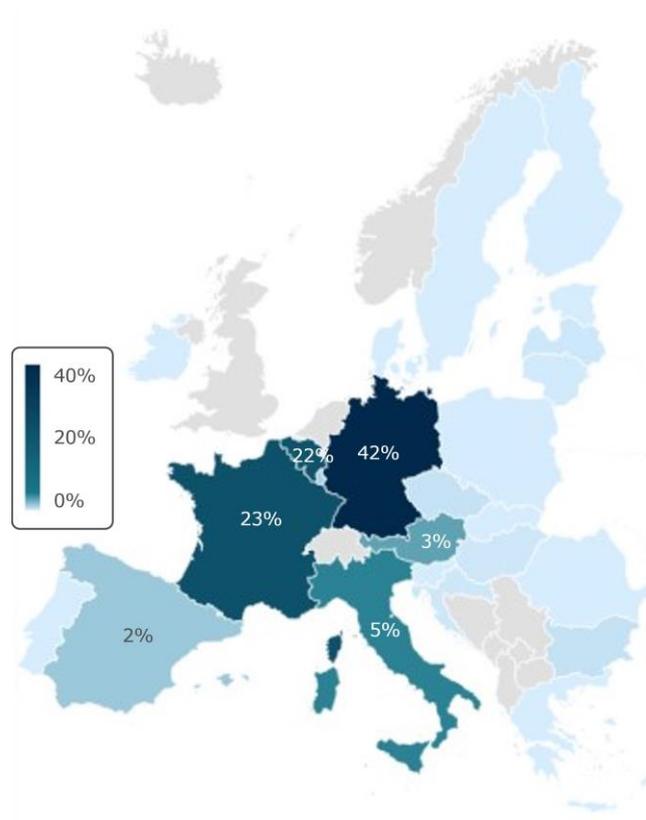


Figure 1. Share in total number of information requests for address details Dutch license plate holders (as a proxy for the number of fines sent), 2021 (source: EUCARIS)

Regarding the reliability of the data and its impact on the results of the study, the work processes by which traffic violations are observed, fines are drawn up, sent and collected differ from country to country. Overall, however, these differences seem to have little effect on the percentage of traffic fines paid by Dutch citizens. **The main factor determining whether a traffic fine is paid is the willingness to pay of the motorist from the country of origin (here: the Netherlands), rather than the way detection, imposition and collection are regulated in the country where the traffic offence is committed.**

This is indicated firstly by the fact that the rates of paid traffic fines *within countries* and federal states are more or less constant over the past years - even when significant changes have taken place in the underlying processes (such as the introduction of a new camera detection system).

Second, differences *between countries* are relatively small. For example, it does not appear to matter which liability system countries use (see Figure 2): *driver-based* (as in Germany) or *license plate holder-based* (as in Spain), or a combination of the two systems (as in France). In the latter case (*hybrid system*), license plate liability applies to minor offences, and driver liability applies to major offences.

