European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Time for Action on Road Safety at Work in the EU

Brussels, 30 April 2009 **- Ahead of the International Day of the Workers, the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) launches a new project PRAISE to increase road safety in the work context. PRAISE stands for: Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees. The projects aims to "praise" best practices in order to help employers secure high road safety standards for their employees.**

Using the roads is a necessary part of everyone's daily business and increasingly this is for work-related movement. Clearly this vital everyday activity should not carry a high risk of injury and death. However, it is estimated that in Europe six out of ten work accidents resulting in death are road crashes, including both crashes while driving for work and commuting crashes.[(1)]

This year the European Commission is preparing its 4th Road Safety Action Programme and its target for reducing road deaths in the EU for 2020. Not only road safety at work but also road safety on the way to work, are important topics to be included in the next Action Programme. Given the increased mobility of people around work this should be integrated into the target and measure setting process of the European Commission. As a minimum ETSC proposes that the EU should encourage each company to prepare a road safety plan and adopt the forthcoming ISO standard for road traffic safety management systems. The starting point should be evaluating the road safety impact on the company, including the burden of road collisions.[(2)]

Alongside these preparations for the 4th Road Safety Action Programme, ETSC´s new project PRAISE will, over the next three years, gather knowledge in short thematic reports covering topics such as in-vehicle technologies and speed management. It will seek out best practice examples from leading companies and disseminate these widely to both the practitioners but also the EU institutions and bodies (including the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work , EU-OSHA)[(3)] and EU governments. ETSC will also incentivise innovative action with an annual award to a European company for action in the field of reducing road deaths at work. At the Member State level the project will also organise six country seminars over the three-year period. PRAISE is co-funded by the European Commission.

Introducing systems to improve road safety at work represents a clear win-win for employers and employees alike as the true costs of road traffic crashes to companies can be high and in many cases avoidable. ETSC's Executive Director Antonio Avenoso stressed: *"Even in this time of economic crisis road safety must be placed at the heart of a company´s working practice. This will serve to save lives but can also bring about gains such as reduced running costs due to better driving standards and the resulting lower fuel consumption and vehicle maintenance costs. With its new project ETSC hopes to show that investing in road safety in the European work place makes sense."*

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Notes to Editors:

(1) Eurogip http://www.eurogip.fr

(2) ETSC Blueprint for a 4th RSAP http://www.etsc.eu/blueprint-4th-road-safety-action-programme.php

(5) PRAISE will also build upon the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's Campaign on Risk Assessment *"Healthy Workplaces. Good for you. Good for business"* http://osha.europa.eu/en/campaigns/hw2008/about