

NEWS RELEASE

Portugal - new measures to prevent drink driving

3 May 2010, Lisboa - Forty distinguished road safety experts gather today in Lisbon to discuss strategies to reduce alcohol misuse in road transport at the first “Safe and Sober” Talk held in Portugal. The event was organised by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)⁽¹⁾ and the Portuguese Road Safety Authority (ANSR) in the framework of ETSC’s “Safe & Sober” drink driving programme. The “Safe & Sober” campaign is run by ETSC in partnership with the VOLVO Group.

Portugal may show one of the best performances in terms of non-drink-driving compared to other EU states, but the trend is worrying. The number of alcohol related road deaths has been stagnating over the past decade in Portugal, while the number of all other road deaths has been cut by more than 50%.

“More systematic approach to alcohol offenders could make a difference as experienced by several EU countries which have introduced alcohol offenders programmes including alcohol interlocks in recent years”, Antonio Avenoso, executive director of ETSC, pointed out.

“Drink driving is one of the major contribute to road accidents in Portugal. “This is one of the situations where we shouldn’t talk about accidents but instead about crashes caused by reckless drivers”, Paulo Marques (ANSR), pointed out.

The objective of the Talk and the “Safe & Sober” campaign is to raise awareness amongst policy makers, the private sector as well as some key opinion leaders for a systematic approach to reduce drink driving, especially in commercial transport. The campaign is to promote best practice from the health and transport sectors alike. It includes measures relating to education (e.g. effective information campaigns), enforcement (e.g. random breath testing) and engineering (e.g. alcohol interlocks).

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Note to Editors:

- 1 The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes and casualties in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. It brings together 41 organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.
- 2 ANSR is the Portuguese Road Safety Authority, that plans and coordinates and supports national wide, the governmental policy in road safety as well as enforces the contravention law.