European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Road safety at work in the spotlight in Spain

14 June 2009, Barcelona **– The second country Seminar within ETSC[1] "Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees" (PRAISE) [2] project, was held today in Barcelona[3]. The PRAISE seminar in Spain was an opportunity to discuss the work-related road safety situation in Spain and a number of other European Countries, and examine existing and possible future initiatives from governments and employers to secure better road safety standards at work. This event was organised in cooperation with the Dirección General de Tráfico (DGT) of the Spanish Ministry of Interior and the Fundación MAPFRE.**

Work-related road safety is an emerging source of concern throughout Europe, which needs renewed commitment from all actors involved. It is estimated that in the EU-15, 39% fatal work accidents are road traffic accidents (ESAW, 2005), and this number would even be considerably higher should accidents while commuting to and from work were included. In Spain, around 90.000 people a year suffered a traffic accident related to work from which 15.700 only in the Catalan region, a global figure that still causes about 400 yearly deaths. In 2008 in Spain, there were over 1.065 fatal work accidents, of which about a third had to do with traffic. It is therefore "key to conduct training and awareness campaigns in companies so that we help lowering the victims caused by traffic accidents" highlighted Filomeno Mira, Vice-President of Fundacion MAPFRE.

Using the roads is a necessary part of everyone's daily business, very often and increasingly for work-related purposes. It is therefore unacceptable that an ordinary activity leads to an excessively high level of injury and death. It is extremely important to raise awareness about the role that governments and employers can take in developing new initiatives to address this situation.

Best practice exchange among European players is also paramount to tackling this emerging concern. Central to today's seminar was a round-table with representatives from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain who presented the situation and the initiatives in place in those countries. As well as declaring work-related road safety a priority for action at a national level, Spain has also made it one of the priorities of its Presidency of the EU and will include this issue as a point of information at the Transport Council.

"ETSC is thrilled to work with Spain under their EU Presidency and hopes this will lead to further action at national and European level." ETSC Executive Director Anotnio Avenoso said at the seminar. *"It is also hoped that the European Commission will consider this as one of the areas for priority in the new Road Safety Action Programme which is due to be published next month".*

Obviously good road safety practices in the workplace are linked to duty of care, but it also most often makes sound business sense to invest into road safety. Indeed, a number of companies that are "champions" at managing road safety succeed at combining safety benefits with financial ones. Experts where tehrefore also invited today to present how road asfety can be tackled at company level.

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Notes to Editors:

(1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of the number and severity of transport crashes in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 41 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See http://www.etsc.eu

(2) PRAISE is a 3 years projetc launched on 1st of May 2009 co-funded by the European Commission, the German Road Safety Council (DVR), the Swiss Council for Accident Prevntion (bfu) and Fundaciòn MAPFRE.

(3) To view the programme: click here