NEWS RELEASE
Brussels and London

UK falls behind on road safety

***14 June 2007* – Comparison of the UK road safety performance with that of other European countries reveals that the UK has lost its leading role as a road safety driving force in Europe. Progress on reducing road deaths is slower than in other top performing countries, which means that the UK now comes after the Netherlands and Sweden in terms of road deaths per million population[(1)].**

Thirty distinguished experts and state representatives gathered today in London for a high-level debate on UK road safety in the European context. The event was organised by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)[(2)] and the Vehicle Safety Research Centre (VSRC)[(3)] at Loughborough University in the framework of the Road Safety PIN Programme[(4)]. The event was kindly supported by Toyota Motor Europe.

The experts' discussion was based on the findings of the first Road Safety PIN Report[(5)] as well as the DfT's Three Year Review.

The UK does not hold a top position in any of the rankings presented by the ETSC so far:

- The country has made little progress on reducing road deaths between 2001 and 2005. The UK has reached a 7% reduction over this period, whereas this is about 25% in Sweden and the Netherlands, and 35% in France.

- Numbers of drink driving deaths in Great Britain have remained high over the last decade. They have actually risen in relation to other deaths so this development has slowed down overall reduction in road deaths[(6)]. This is also the case in six other countries whereas changes in drink driving deaths contributed more than their share in eight countries.

- Mean driving speed in Great Britain has decreased over the last ten years by 9% on urban roads. There has also been a 3% reduction in the mean speed on 70 mph all-purpose roads, but mean speed on 60 mph roads has increased by 9% since 2001[(7)]. It is only in France, Belgium and Switzerland that speed reductions have been recorded on all types of road in recent years.

- Seat belt use in the UK in the front seat of cars and vans is high at 90% (2005) but not as high as in the top three countries France, Germany and Malta[(8)].

Prof Richard Allsop, ETSC Board Member and Chairman of the PIN Programme, said *"Much road safety policy and practice in the UK is good, but these comparisons with our fellow-Europeans come as a wake-up call to anyone tempted to acquiesce in present levels of death and injury on our roads – perhaps especially those concerned with priorities for law-enforcement."*

Prof. Pete Thomas from VSRC said "*The UK has been a leader in road and vehicle safety for many years helping to set the standard for Europe. Progress in reducing road deaths has slowed and the UK has to develop more innovative solutions and apply them*."

Robert Gifford, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, said "*This objective analysis of the performance of the UK reminds us of how much more progress we need to make. We used to claim that we had the safest roads in Europe. That claim is no longer matched in reality. The UK clearly needs to do much more to reclaim its position at the top of the EU road safety league*."

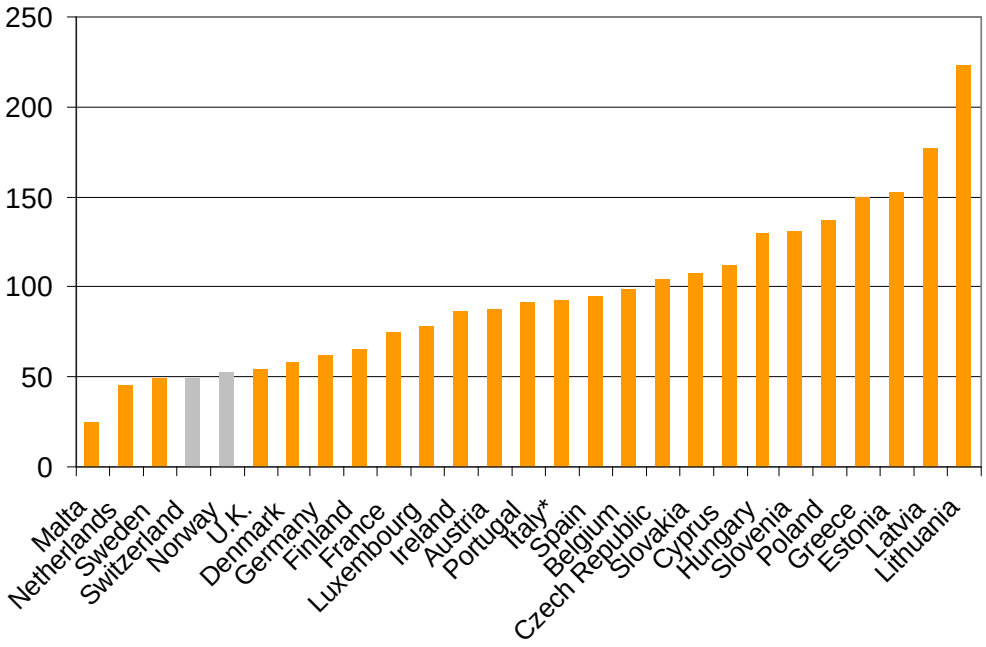
Road Safety Minister Stephen Ladyman said "*As this report acknowledges, Great Britain has greatly improved its road safety record and as a result has some of the safest roads in the world. Indeed when assessed on the basis of fatalities per passenger kilometre, which I believe is the best indicator to use when drawing a comparison as it takes into account both the number of fatalities and level of passenger mobility, Great Britain is second only to Sweden.*

"We have been congratulated by the ETSC for reducing overall speeds on urban roads and continually improving seatbelt wearing rates. Alongside this, we have already met our target of halving the number of children killed or seriously injured by 2010."

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Notes to Editors:

(1) Road deaths per million population in 2006. Source: CARE and national data



(2) 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 37 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See http://www.etsc.be.

(3) The Vehicle Safety Research Centre (VSRC) was established in 1983 to provide transport and road safety policy and design solutions to governments and the industry using in-depth real world research tools. The Centre's ongoing research and consultancy activities for major clients have led to its reputation as a world leader in its field, often collaborating with other national and international organisations. See http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/esri/vehicle-road-safety/index.htm.

Loughborough is one of the country's leading universities, with an international reputation for excellence in teaching and research, strong links with industry and unrivalled sporting achievement. It is a member of the esteemed 1994 Group – a set of internationally recognised, research-intensive universities – and has a reputation for the relevance of its work. Its degree programmes are highly regarded by professional institutions and businesses, and its graduates are consistently targeted by the UK's top recruiters.

Loughborough is also the UK's premier university for sport. It has perhaps the best integrated sports development environment in the world and is home to some of the country's leading coaches, sports scientists and support staff. It

also has the country's largest concentration of world-class training facilities across a wide range of sports.

In the 2006 National Student Survey, the University gained a top five place, with nine out of Loughborough's 23 departments topping their subject tables. Loughborough was also placed 6th in the 2007 Times Good University Guide and was named winner of the 2006 THES award for the UK's Best Student Experience. In recognition of its contribution to the sector, the University has been awarded five Queen's Anniversary Prizes – an achievement bettered by no other university.

(4) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme was launched in June 2006 to compares road safety performances of 27 European countries. See http://www.etsc.be/PIN.php.

(5) European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) 2007: *Raising Compliance with Road Safety Law.* 1st Road Safety PIN Report. See http://www.etsc.be/documents/PIN_Report.pdf.

(6) Department for Transport (DfT) 2006 Road casualties in Great Britain. Main results 2005

(7) Department for Transport (DfT) Vehicle speeds in Great Britain

(8) Road Safety Performance Indicators: Country comparison. Deliverable D3.7a of the EU FP6 project SafetyNet