European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

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EU GAINS MOMENTUM IN ROAD SAFETY

This may be too late for 2010 but should help setting new 2020 target

***22 June 2009, Brussels* - Some 39,000 people were killed in road collisions in 2008 in the EU27, 15,400 less than in 2001 but still far from the 27,000 deaths limit which the EU set for itself in its Road Safety Target for 2010. The average annual reduction since 2001 has been only 4.4% instead of the 7.4% needed. This could delay the EU in reaching the target until 2017. Recent EU and national performance in road safety has come under scrutiny today at the 3rd ETSC(1) Road Safety PIN(2) Conference in Brussels.**

After a particularly bad 2007, 2008 saw a promising decrease in road deaths by 8.5%. This has been the best year-to-year reduction since 2001. **Estonia** (-33%), **Lithuania** (-33%), **Slovenia** (-27%) and **Latvia** (-25%) achieved the best reductions in 2008 but still have some of the highest road death rates in the EU. In 2008 for the first time ever the EU10 achieved the same year-on-year percentage reduction in road deaths as the EU15. The reduction in road deaths in 2008 can be partly attributed to reduced traffic volume following the recent economic recession and relatively high petrol prices earlier in the year. The **Baltic States** and **Hungary** were particularly affected, and the **UK**, **France** and **Germany** to a lesser extent(3).

Over the period 2001-2008, best results have been achieved by countries with a medium level of safety. **Luxembourg**, **France** and **Portugal**, already the top three for their progress up to 2007, keep their leading position with outstanding reductions of 49%, 48% and 47% respectively up to 2008. **Spain** and **Latvia** are catching up with reduction of more than 43% for which they have been recognised with the "2009 Road Safety PIN Award" at the Conference. **Belgium** with **38%** resumed in 2008 the good progress it was making early in the decade. Good progress was also made by countries with a longer tradition of road safety such as **Germany** (-36%), **Switzerland** (-34 %), the **Netherlands** (-31%) and **Sweden** (-28%). In **Romania** and **Bulgaria**, however, the number of road deaths was higher in 2008 than in 2001. **Slovakia** and **Poland** have not made any substantial progress(4).

Sweden, the **Netherlands** and the **UK** remain the safest European countries roadwise, behind **Malta**(5). **Switzerland** and **Norway** have been among the frontrunners in Europe for some time and **Germany** is close on the heels of the leading group. **Ireland**, **Spain**, **France**, **Luxembourg**, **Portugal** and **Belgium** all used to be underperformers, but now have a medium level of road safety. Disparity in road death rates across Europe has decreased since 2001, and in 2008 there was no longer any EU country with more than 150 road deaths per million inhabitants(6).

Despite individual countries' progress, the EU as a whole is likely to fail to reach its 2010 Target. *"The EU15, which originally set the Target, might halve the number of deaths with only two years' delay"*, said Graziella Jost, PIN Programme Manager. "*But for the EU27 reaching the target on time appears unrealistic, since it would require an annual reduction of 17% in both 2009 and 2010."*

"Of course setting targets does not guarantee their achievement. Although ambitious, the EU target could have been achievable had all countries provided stronger political will for the required interventions." Claes Tingvall, Swedish Road Administration.

"It is high time for the EU to come forward with a new Road Safety Action Programme for the next decade," said ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso(7). *"New targets must be set for 2020 which will mobilise action at a joint European level, and more EU instruments, like structural funds for transport, should be used in order to further bring down deaths and disabilities on our roads."*

You can download the 3rd PIN Annual Report at www.etsc.eu/PIN-publications.php. For more information please contact PIN Programme Manager Graziella Jost, graziella.jost@etsc.eu, mob. +32 (0)4 98 51 65 62 or ETSC Communications Officer Evgueni Pogorelov, evgueni.pogorelov@etsc.eu, tel. +32 (0)2 230.41.06.

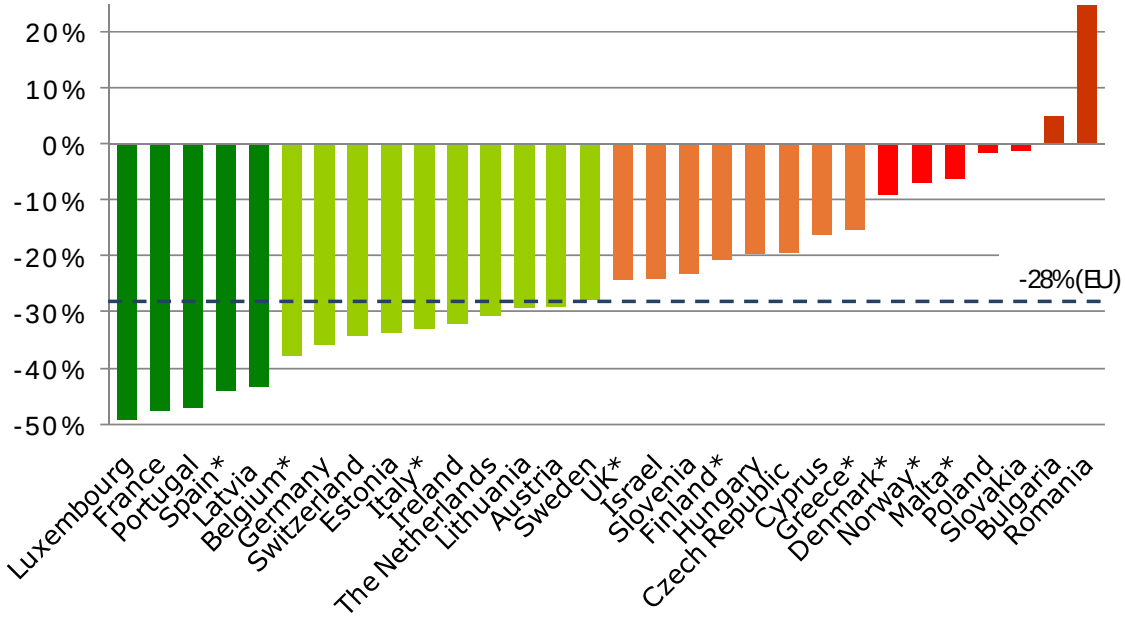
Notes to Editors:

(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 42 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu

(2) **The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN)** Programme was launched in June 2006 to compare country road safety performances. It currently includes 30 countries. www.etsc.eu/PIN.

(3) You can download the 3rd PIN Annual Report at www.etsc.eu/PIN-publications.php.
2008 numbers of road deaths for all 30 countries covered by PIN are available in the Annex. The numbers of road deaths in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain and the UK are provisional as provided by PIN Panelists as final figures were not yet available at the time of print.
The Methodological Note can be downloaded from the same address.

(4) Fig.1 Percentage change in road deaths between 2001 and 2008



** 2008 provisional figures or national estimates based on provisional figures as final figures for 2008 were not yet available at the time of going to print.*

(5) In the EU27 in 2008 79 people were killed on the roads per million inhabitants compared to 113 in 2001. But there is still a fourfold difference in road death rate between Malta and Lithuania.
In comparison, in the USA in 2008 122 people were killed on the roads per million inhabitants and 69 in Australia. The reduction in road deaths between 2007 and 2008 was the same in the EU27, the USA and Australia (-9%).

(6) There are special reasons for low road death rate in Malta.

(7) See ETSC (2008), Road Safety as a Right and Responsibility for All, A Blueprint for the EU's 4th Road Safety Action Programme 2010-2020 available on
www.etsc.eu/blueprint-4th-road-safety-action-programme.php