European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Call for Strong EU Leadership in Time of Crisis: France to Advance Road Safety

1 July 2008, Brussels **– Today France is taking office as the Presidency of the European Union. In its Memorandum to the French Presidency [(1)] ETSC[(2)] welcomes the news that road safety will be one of the top priorities on its Transport agenda. France has been the champion in road safety in the EU, having cut the number of deaths by 43% over the past six years. Its energetic commitment and dedication to making European roads safer could also appeal to a now disenchanted European public. Following the Lisbon Treaty referendum, action taken by the European Union on this important topic could reconnect European citizens to the European idea.**

A key French priority, welcomed by ETSC, is the new legislative proposal on **cross border enforcement** that will enable EU drivers to be identified and prosecuted for offences committed in other Member States. This legislation is a dire necessity at the time of growing non-resident traffic, widening national automated speed camera networks and complex crossborder problems posed by offenders, which current bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation agreements are often unable to deal with. Effective enforcement leads to a rapid reduction in deaths and injuries. The EU is unlikely to meet its target of halving road deaths by 2010. Moreover, 2007 was the first year where there was no reduction in total road deaths. Given this poor state of affairs measures such as police enforcement must be prioritised by the EU under the French Presidency.

Better cross-border enforcement will reduce illegal speeding on Europe's roads, which in turn would **lower the level of CO2 emissions**. It should therefore be considered within the framework of the Presidency's environmental and energy strategies for transport. Fighting speeding will also help the EU meet its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20-30% by 2020. Road transport generates about one fifth of the EU's CO2 emissions, with passenger cars responsible for around 12%, and these emissions have risen between 1990 and 2004 by 26%.

Finally, with the 2010 deadline approaching fast, the French Presidency should consider **new European wide target for reducing deaths and serious injuries together with a new Action Programme on improving road safety** in the EU beyond 2010. This should comprise a set of measures linked to the strict monitoring of targets and accountability mechanisms.

"France must do its best to advance agreement on a Directive on Cross Border Enforcement. This will bring an end to impunity and discrimination and ensure equal treatment of citizens across the EU," said Pierre Gustin *Prévention Routière's* Director General[(3)].

"The EU stands at a crossroads and decisive leadership is now key to decide its future. This applies equally to the Treaty of Lisbon as to the dossier that touches all European citizens: saving lives on Europe's roads. The stakes are high," said Ellen Townsend, ETSC Policy Director.

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Notes for Editors:

(1) You can download ETSC Memorandum to the French Presidency here

(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. ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 40 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.be.

(3) See also *Prévention Routière's* Press Release and appeal to the French Presidency at www.preventionroutiere.asso.fr