European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Road safety at work in the spotlight in Poland

24 September 2009, Warsaw **– The first event within the new ETSC[1] "Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees" (PRAISE) project, was held today in Warsaw. The PRAISE seminar[2] in Poland was an opportunity to discuss the work-related road safety situation in Poland, and examine existing and possible future initiatives from the Polish Government and from Polish employers to secure better road safety standards at work. Under the Special Patronage of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Infrastructure, this event was organised in cooperation with the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and the Motor Transport Institute (ITS), and hosted by the Polish-German Foundation for Cooperation.**

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 be included. In Poland, according to a National Labour Inspectorate analysis, car drivers were the largest professional group involved in fatal accidents at work: 16.7% in 2007. They also represented 8.6% of all work place injuries. 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 incredibly 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.

Very importantly it also most often makes sound business sense to invest into good road safety practices in the workplace, and a number of companies that are "champions" at managing road safety succeed at combining safety benefits with financial ones. A number of such "champions" presented their success stories at this seminar. It is such examples that form the cornerstone of the PRAISE project; as such, success stories should be "praised" to encourage more employers to get onboard. For this reason PRAISE is launching the PRAISE award, an award that will be given to an employer who is doing the utmost to secure high road safety standards for its employees. Each year this award will be presented at the PRAISE Brunch in Brussels[3].

"Investing in work-related road safety is not only a moral obligation for employers but very often a solid business opportunity too," ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso said at the seminar in Warsaw. *"It is not so often that we can have such win-win situations and this needs to be recognised as soon as possible, both by employers and governments, if we are to be serious about saving lives and sparing injuries".*

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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 42 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See http://www.etsc.eu

(2) Materials from the Country Seminar will be downloadable from ETSC's website after the event http://www.etsc.eu/PRAISE-events.php

(3) The first PRAISE Brunch will be held in May 2010. For more information and to apply to receive the award please visit http://www.etsc.eu/PRAISE-award.php