



European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

## World Transport Ministers to Tackle Road Safety at First U.N. Conference on Road Safety

**18 November 2009, Brussels** – Today Transport Ministers, the European Transport Safety Council<sup>(1)</sup> and other NGO representatives from over 40 countries will meet at the 1<sup>st</sup> U.N. Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow, Russia. The U.N. Conference will be a historical landmark for countries to join forces in tackling the problems of road safety globally. The WHO predicts that road traffic injuries will rise to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030<sup>(2)</sup>.

Every year 1.2 million people are killed and 20 to 50 million injured in road crashes around the world<sup>(3)</sup>. In the WHO European Region alone, 120,000 people are killed and 2.4 million injured in road collisions each year<sup>(4)</sup>. Yet the European Region is home to three countries with the safest roads in the world (Sweden, UK and the Netherlands). The EU-27 has a lower road mortality (road deaths per population) than the US, but this is not as low as in Australia or Canada.

Ministers from across the world including EU Transport Ministers will adopt a Resolution<sup>(5)</sup> which will call upon Member States to develop action plans and strategies in road safety including ambitious and measurable targets. National crash data systems are also in need of improvement. Countries are encouraged to build capacity of the lead agency for road safety and focus measures on addressing main risk factors including excessive speed, drink driving, non use of seat belts and helmets. Funding is also a top priority and Member States should develop sustainable mechanisms for financing the implementation of national road safety programmes.

NGOs launched their own declaration<sup>(6)</sup> supported by 70 road safety NGOs from across the world. They proposed policies and measures which should be universally adopted by governments across the globe. They supported the measures of the Ministerial Resolution. They proposed that governments should address road traffic issues as a public health and also a human rights issue. Deaths and serious injuries should be reduced as close to zero as possible by managing the main risks and investing in prevention work. Resources should be allocated for strict enforcement of road traffic law also by adopting global standards for traffic police. Vehicle and Road Assessment Programmes should be adopted universally. Emergency services and the immediate post-crash response should be improved and a global emergency telephone number should be established.

ETSC Executive Director in his presentation stressed the need to make rapid progress in adopting safety technologies. These should be prioritised according to their effectiveness in reducing casualties caused by the major risk factors. He welcomed this first ever meeting of Transport Ministers as a sign of renewed political will to act on improving road safety. *"The high level of road traffic deaths represents a global health problem. This is clearly recognised today by this first meeting of Transport Ministers from around the world"* said Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director. *"The EU has one of the best records on road safety. With this comes a responsibility to ensure that the outcome of this first U.N. meeting strikes a right balance between safety and mobility. Every life lost on a road are a life too many."*

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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 [www.etsc.eu](http://www.etsc.eu).
- (2) Leading causes of death 2004 and 2030 compared. WHO (2009) Global Status Report.  
*Source: World health statistics 2008 ([www.who.int/whosis/whostat/2008/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat/2008/en/index.html))*

TOTAL 2004			TOTAL 2030		
RANK	LEADING CAUSE	%	RANK	LEADING CAUSE	%
1	Ischaemic heart disease	12.2	1	Ischaemic heart disease	12.2
2	Cerebrovascular disease	9.7	2	Cerebrovascular disease	9.7
3	Lower respiratory infections	7.0	3	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	7.0
4	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	5.1	4	Lower respiratory infections	5.1
5	Diarrhoeal diseases	3.6	5	Road traffic injuries	3.6
6	HIV/AIDS	3.5	6	Trachea, bronchus, lung cancers	3.5
7	Tuberculosis	2.5	7	Diabetes mellitus	2.5
8	Trachea, bronchus, lung cancers	2.3	8	Hypertensive heart disease	2.3
9	Road traffic injuries	2.2	9	Stomach cancer	2.2
10	Prematurity and low birth weight	2.0	10	HIV/AIDS	2.0
11	Neonatal infections and other	1.9	11	Nephritis and nephrosis	1.9
12	Diabetes mellitus	1.9	12	Self-inflicted injuries	1.9
13	Malaria	1.7	13	Liver cancer	1.7
14	Hypertensive heart disease	1.7	14	Colon and rectum cancer	1.7
15	Birth asphyxia and birth trauma	1.5	15	Oesophagus cancer	1.5
16	Self-inflicted injuries	1.4	16	Violence	1.4
17	Stomach cancer	1.4	17	Alzheimer and other dementias	1.4
18	Cirrhosis of the liver	1.3	18	Cirrhosis of the liver	1.3
19	Nephritis and nephrosis	1.3	19	Breast cancer	1.3
20	Colon and rectum cancers	1.1	20	Tuberculosis	1.1

- (3) WHO (2009) Global Status Report.  
[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2009/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2009/en/index.html)
- (4) WHO (2009) European Status Report (in print)
- (5) Link to Ministerial Resolution:  
[http://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial\\_conference/declaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial_conference/declaration_en.pdf)
- (6) Link to NGO Declaration:  
[http://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial\\_conference/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial_conference/en/index.html)