



*NEWS RELEASE
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Better road safety may be in horizon in Slovenia

5 December 2008, Ljubljana – 2008 may become the first good year for road user safety in Slovenia in almost a decade. While the number of road deaths has shown little decrease since 2001 and rose in 2007, provisional data for 2008 show strong signs that this increase may be reversed. These results and the measures which must be taken in order to cement recent positive developments were discussed today at the Road Safety PIN⁽¹⁾ Talk in Ljubljana, organised by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)⁽²⁾ and the Transport Directorate of the Ministry of Transport with the support of Toyota Slovenia. The Talk showed how Slovenia can be encouraged in its road safety efforts by progress across the EU, while progress in Slovenia can help and encourage its European neighbours.

In line with the general trend amongst East European countries, the number of road deaths in Slovenia was 5% higher in 2007 than in 2001. This increase was below the 7.4% average annual reduction which is required of all EU members in order to reach the EU target of halving road deaths between 2001 and 2010. The underperformance of East European countries partly accounted for a slower 4.2% overall annual EU reduction in road deaths, which has pushed back the year of reaching the original 2010 target to 2018. In the case of Slovenia, it means that the country needs a big change in reducing the numbers of deaths to reach the EU target at all.

However, provisional figures for the first nine months of 2008 show a very impressive 33% drop in road deaths to 157, down from 233 in the same period last year. With this encouraging improvement Slovenia can get back on track in reaching its own national target of no more than 171 fatalities in 2008.

In 2007 the number of road deaths per million population in Slovenia was 146, 70% above the EU average of 86. However, if 2008 turns out as positive as it promises to be, Slovenia will be in the EU average range with 78 deaths per million population. This major improvement would be a tremendous achievement for the country and a great encouragement to its neighbours.

Speaking at the PIN Talk experts have discussed a detailed breakdown of the national data by region and by type of road. In terms of regional differences, more than 57% of road deaths are observed in just three of the twelve regions. Local roads also account for a higher proportion of road deaths (37%) compared to their share of traffic (28%). These figures highlight the road safety effort that is needed at the local level to match the positive developments in road safety management at the national scale.

As it was stressed by speakers at the PIN Talk, many communities are willing to address local road safety problems through the work of their Road Safety Councils. However, their progress is held back by a need for greater knowledge and awareness of solutions and best practice. In order to overcome this obstacle, the National Road Safety Council has promoted safety programmes through the transfer of "Examples of Road Safety Best Practices" around the country.

"Strong social and political support from the central state level is necessary to encourage and achieve horizontal and vertical harmonisation of road safety efforts at the state and local levels," said Richard Allsop, Professor of Transport Studies at University College London, speaking at the PIN Talk.

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Notes to Editors:

(1) **The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN)** Programme was launched in June 2006 to compare country road safety performances. It currently includes 30 countries. <http://www.etsc.be/PIN.php>

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