NEWS RELEASE

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MOTORCYCLIST DEATHS IN EUROPE: Worrying trends require urgent measures

18 December 2008, Brussels - In 2006 at least 6200 motorcycle and moped riders were killed in road crashes in the EU25. While representing 16% of the total number of road deaths, they accounted for only 2% of the total kilometres driven. The latest ETSC[1] Road Safety PIN[2] report on motorcycling looks closely at the stagnating safety of the Powered Two-Wheeler (PTW) riders.

Norway, Switzerland, Denmark and Finland are the least dangerous places to ride, with average rider deaths between 30 and 45 per billion kilometres[3].The countries in a second group, comprising Germany, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Greece, are just below the EU average of 86 rider deaths per billion km. In Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Estonia and Poland, rider deaths are above the average of 86 but below 200 per billion km, while in Latvia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovenia riders are exposed to death rates above 200 per billion km.

On average per kilometre travelled a motorcyclist has 18 times the risk of being killed in a road accident that a car driver has[4]. While this figure is shocking in itself, the country-by-country variation in the rider/driver risk ratio is just as striking: from 6 times in Norway, safest for motorcycling, to 50 times in Slovenia, the most dangerous for riders by any measure.

The report also shows that, while the total number of road deaths has declined in the past decade in Europe, the number of killed PTW riders rose in 13 out of 27 countries. Between 2001 and 2006, in particular, PTW rider deaths decreased on average by less than 1.5% yearly across Europe. This flies in the face of the ambitious EU goal of halving road deaths by 2010. To reach the target, a 7.4% annual reduction is needed. Portugal and Slovenia are the only two countries where the reduction of PTW rider deaths has been contributing fully to the overall road deaths reduction, while Belgium, France and Lithuania come close. However, if the road deaths in the EU decreased at the rate at which rider deaths have been going down, the EU would reach its target only by 2045.

In order to reverse the situation ETSC calls on the EU and Members States' authorities to:

- Enforce the compulsory wearing of helmets
- Install speed cameras able to detect speeding riders
- Improve rider and driver training with regard to particular hazards related to motorcycling
- Address specific needs of PTW users in road design and road maintenance
- Investigate the effectiveness of ABS for PTW
- Investigate the extent to which airbags are viable PTW safety measures
- Include PTW issues in the European research agenda
- Let motorcyclists benefit from eCall, which is to become a standard for passenger cars in many EU countries.[5]

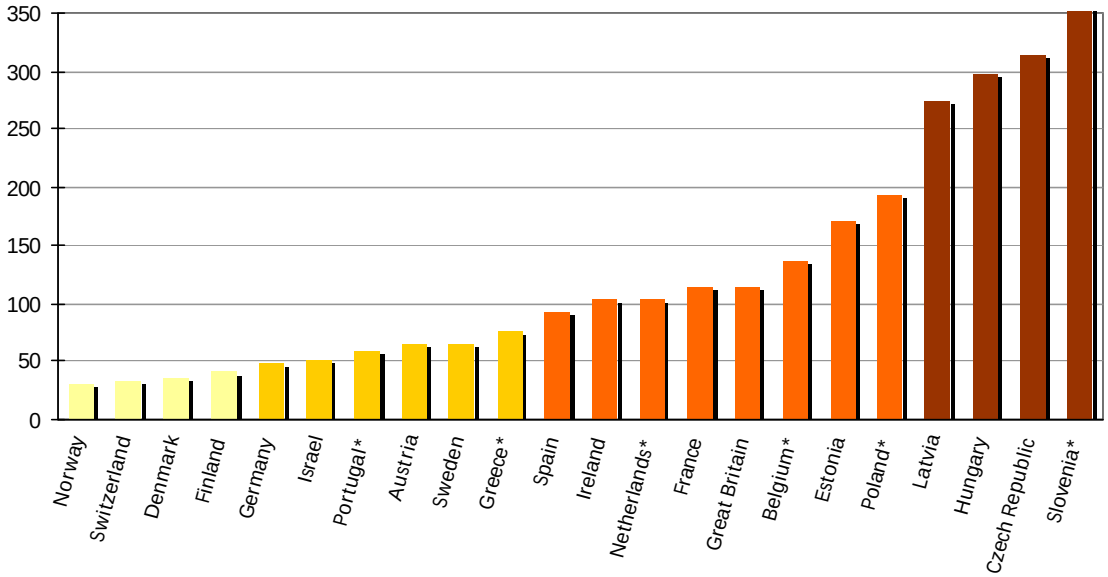
"While riding a motorcycle will inevitably carry more risk than driving a car, the implementation of dedicated safety measures can substantially improve PTW safety," said Richard Allsop from University College London, Chairman of the PIN Programme.

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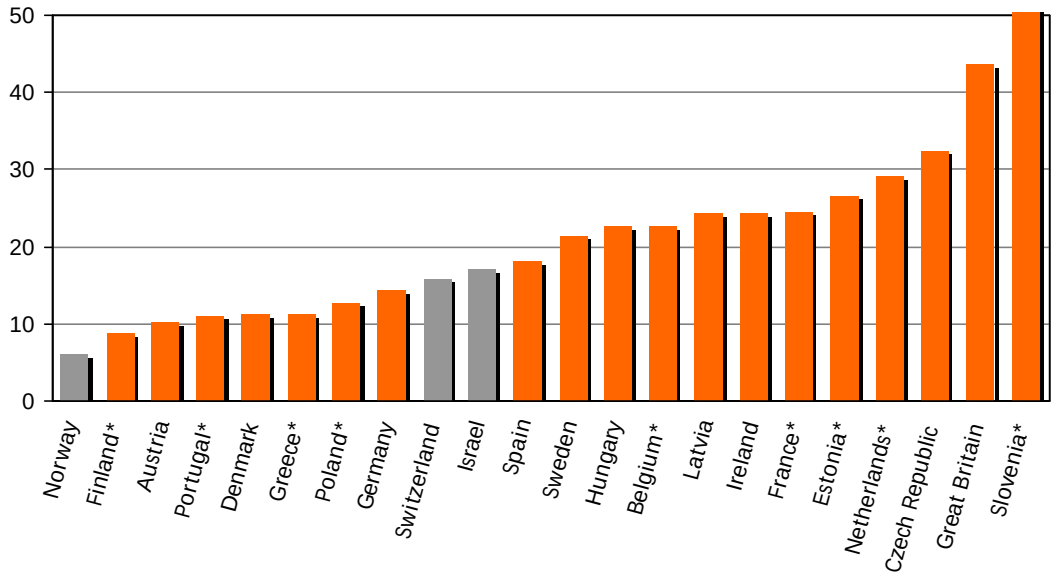
Notes for Editors:

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

(2) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme was launched in June 2006 to compare road safety performances of 27 European countries. It currently includes 30 countries. www.etsc.be/PIN



(3) PTW rider deaths per billion PTW-km in 2006
**Except BE, PL and SI (2005), GR (2004), PT (2001) and the NL (2000)*



(4) Ratio of death rate per billion km ridden by PTW riders to corresponding rate for car drivers in 2006. **Except PL, BE, FI, FR, EE and SI (2005); GR (2004); PT (2001) and NL (2000)*

(5) These recommendations are based on the work of ETSC Working Party on Motorcycle Safety. A Review "Vulnerable riders - Safety Implications of motorcycling in the European Union" will be published at the beginning of 2008.

Road Safety PIN