European Transport Safety Council

Press release

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EU urban mobility plan lacks teeth say road safety campaigners

Brussels - The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) says European Commission plans to improve urban mobility will need strengthening if they are to have a measurable impact on road safety.

Commenting on yesterday's launch of the 'Urban Mobility Package', Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC said:
"With 11,000 deaths on the road in urban areas across the EU each year, it is right that the European Commission says improving road safety in our cities should be a political priority. We welcome the renewed push to share good practice and further encouragement for local governments to make road safety a key component of their mobility plans. But we should not be under the illusion that these kinds of soft measures will be enough."

Excessive speed is the number one road safety problem. In countries where data are available, up to 80% of drivers exceed speed limits in urban areas. ETSC is calling for intelligent speed assistance (ISA), which enables vehicles to receive and act on electronic speed limit data, to be mandatory for professional vehicles such as lorries, vans and buses. Currently lorries and buses only limit speed to the maximum allowed on main roads and motorways. A recent European Commission study recommended the mandatory fitting of speed limiters to vans, which ETSC supports (2).

One area where the EU can have a big impact is on EU-wide safety standards for new vehicles. The latest ETSC research shows that 4,254 people lost their lives in the EU in collisions involving heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in 2011 (3). ETSC supports the Commission's recently proposed improvements to lorry cab design to reduce blind spots and help prevent pedestrians and cyclists from being run over. Other measures should include improved route planning to avoid urban areas at peak times when there are high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists, and schemes to insert HGV safety into public procurement contracts.

ETSC says the increased popularity of walking and cycling in cities should be encouraged for the overall health benefits. But more needs to be done to ensure the safety of these vulnerable road users. ETSC welcomes the inclusion of safer road design for vulnerable road users in the urban mobility package but says this aspiration must be followed up with specific measures such as EU guidance on traffic calming measures.

Notes to editors:

(1) See ETSC Road Safety Performance Index (PIN), chapter 3, 2010
http://etsc.eu/documents/ETSC%204th%20PIN%20Report%202010.pdf

(2) See: http://etsc.eu/documents/ETSC_ISA_Press_Release_2013.pdf

(3) See ETSC Road Safety Performance Index (PIN), chapter 2, 2013
http://etsc.eu/documents/PIN_Annual_report_2013_web.pdf

ETSC's position paper on Urban Transport can be downloaded from our website.
http://www.etsc.eu/documents/ETSC_Position_on_Urban_Transport_June_2013.pdf

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