



NEWS RELEASE

Crossing Borders – Follow the Traffic Rules

20th of August 2013, Brussels – Drivers across the European Union will face sanctions for breaking traffic laws even when driving in a foreign country. “Traffic laws apply to all drivers, regardless of the country where their vehicle is registered,” said Antonio Avenoso, ETSC¹ Executive Director.

The message is simple: as a driver, you would not break the traffic laws in your home country. You know the authorities can follow up upon traffic offences. The same will apply abroad, acting as a deterrent to breaking traffic rules.

These developments will come into force at the latest on the 7th of November 2013, the deadline for EU Member States to implement Directive 2011/82/EU facilitating the cross border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences. The implementation of this legislation has a considerable life-saving potential and will help improve road safety across the Union.²

What will change? Nothing, if you are a law-abiding driver or motorcycle rider! Traffic laws are introduced and enforced in order to save lives and reduce the risk of road collisions. This is a fact across all of the EU, and across the world. It is thus fair for the authorities to seek to enforce these laws on all those travelling within one country, the country of a vehicle’s registration should not mean that enforcement is more lenient.

Eight major road safety related offences are included in the text of the EU Directive:

- Speeding,
- Not using a seatbelt,
- Not stopping at a red traffic light or other mandatory stop signal,
- Drink driving,
- Driving under the influence of drugs,
- Not wearing a safety helmet (for motorcyclists),
- Using a forbidden lane (such as the forbidden use of an emergency lane, a lane reserved for public transport, or a lane closed down for road works),
- Illegally using a mobile phone, or any other communications device, while driving.

As such, drivers crossing national borders within the EU must inform themselves of the traffic rules in the country they will be visiting. According to a recent European Commission estimate, some 100 million cross-border road trips are undertaken annually in the EU, primarily for business and tourism purposes.³ As part of the Directive, EU countries and the European Commission must inform road users of the traffic rules in each country. The European Commission has set up a dedicated page at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/index_en.htm

Additionally, TISPOL, the European traffic police network, has published a series of country driving guides, providing information about national traffic laws: www.tispol.org/

“We ask all drivers going abroad to access this information and comply with the traffic rules,” concluded Mr Avenoso.

Background

To date the UK and Ireland have decided not to opt-in to the legislation. This is in accordance to Protocol 21 of the Treaty of the European Union, meaning that their citizens will be exempt from this important new road safety law when travelling abroad. Additionally, Denmark, is not taking part in this Directive in accordance to Protocol 22 of the Treaty. ETSC encourages these remaining Member States to opt-in as soon as possible. Neighbouring states would also benefit from them opting in.

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Notes to editors:

¹ ETSC is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 47 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu

² For more information, please consult the ETSC position on enforcement of traffic laws: http://www.etsc.eu/documents/Enforcement%20in%20the%20EU_Vision%202020_29%20April.pdf, and consult the text of Directive 2011/82/EU at:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:288:0001:0015:EN:PDF>

³ The figure has been released by the European Commission in its justification for introducing an automatic in-vehicle system for the transmission of emergency calls, also known as eCall. More information is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/esafety/doc/ecall/recomm/imp_assessm_fin.pdf