European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

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Number 1 New Year's Resolution for the German EU Presidency: A Directive on Traffic Law Enforcement

A full road safety agenda awaits the German Presidency and ETSC[1] hopes it will address it with all the attention it is due[2]. At the start of the German Presidency's tenure stakeholders will be giving their views on the European Commission's proposal *"Respecting the Rules:* Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU"[3]. This states the Commission intention to present a proposal on better road safety enforcement in the EU in 2007. Notably the Consultation picks out the failure of the EU Member States to progress on an EU wide introduction of best enforcement methods.

In its contribution[4] to the consultation ETSC strongly supports the preparation of a Directive that includes minimal legal requirements in the area of enforcement of road traffic law in the areas of speeding, drink driving and seat belt use, according to the best practice set out in the EC Recommendation on enforcement[5]. The enforcement of these rules could help prevent 14,000 deaths by 2010, according to Commission estimates[6].

ETSC has been closely monitoring enforcement in the Member States with the conclusion that this undoubtedly has a direct impact on saving lives[7]. In the Netherlands, better compliance with key road safety rules contributed at least 25% to the spectacular progress of 2004/2005[8]. In Germany the state of North Rhine Westphalia has seen an impressive 20% drop in road deaths in the first half of 2006 compared to the same period in 2005. This has also been attributed to the implementation of best practice as set out in the EC Recommendation[9]. In the area of drink driving Switzerland has taken on the suggestions of the EC Recommendation. Here the number of road deaths decreased by an estimated 20% from 2004 to 2005[10]. In France improved speed management also taking up best practice set out by the EC Recommendation has contributed to about 75% of the massive overall reduction in fatal accidents between 2002 and 2005[11].

As Germany prepares to take up the Presidency on the 1st January 2007, the road safety community has high expectations of the country taking a leading role in the field of road safety policy. *"Germany with its higher than average performance should encourage other EU countries to follow suit on road safety. Their Presidency of the EU is a real chance for the country to take a leadership role as the EU is forging ahead on a number of road safety issues. Binding EU legislation on traffic law enforcement should be placed at the top of the German EU Presidency's New Year's Resolutions for 2007"* says Jörg Beckmann, Director the European Transport Safety Council.

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Notes to Editors:

(1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), founded in 1993 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 36 national and international organisations concerned with road safety from across Europe.

(2) ETSC Memorandum to the German Presidency 2006. www.etsc.be

(3) European Commission Consultation "Respecting the Rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU" (European Commission 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/library/consultations/consultation_paper_enforcement_20060411.pdf

(4) Position of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) on "Respecting the Rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU" (2006) www.etsc.be. See also position of TISPOL European Traffic Police Network www.tispol.org

(5) EC Recommendation on Enforcement (2004) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=32004H0345&model=guicheti

(6) ICF Consulting 2003. Cost Benefit Analysis of Road Safety Improvements. Final Report London UK

(7) ETSC 2006. Traffic Law Enforcement Across the EU: An Overview
http://www.etsc.be/documents/Traffic_Law_Enforcement_in_the_EU_An_Overview_May_2006_ETSC.pdf

(8) In the Netherlands non-compliant behaviours such as speeding (by 16 km/h and more), drink driving (up to 1.3‰) and the non-use of seat belts went down significantly over these two years, accounting for the survival of an estimated extra 40 people. SWOV assumes that this success will be of a permanent nature, provided that the efforts concerning enforcement and information maintain at least the same level. SWOV De essentie van de daling in het aantal verkeersdoden. SWOV, 2006

(9) Innenministerium Nord Rhein Westfalen http://www.im.nrw.de/pm/070806_932.html

(10) In Switzerland, preliminary findings show that one of the main reasons for this is an increase in enforcement activities as well as a change in driver behaviour. Alcohol-related deaths decreased in 2005 by 23% and a further 38% drop (preliminary result) for the first half of 2006. On 1st January 2005, the legal BAC limit was reduced from 0.8 mg/ml to 0.5 mg/ml and random breath testing was introduced.www.bfu.ch

(11) Observatoire national interministériel de sécurité routière, 2006
Impact du contrôle sanction automatisé sur la sécurité routière (2003-2005)