European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

9 June 2006

EU Ministers call for Commission to Act on Road Safety

The European Transport Safety Council[1] welcomes the call made today by EU Transport Ministers for greater action on road safety. The Ministers were reacting to the Commissions mid term review of the third Road Safety Action Programme[2] (Road Safety: a shared responsibility), and have echoed ETSC's own call for action[3] with their response.

The Commission's mid term review was not accompanied by any of the long awaited legislative proposals despite its acknowledgement that more needs to be done to achieve the Community's road safety target. The Council of Ministers have therefore requested action on a wide range of road safety related areas including action to:

1. Improve drivers' abilities
2. Protect vulnerable road users
3. Improve the safety of road infrastructure
4. Enhance Cross boarder enforcement of traffic laws
5. Improve Vehicle technologies
6. Elaborate joint road safety campaigns
7. Engage all stakeholders on road safety, including NGOs
8. Raise public awareness of the risks on the road.

Some press reports in the lead up to the Ministers meeting had suggested that some Member States were reticent about proposing too many actions[4]. However, the breadth of the call to action by the Ministers demonstrates their commitment to road safety. The priority afforded to the issue of road safety by the Austrian presidency has therefore paid dividends[5].

Since publishing the mid term review the Commission has launched public consultations on possible legislative proposals[6]. We now wait to see if the Commission can quickly adopt proposals that respond to the Ministers' call, allowing the Finnish to continue the road safety work during their forthcoming presidency.

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Notes to Editors:

(1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes and casualties in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. It brings together 34 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

(2) For the EC press release including links to the Communication see: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/202&type=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=en .

(3) For an ETSC Briefing on the review see www.etsc.be/briefings and for the press release see: http://www.etsc.be/documents/Mid%20Term%20review%20press%20release.prn.pdf

(4) For example see the article in the Times at: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,173-2185685,00.html

(5) The Austrian presidency had set road safety as a priority of their Presidency including dedicating the informal meeting of transport ministers to the topic when they met in Bregenz in March.

(6) The Commission has undertaken public consultations on draft proposals for a package of measures improving infrastructure safety (see: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/library/consultations/consultation_paper_infrastr_safety_20060411.pdf) as well as a draft proposal for the retrofitting of blind angle mirrors to heavy vehicles (see: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/library/consultations/consultation_paper_blind_spot_20060411.pdf).

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