European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

European Parliament decides against improving road safety

5 June 2007, Brussels **- The Transport Committee of the European Parliament rejected today the European Commission's proposal on road infrastructure safety management. Citing, among other reasons, their wish to avoid additional bureaucratic constraints for the Member States, the overwhelming majority of Committee members voted against the legislation aiming to enhance and extend safety standards throughout the EU.**

Requiring Member States to adopt guidelines for infrastructure safety management, the proposal had the potential of saving 7,000 lives every year in the EU, according to Commission estimates. Driven by this goal, the Commission made in October 2006 a legislative proposal on the four most important infrastructure safety instruments, leaving the details of their implementation to Member States. The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)[(1)] criticised this approach at the time, saying that stringent infrastructure management standards in all Member States would have made an impact in countries where road safety levels were below average[(2)]. Nevertheless, despite the proposal's weaknesses, it was a step in the right direction.

Today's decision of the Parliament's Transport Committee has however dashed any hopes for even such moderate rules to be adopted. Many Member States have thus been given plenty of rope by the highest elected EU body to continue to disregard their obligation towards their citizens in keeping road infrastructure safe during many years to come.

"The European Parliament has deliberately chosen not to demonstrate leadership on this issue of extreme importance which affects virtually every EU citizen," said Jörg Beckmann, ETSC Executive Director. *"If the EU is serious about halving yearly road deaths by 2010, it must exploit all policy instruments available. The EU's Common Transport Policy has suffered a heavy blow today due to the lack of political wisdom, resolve and responsibility on the part of the European Parliament."*

For more information please go to www.etsc.be/PIN or contact ETSC Head of Communications, Franziska Achterberg at franziska.achterberg@etsc.be tel. +32 2 230 4106.

Notes to 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 37 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See www.etsc.be

(2) See ETSC press release http://www.etsc.be/documents/ETSC_NewsRelease_infrastruc_rearviewmirrors.pdf