ETSC Memorandum

to the German Presidency on the EU Road Safety Policy

January 07

Strong German leadership needed for safer roads

This Memorandum will briefly outline ETSC's priorities for the German Presidency and suggest how the Presidency may react to the important new dossiers on the EU road safety agenda.

ETSC[1] welcomes the setting of road safety as a priority on the transport policy agenda during the German Presidency. This Presidency of the EU is a real chance for Germany to take a leadership role as the EU is forging ahead on a number of safety issues. The policy agenda on road safety set by the European Commission needs to be followed up vigorously by the Presidency.

The German Presidency should therefore:

Support binding legislation on traffic law enforcement

Binding EU legislation on traffic law enforcement should be placed at the top of the German EU Presidency's agenda. The German Presidency coincides with the European Commissions' consultation "Respecting the rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU". The Commission picked out the failure of the Member States to progress on an EU wide introduction of best enforcement methods. The Presidency should therefore support the European Commission in its preparation of a Directive that should include minimal requirements in the area of enforcement of road traffic law. This is necessary in order to ensure that all Member States achieve high standards in enforcement in the areas of speeding, drink driving and seat belt use according to the best practice set out in the EC Recommendation on enforcement. Binding legislation on raising the quality and quantity of enforcement of these rules could help prevent 14,000 deaths by 2010, according to European Commission estimates.

Promote eSafety technologies

ETSC particularly welcomes the German commitment to support the development of eSafety technologies. The German Presidency should focus Member States' efforts to promote the use of in-vehicle enforcement technologies such as seat belt reminders, alcohol interlocks and intelligent speed assistance (ISA). This will ensure that technologies address the three main causes of road deaths in the EU: speed, alcohol and non use of seat belts. The Presidency should therefore promote high and uniform standards for these technologies.

Provide for effective legislation on safer road infrastructure

Besides the vehicle and the driver, infrastructure is the third pillar of any comprehensive road safety work. Road infrastructure improvements can make a significant contribution towards reducing the frequency and seriousness of road traffic accidents. ETSC urges the German Presidency to turn the draft Directive on road infrastructure into EU law without further delay. ETSC also urges the German Presidency to push for an amendment to the draft proposal which would require safety impact assessment, safety audits, network safety management and safety inspections to be a condition for all EU-funded infrastructure. This would avoid limiting the scope of the proposed Directive to the trans-European networks which are limited in extension and already relatively safe.

Strengthen the new driving licence network (RESPER)

The Driving Licence Directive, which was adopted in December, will increase the European minimum standards in driver licensing, especially among novice drivers, and improve cross-border enforcement of traffic laws, as well as the fight against fraudulent access to driving licences. Ahead of its implementation date, the German Presidency should restart the process of developing the Driving Licence Network to facilitate the sharing of information between authorities and the fight against driving licence tourism.

As part of this, the German Presidency should also promote the dissemination of Best Practice between Member States regarding driver training. For example the introduction of the multiple-phase driving licence, or the rehabilitation model to help recovering their licence those who lose it due to repeated alcohol or drug offences, could help improve the safety of these high-risk drivers.

Note to editors:
(1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), founded in 1993, is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 36 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

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