European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE
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Finland's Presidency of the EU: Road Safety Champion to take the helm

As Finland prepares to take up the Presidency on the 1 July 2006, the road safety community expects the country to play a leading role in the field of road safety policy. *"Finland has a higher than average performance in road safety compared with other Member States. Also, it ranks number one in the field of traffic law enforcement*[(1)]*. This is a real chance for the country to take a leadership role in several areas of road safety".* says Ellen Townsend, Head of ETSC's Enforcement Programme..[(2)]

In its Memorandum[(3)] ETSC invites the Finnish Presidency to push for the introduction of legislation in the field of cross-border enforcement, and to help transform the Commission Recommendation on traffic law enforcement into a Directive . ETSC also hopes that Finland will support the introduction of automotive technologies that have a real safety focus such as Intelligent Speed Adaptation, seat belt reminders and alcohol interlocks. As the first country to have signed the Memorandum of Understanding on eCall and implement this system, Finland should raise the need for the deployment of eCall in all Member States.

But even more urgently, Finland will be expected to ensure that the European Commission tables a Directive as soon as possible on infrastructure safety which introduces defined and harmonized common infrastructure safety management standards in the Member States. *"Stringent legislation is needed in order to accelerate progress on road infrastructure safety beyond what national governments are already committing themselves to"* [(4)]*,* says Jörg Beckmann, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council.

With less than four years to 2010, the chances of the European Union achieving its 50% road death reduction target are slim. Europe has so far only reached about 13% of its target of halving road deaths by 2010. Hence, assuming a similar type of effort, it is likely that only a 40% reduction will be eventually achieved. As the Mid-term review of the 3rd Road Safety Action Programme was not accompanied by the long awaited legislative proposals, this is a crucial period for Finnish led action.

For more information please contact ETSC Programme Officer Ellen Townsend, programme@etsc.be, tel. +32 2 230 4106 or visit www.etsc.be.

Notes to Editors:

(1) “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

(2) 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 34 national and international organisations in membership, leading transport safety experts from across Europe.

(3) ETSC Memorandum to the Finnish Presidency on the European road safety policy, www.etsc.be

(4) ETSC Response to the Consultation on Infrastructure Safety, www.etsc.be