

NEWS RELEASE

SPAIN BECOMES FOURTH FASTEST IMPROVING EU COUNTRY

Road safety progress decreased death rate by half

22 June 2009, Brussels – Spain and Latvia have been recognised with the “2009 Road Safety PIN Award” at the 3rd ETSC⁽¹⁾ Road Safety PIN⁽²⁾ Conference in Brussels today for their sustained successful strategies in reducing road deaths. Since 2001 Spain has seen a rapid improvement of road safety, with deaths down by 44%, which is the fourth best progress in the EU. During this time road mortality has been halved: from 136 deaths per million inhabitants in 2001 to 68 in 2009, below the EU average of 79.

As revealed today by the latest PIN Annual Report⁽³⁾ best results over the period 2001-2008 have been achieved by the EU countries with a medium level of safety. Luxembourg, France and Portugal, already the top three for their progress up to 2007, keep their leading position with outstanding reductions of 49%, 48% and 47% respectively up to 2008⁽⁴⁾. Spain and Latvia are catching up with reduction of more than 43%. Belgium with 38% resumed in 2008 the good progress it was making early in the decade. Good progress was also made by countries with a longer tradition of road safety such as Germany (-36%), Switzerland (-34 %), the Netherlands (-31%) and Sweden (-28%). In Romania and Bulgaria, however, the number of road deaths was higher in 2008 than in 2001. Slovakia and Poland have not made any substantial progress⁽⁵⁾.

Spain's success was helped by a number of very effective legislative and regulatory measures recently adopted in the country. In 2006 a penalty point system was introduced, and already one year later seat belt wearing rates increased from 74% to 85% on front seats and from 51% to 64% on rear seats. In 2007, 4.5 million random breath tests were carried out, compared to 2 million in 2003. Drivers tested positively for alcohol decreased from 4.3% in 2003 to 1.9% in 2007. By June 2009 as many as 800 speed cameras have been installed along the national road network, and their number is planned to grow up to 2,000 units by 2012.

“The adoption of the EU common target and the 3rd Road Safety Action Plan have been the tipping point for the adoption of the Spanish strategy,” said Pere Navarro, General Director of the General Directorate for Traffic (DGT) at the Ministry of Interior. *“In 2004 the first multi-annual Road Safety Plan was launched in Spain, aiming at reducing the road toll by 40% in five years (2004-2008), in line with the EU 50% target. Further progress is needed, however, particularly in enhancing the safety of motorcyclists and cutting drink driving. We are now looking in the direction of other countries for best practices in the framework of our preparatory discussions on our next Strategic Plan 2010 to 2015.”*

“Spain has proved yet again that impressive progress in road safety can be achieved no matter how low you start,” said ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso. *“While ten years ago this big country was one of the EU safety laggards, today thanks to its determination and focus on people's safety it is fast closing the gap with the EU safety champions – Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and Germany.”*

On 25 June ETSC and the Spain's General Directorate for Traffic are holding a PIN Talk in Madrid which will focus on the challenges the country faces in road safety and its progress in dealing with them.

You can download the 3rd PIN Annual Report at www.etsc.eu/PIN-publications.php. For more information please contact PIN Programme Manager Graziella Jost, graziella.jost@etsc.eu, mob. +32 (0)4 98 51 65 62 or ETSC Communications Officer Evgueni Pogorelov, evgueni.pogorelov@etsc.eu, tel. +32 (0)2 230.41.06.

Notes to Editors:

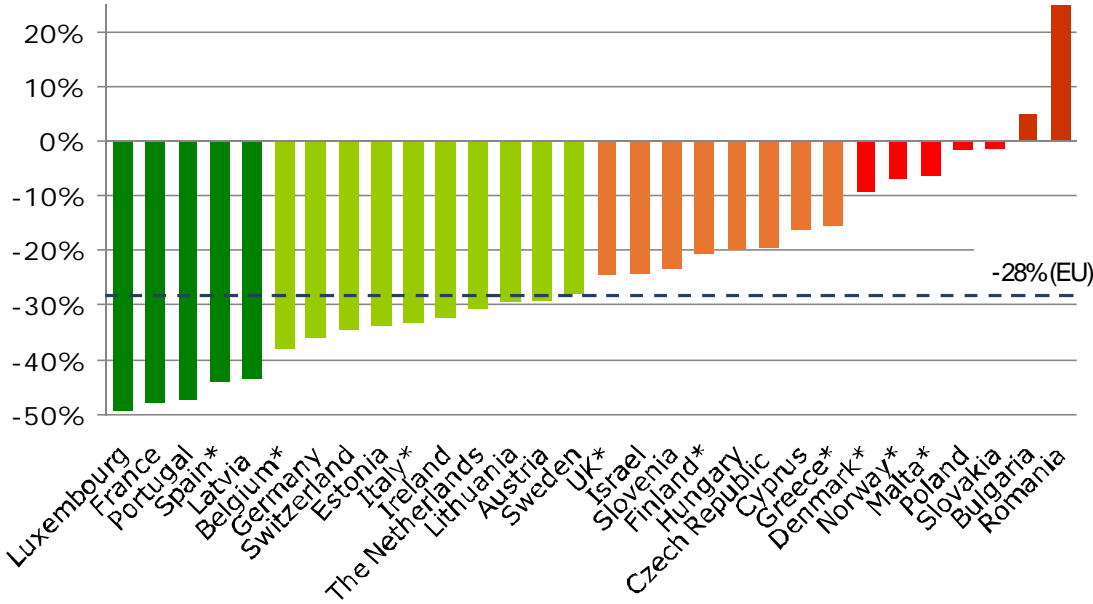
(1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of the number and severity of transport crashes in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 42 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu

(2) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme was launched in June 2006 to compare country road safety performances. It currently includes 30 countries. www.etsc.eu/PIN.

(3) You can download the 3rd PIN Annual Report and the Methodological Note at www.etsc.eu/PIN-publications.php.
 Some 39,000 people were killed in road collisions in 2008 in the EU27, 15,400 less than in 2001 but still far from the 27,000 deaths limit which the EU set for itself in its Road Safety Target for 2010. The average annual reduction since 2001 has been only 4.4% instead of the 7.4% needed. This could delay the EU in reaching the 2010 target until 2017.

(4) In 2007, the first PIN Award was given to Cécile Petit, Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety in France. In 2008, the second PIN Award was given to Mário Lino, Minister of Public Works, Transport and Communications of Portugal. On the 22 June 2009, a joint PIN Award 2009 was given to Justo Zambrana Pineda, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Spain and Nils Freivalds, State Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Latvia.

(5) Fig.1 Percentage change in road deaths between 2001 and 2008



* 2008 provisional figures or national estimates based on provisional figures as final figures for 2008 were not yet available at the time of going to print.