

NEWS RELEASE

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600 CHILD LIVES COULD BE SAVED ON EU ROADS

9 February 2009, Brussels – Some 18,500 children have been killed in road collisions over the past ten years in the EU-27, around 1,200 of them in 2007 alone. At least half of those deaths, 600, could have been avoided, had the level of child road safety been the same across Europe as in Sweden. These and other results from the latest ETSC⁽¹⁾ PIN country ranking⁽²⁾ on child road safety have been released today. In the past, EU legislation, including the Directive on seat belts and child safety restraints has played a key role in improving child safety. New measures such as the “Intelligent Transport Systems” Action Plan may further contribute.

Road safety of children has improved considerably in all 30 countries covered by PIN over the past decade⁽³⁾. **Portugal** achieved the best annual average reduction in child road mortality of 15%. **France, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ireland and Belgium** also rank highly with reductions close to 10%. **Lithuania, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Slovakia, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands** follow with better than average reductions. However, **Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Czech Republic, Greece and Romania** performed poorly with average annual reductions of less than 5%.

As a result of this uneven rate of improvement, disparities between countries remain strikingly high: children in **Lithuania** have a 7 times higher probability of being killed in road traffic than children in **Sweden**, the best performing country in terms of road mortality of children. Another comparison shows that, while on average in the EU every tenth child death after the first birthday results from a road collision, this share varies from 5% in **Norway and Sweden**, to almost 20% in **Luxembourg and Slovenia**.

Still European children fare better than the rest of the EU population. There are 16 road-related child deaths per million inhabitants, compared to 95 for the rest of the population. Also the annual average reduction in child road mortality in the EU-27 over the past decade was 7%, compared to 4.3% for the rest of the population. However, in **Italy, Greece and Hungary**, the opposite is true and road safety of the population aged 15 and above has improved faster than road safety of children.

“Yet child casualties have been going down not only because of improved safety but also due to reduced exposure to risk as they are driven to school and spend less time out on the streets playing. Cycling and walking should instead be promoted, but it should be made safe,” said Ellen Townsend, ETSC Policy Director. *“In our Blueprint for the EU’s 4th Road Safety Action Programme, we’ve proposed a separate 60% reduction target for child road deaths in the EU between 2010 and 2020.”*⁽⁴⁾

“It is estimated that every euro spent on a child safety seat saves around €30 on health care costs,” said Morag MacKay, Programme Manager, European Child Safety Alliance. *“Our research shows that child restraint prices range greatly across Europe. We therefore urge Member States to apply the lowered VAT rate. Lower prices could increase affordability of child restraint equipment and reduce the use of second hand and old design seats.”*

You can download the complete Road Safety PIN Flash 12 at www.etsc.be/PIN-publications
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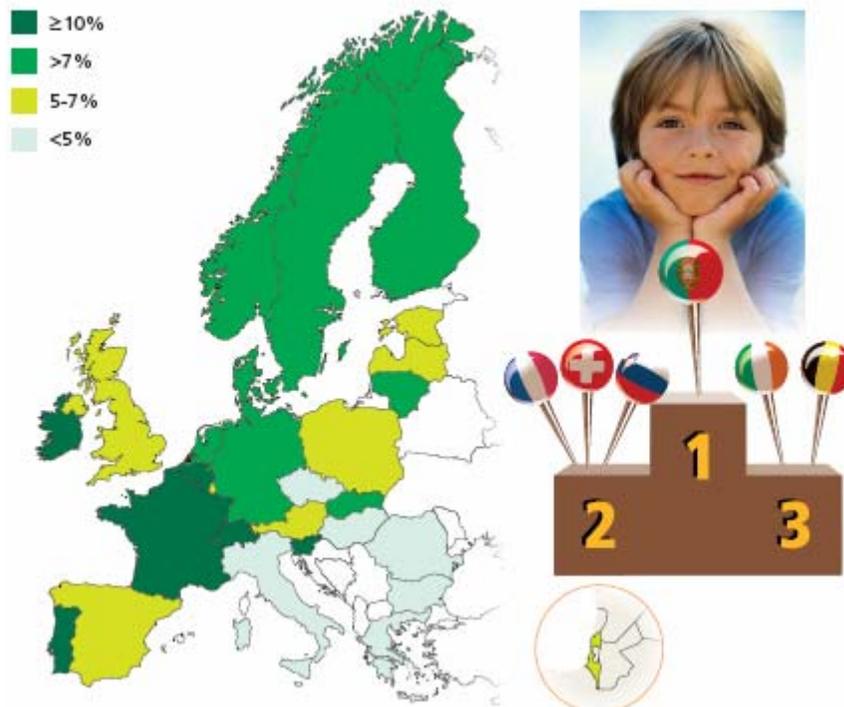
Notes to Editors:

(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 41 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.be.

(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.be/PIN. You can download the complete Road Safety PIN Flash 12 “**Reducing Child Deaths on European Roads**”, February 2008, at www.etsc.be/PIN-publications.php. The full dataset is available in the PIN Flash 12 Background tables. The Background Tables and Methodological Note can be downloaded from the same address.

(3) Average annual percentage reduction in road mortality among children aged 0-14 over the past decade (1998 to 2007)

Except BG (2001-2007), LT (2004-2007), RO (2000-2007), SK (2003-2007)



(4) As population forecasts predict that the proportion of the EU population aged 0-14 years is likely to continue falling steadily in the next decade, ETSC argues that a single target for all ages would be less challenging in respect of children than other age groups. In its Blueprint for the EU's 4th Road Safety Action Programme 2010-2020, ETSC therefore recommends the EU to adopt a target of a 60% reduction between 2010 and 2020 in child deaths on the roads, compared to a 40% overall reduction.