European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Next Steps on EU Road Safety Priorities under Hungarian Presidency

10 January 2011, Brussels **– The Hungarian Presidency of the EU comes at an important time for road safety both at national and European level. In its Memorandum[1] to the Presidency, ETSC[2] urges the Presidency to keep up the strong momentum on the Cross Border Enforcement Directive. The year 2011 also kicks off the start of the European Commission's "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020"[3] and the new 2020 target to reduce road deaths by 50%.**

Hungary has seen a reduction of 34% of road deaths between 2001 and 2009, from 1,239 deaths in 2001 down to 822 in 2009. Hungary has moved from being an underperforming country to an average performer and is now 15th out of 27th in terms of road deaths per million population[4]. Three elements are cited for this improvement: one is introducing owner liability in following up speeding offences, secondly introducing "zero tolerance" for drink drivers and thirdly refreshing the penalty point system. Hungary has not rested on its laurels, and recently adopted a new National Road Safety Programme (2011-2013) with a new long term target for the decrease in the number of deaths by 50%, in line with the EU target.

Hungary takes the Presidency helm with the background of the Transport Council Conclusions of the 2nd of December on road safety. Ministers endorsed the new ambitious target of halving road traffic deaths by 2020 again by 50%. The Transport Ministers also identified key areas including work related road safety, harmonisation of traffic rules and looked forward to the next steps of the European Commission "to develop coherent and cost-effective action plans for each of the strategies in order to implement the road safety policy orientations 2011-2020". Hungary will preside over the EU Presidency when Vice-President Kallas presents the White Paper on Transport Policy to 2020. ETSC hopes the Hungarian Presidency will work towards reaching a strong response from the Council placing road safety as a high level objective within the White Paper.

The recent conclusions on a political agreement on the Cross Border Enforcement Directive[5] reached under the Belgian EU Presidency on the 2nd of December was a significant step towards the adoption of the Directive. The Directive would introduce a system of exchanging information to enable the follow up of road safety related traffic offences committed by non-resident drivers. ETSC supports enforcement as a means to prevent collisions from happening by way of persuading drivers to comply with the safety rules.

"ETSC has high expectations for the Hungarian Presidency following on from the progress made by the Belgian Presidency. Significant steps were made on the Cross Border Enforcement Directive[6] said ETSC's Executive Director Antonio Avenoso. "We hope the opportunity that the new year brings will be used to kick start fresh actions to reach the new 2020 target of saving lives on Europe's roads."

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Notes to Editors:

(1) Memorandum to the Hungarian EU Presidency

(2) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 43 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See www.etsc.eu.

(3) EC Road Safety Policy Orientations

(4) ETSC (2010). Road Safety Target in Sight: Making up for Lost Time, ETSC 4th Road Safety PIN Report.

(5) Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council facilitating cross-border enforcement in the field of road safety 2nd of December 2010

(6) ETSC Position on Cross Border Enforcement