European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Towards a Vision Zero for Road Safety in Europe

***28 March 2011, Brussels* – "We welcome what may be a new era in European road safety. We support the European Commission's approach to include safety as an underlying theme of the White Paper on Competitive and Sustainable Transport," declared ETSC[1] Executive Director Antonio Avenoso after the adoption of the European Commission's *Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system*. "It is encouraging that in several aspects the White Paper goes further than last year's Road Safety Policy Orientations."**

Including a 'Vision Zero[2]' for road safety is a new and potentially ground-breaking goal for 2050, complementing the renewed target of halving road deaths by 2020[3,4]. ETSC also urges the Commission to accelerate its work on a common definition of serious road injuries and adopt a target for reducing these. For every road death in the EU, at least 44 road injuries are recorded, eight of which are classified as serious.[5] "Highlighting behavioural risk factors such as driving distraction, or driving under the influence of drugs and medicines, shows insight on behalf of the Commission, but we warn that one of the most widely recognised risky behaviours – drink driving – must not be overlooked," Mr. Avenoso added. "Measures to address drink driving, such as a lower limit for novice and professional drivers and fitting of alcohol interlocks, would save many lives."[6]

ETSC is delighted the European Commission recognised that: "reducing speed is an extremely effective way to reduce not only the risk of collisions but also fuel consumption," particularly as this approach enjoys the support of the European public.[7] Promoting eco-driving and in-vehicle systems that 'provide real-time information on prevailing speed limits' will also contribute to improving compliance with speed limits. "Europe needs action to tackle speeding. This is the number one killer on Europe's roads. The European Commission shied away from recommending uniform maximum speed limits for our roads. While the White Paper mentions the need to harmonise and deploy road safety technologies, we consider the Commission should have shown stronger leadership in promoting Intelligent Speed Assistance Systems," Mr. Avenoso explained. Reducing speeds across the EU by just 1 km on average could save 2,200 lives every year.[8]

"Hard work will be required to achieve this ambitious new Vision Zero goal. ETSC will look forward to the [European] Commission's implementation of the new measures included in the White Paper," Mr. Avenoso concluded.

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Notes to editors:

[1] ETSC is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. The 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. www.etsc.eu

[2] Vision zero – An ethical approach to safety and mobility.

[3] Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

[4] The ETSC response to the Road Safety Policy Orientations can be found here.

[5] ETSC Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) 4th Report available here.

[6] Further information can be found here: http://www.etsc.eu/PIN.php

[7] Flash Eurobarometer no. 312 "Future of Transport" available here.

[8]The ETSC policy on speed management in Europe can be found here.