



NEWS RELEASE

Adoption of the Cross-Border Enforcement Directive Should Move Ahead despite News of UK Decision to Delay Opt-In

4 March 2011, Brussels – “We urge EU Transport ministers and MEPs to continue with the adoption of the Cross-Border Enforcement Directive¹, despite the decision that the UK will delay their opt-in procedure,” said Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)². “The situation is less than ideal, but the Council and European Parliament must carefully weigh up the EU-wide road safety benefits of the Directive and adopt this legislation, thus addressing a long-standing problem of enforcing traffic laws on non-residents³,” he added.

According to ETSC, the UK decision is regrettable, but the government is within its legal rights to delay their opt-in. ETSC strongly believes the time to act is now: across the EU foreign drivers make up only 5% of traffic but 15% of speeding offences, thus renewing the urge that EU decision-makers remedy this situation by adopting the Directive without delay. The Directive will bring significant improvements for road safety in the EU and will enhance the likelihood that EU citizens travel safely across the Union and respect traffic rules⁴.

The decision of the UK to delay its opt-in implies that UK citizens will be exempt from this important new road safety law. Fellow Europeans may also be affected by the failure of the UK citizens to comply with traffic regulations when travelling abroad.

Ireland also has to formally opt-in to be covered by the new Directive and ETSC is looking forward to a positive decision coming from the new government in Dublin.

Background

The main objective of the new Directive is to introduce a system of exchanging information to enable the follow up of road safety related traffic offences committed by non-resident drivers. The swift adoption of the Directive would introduce equal treatment of foreign and resident drivers and most importantly, save lives on Europe’s roads. The Council of EU transport ministers reached a political agreement on the Directive in December 2010, agreement which was approved also by the United Kingdom. As the legal basis for the Cross-Border Enforcement Directive is art. 87.2 – dealing with police cooperation rather than transport policy – the United Kingdom and Ireland are not automatically covered by the new Directive, but have to formally opt-in to be bound by its provisions.

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¹ EC proposal for a [Directive](#) facilitating the cross-border enforcement of traffic offences. ETSC position paper on the Proposal is available [here](#).

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. www.etsc.eu

³ According to the EC impact assessment study, the Directive would save between 350 and 400 road deaths a year. *Impact assessment on road safety enforcement and cross-border cooperation*, Ecorys, March 2007.

⁴ See also:

ETSC 2010 [4th PIN Report "Road Safety Target in Sight: Making up for lost time](#)
ETSC, 2007. [Traffic Law Enforcement across the EU: Time for a Directive](#)
ETSC, 2007. [Raising Compliance with Road Safety Law, 1st PIN Road Safety Report](#)
ETSC, 2006. [Traffic Law Enforcement across the EU – An overview](#)
TISPOL European Traffic Police Network - <https://www.tispol.org/>