

NEWS RELEASE

EU road safety plan behind schedule –

5,000 more deaths should have been prevented in 2006

Brussels, 10 October 2007 - Just three Member States will achieve the EU target of halving road deaths by 2010 at the current rate of advance, according to the latest ETSC⁽¹⁾ PIN⁽²⁾ study. The EU-25 as a whole will be able to reduce the yearly number of road deaths to 25,000 only by 2015⁽³⁾ and not by 2010 as foreseen in its road safety strategy⁽⁴⁾.

Some 39,200 people were killed on EU roads in 2006 – almost 5,000 more than would have been the case if the EU had moved ahead in accordance with the 2010 road safety target. An annual reduction of at least 7.4% is needed to halve road deaths between 2001 and 2010. Up to 2006 however, the European Union's yearly reduction in road deaths is only 4.9% on average.

Luxembourg, France and Portugal are the only countries which have been able to reduce road deaths by over 8% yearly. Belgium is also very close to the threshold and will reach the 2010 target if efforts are stepped up. At the other end, East European countries have largely been holding the EU back. Lithuania, Hungary and Estonia have actually seen the number of road deaths increase in 2006 compared with 2001, while only a slight reduction was registered in Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. The UK is the only large Western European country among the last third of the 29 surveyed⁽⁵⁾.

The experience of the best performing nations suggests that the key to their success has been their unrelenting struggle against major road offences (drink driving, speeding and non-use of seat belts) and their investments in infrastructure improvements. For instance, the legal BAC (blood alcohol content) was lowered and the severity of sanctions increased in Luxembourg, Switzerland and Cyprus. The deployment of automatic speed control cameras played a major role in reducing speed-related accidents in France and is now copied by a number of other countries. Apart from stricter law enforcement, Portugal has also stepped up investments in infrastructure, transferring high speed traffic from rural roads to newly built motorways.

Paulo Marques, Director of the Portuguese National Road Safety Authority, said: *"In Portugal, people are well informed about road safety and levels of injuries and deaths. They have accepted the recent road safety measures very well and they will accept even more drastic steps. The public, much as they are reluctant to change their own behaviour in traffic, want the government to do more about road safety."*

"The first five years of the road death reduction programme have demonstrated mixed results," PIN Programme Manager Graziella Jost said. *"A lot of efficient instruments have been developed and an overall positive trend has been noted in many countries. However, the net results are disappointing as only few countries are progressing fast enough to reach the EU target at a national level. We need a new, fresh impetus in all countries if we want to accelerate progress during the four remaining years of the target period. Only concerted and lasting efforts that are supported by the public and politicians alike can lead to success."*

For more information please contact:

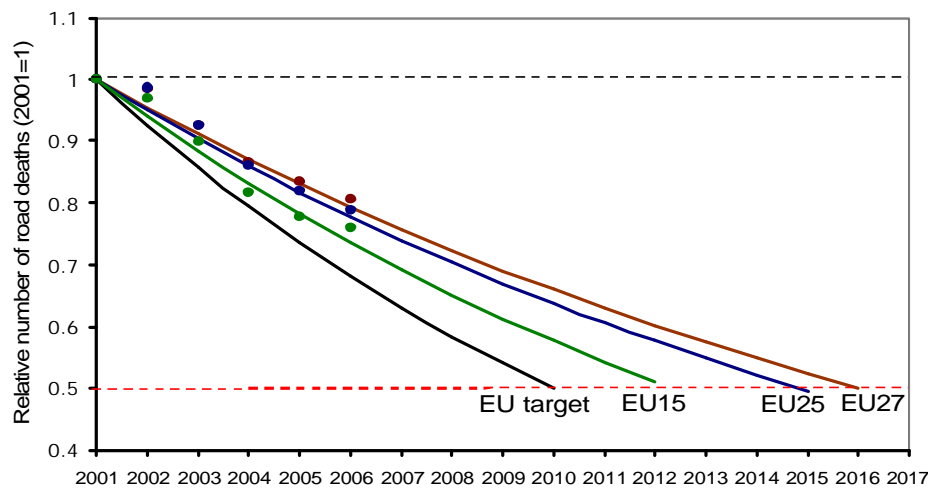
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Notes to Editors:

(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. Founded in 1993, it seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. ETSC brings together 37 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See www.etsc.be.

(2) Started in June 2006, the ETSC's Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) is a new policy instrument which compares Member States' performance in key road safety areas. By comparing Member States' performance, it serves to identify and promote Best Practice in Europe. Learn more about the PIN Programme under www.etsc.be/PIN.

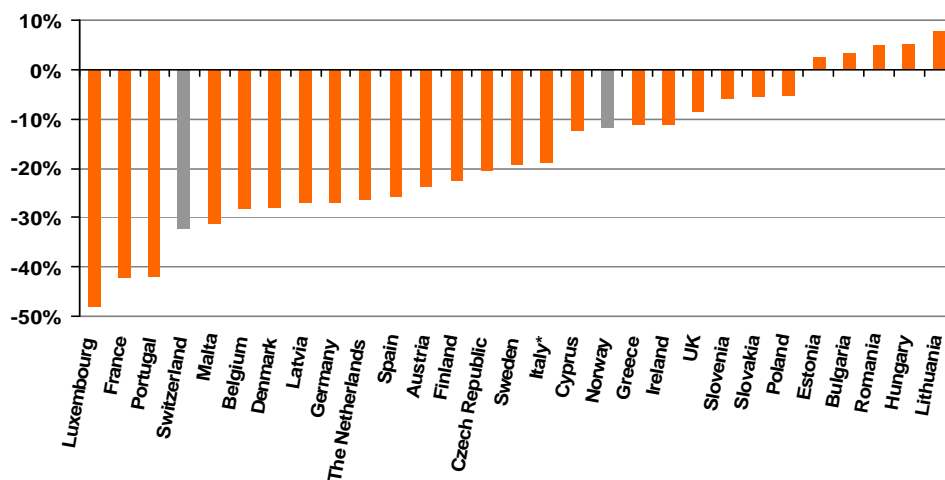
(3)



Trends in road deaths in the EU-15, EU-25 and EU-27, based on developments in 2001-2006. Source: CARE and national data

(4) 3rd Road Safety Action Programme. Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility. Commission Communication COM (2003)311 final

(5)



*Italy 2005

Percentage changes in road deaths between 2001 and 2006. Source: CARE and national data