



NEWS RELEASE

Catalan Authorities Debate the Use of Alcohol Interlock Devices

31 May 2012, Barcelona – The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)¹ held its 23rd 'Safe and Sober' seminar in Barcelona today, Thursday 31 May. The seminar, hosted in cooperation with the Generalitat of Catalonia, is part of the ETSC's campaign on drink driving.

Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director, said: "About 2% of the kilometres driven in the EU every year are driven with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level higher than the legal limit. Yet the European Commission estimated 25% of the road deaths in the EU are alcohol related. ETSC estimated that approximately 6500 road deaths could have been prevented in 2010 alone if all drivers had respected the BAC limits in their respective countries. This is why we must look at all solutions available to reduce drink driving, one of the most dangerous behaviours on our roads. The purpose of today's seminar is to look at measures such as alcohol interlocks that can be deployed in the rehabilitation of offenders, or by employers to reduce alcohol-related risk among the employees who drive as part of their work." Experts presented also the dimension of the drink driving problem in Spain and Catalonia, as well as the enforcement and judicial approaches to tackling drink driving.

The audience also had the opportunity to find out how alcohol interlocks are used in other countries. The seminar was an opportunity to exchange experiences in the use of alcohol interlocks both as a rehabilitation method – as in the French example presented by Dr. Charles Mercier Guyon – and as a preventative method used to reduce risk by public authorities – illustrated in Finnish public transport by Kimmo Pylväs – and private companies – illustrated in the Stockholm taxis by Tanja Illic.

Background

The 'Safe and Sober' seminars, which are supported by Volvo Trucks and Alcohol Countermeasures System (ACS), are organised by the ETSC in selected European countries. The purpose of the seminars is to bring together road safety stakeholders, experts and organisations in order to raise awareness among employers of drink driving in the workplace, particularly in the commercial transport industry, and to explore measures to address this high risk behaviour. Further information on the ETSC's 'Safe and Sober' campaign is available at www.etsc.eu

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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 45 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu