VOICE

News release

Brussels, 22 March 2007

Targeting Speed: VOICE positive award goes to LeasePlan Nederland, negative award goes to Sixt Germany

Today the Vulnerable road users Organisations In Cooperation across Europe – VOICE – network presents its first awards focusing on speed. They identify and highlight two initiatives that could have positive and negative repercussions respectively on driving behaviour and the safety of all road users, including the most vulnerable amongst them.

The positive award goes to the car lease company *LeasePlan Nederland N.V.* for offering in-car assistance to keep safe speeds and distances as part of the *Belonitor* project (1). The negative award has been given to the car rental company *Sixt* in Germany for glamorising speed through one of its advertising posters (2).

The aim of the awards is to draw attention to the important role that can be played by the industry – including car lease and rental companies - in influencing road user behaviour. In this case, *LeasePlan Nederland* and *Sixt* find themselves on opposite ends of the road safety spectrum. On the one hand, *LeasePlan* has played an active part in promoting safe driving. The fundamental principle of the *Belonitor* project has been to encourage drivers not to speed or tailgate by monitoring and rewarding those who drive responsibly. On the other hand, *Sixt* has chosen to emphasise speeding in one of its advertising posters displaying the photo of a large car and a caption in German that could be roughly translated as: “There are many fast cars. Try overtaking a few”.

Speed is the leading killer on roads in Europe, according to the World Health Organisation (3). Génon Jensen, Executive Director for Health & Environment Alliance says: "WHO says estimates for the European Union (EU) indicate that reducing the average driving speed by only 3 km/h would mean 120,000 fewer crashes and 5,000 few deaths each year."

“Car rental and leasing companies are particularly well-placed to motivate people to drive less dangerously, and with company and rental cars making up a significant share of vehicles on EU roads they can do a lot,” said ETSC Executive Director Jörg Beckmann. “It is really inspiring to see pioneers like *LeasePlan* explore innovative ways to get the message across to their customers. If more rental and lease car drivers could fall back on new in-car technologies that assist them in driving safely, this would help a lot in bringing about their large-scale implementation.”

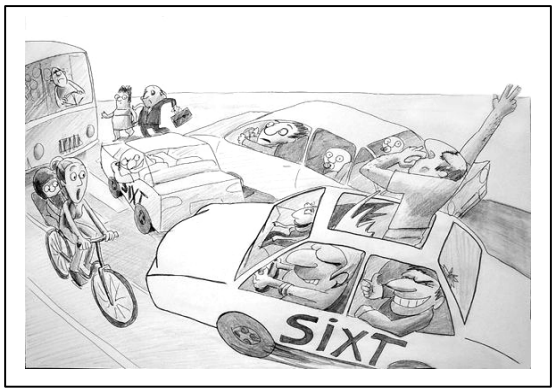
The awards take the form of original cartoons that feature in a VOICE award advertisement published today on the front page of the European Voice newspaper.

The Awards:

VOICE Positive Award



VOICE Negative Award



To request Electronic copies of these cartoons for publication contact Patricia Rio Branco at ETSC (see contact details below) for details.

Outline of VOICE

VOICE is another NGO network ensuring that usually neglected VOICEs are heard in the transport debate – those of vulnerable road users.

The VOICE coalition currently consists of:
AGE - European Older People's Platform
ANEC - European consumer voice in standardisation
BEUC - European Consumers' Organisation
ECSA - European Child Safety Alliance
EDF - European Disability Forum
EPHA - European Public Health Alliance
HEAL – Health and Environment Alliance
ETSC - European Transport Safety Council
T&E - European Federation for Transport and Environment
Voetgangersbeweging (Pedestrian Movement) / IFP – International Federation of Pedestrians

For more information see the VOICE web site on http://www.etsc.be/Voice.php

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Notes to Editors:

(1) The Belonitor project has been co-financed by the Dutch Department of Transport and LeasePlan Nederland. For more information, please see https://www.belonitor.com/belonitor/index.jsp (in Dutch) or http://www.wegennaardetoekomst.nl/data/docs/lib/1-1138801129.pdf in English.

(2) The Sixt advertising poster can be viewed on their website at http://ag.sixt.com/presse/downloadcenter/werbegalerie.php?sel_image=2006_011_0806

(3) For more information on road traffic accidents, please visit the WHO website at http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2004/20040406_2

The ETSC VOICE project is co-financed by the European Commission