European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

Transport Ministers Discuss Road Safety at Work

***24 June 2009, Brussels*– Transport Ministers meeting in Brussels today will discuss work related road safety at their Council Meeting. As well as declaring work-related road safety a priority for action at a national level, Spain has made it one of the priorities of its Presidency of the EU and will include this issue as an *Any Other Business* point at the Transport Council.**

The European Union has set itself the ambitious target of reducing the yearly number of road deaths by 50% by 2010 compared to 2001. The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) [(1)] found that as many as 34,900 people were killed in road collisions in 2009 in the EU27, still far more than the maximum of 27,000 which the EU set for 2010. Yet, road deaths have gone down by 36% in the EU27 between 2001 and 2009. The EU15 alone, for whom the EU's 2010 target was originally set, has achieved an impressive 42%[(2)]. The EU is due to come forward with a new European Action Programme for the period 2010 to 2020 in July. Transport Ministers should consider the need for new targets and measures which address driving for work and commuting to and from work for 2020. This would mobilise action at a joint European level to work further towards reducing the unacceptably high level of deaths and disabling injuries on Europe's roads.

Work-related road safety is an emerging source of concern throughout Europe, which needs renewed commitment from all actors involved. It is estimated that in the EU-15, 39% fatal work accidents are road traffic accidents (ESAW, 2005), and this number would even be considerably higher should accidents while commuting to and from work be included. Using the roads is a necessary part of everyone's daily business, very often and increasingly for work-related purposes. It is therefore unacceptable that an ordinary activity leads to an excessively high level of injury and death. It is extremely important to raise awareness about the role that governments and employers can take in developing new initiatives to address this situation.

At an EU level the European Commission should integrate specific measures focussing on reducing death and injury whilst driving for work in the next Community Health and Safety at Work Strategy due 2013 and the next Road Safety Action Programme due this July 2010. The EU should also ensure that employers are implementing the Directive 89/391/EEC to improve health and safety of workers by including risk of using a vehicle for work, both on-site and off-site, as part of their work risk assessments. All EU governments should follow the lead of countries such as the UK and Sweden and elaborate specific guidelines to help employers implement this Directive. Moreover governments themselves should lead by example and adopt work related road safety management programmes for government and public authority fleets including vehicle safety into public procurement.

Ministers will discuss this important issue just two weeks after ETSC's second country Seminar on "Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees" (PRAISE) [(3)], held in Barcelona. The PRAISE seminar[(4)] in Spain was an opportunity to discuss the work-related road safety situation in Spain and a number of other European Countries, and examine existing and possible future initiatives from governments and employers to secure better road safety standards at work. This event was organised in

cooperation with the Fundación MAPFRE and the Dirección General de Tráfico (DGT) of the Spanish Ministry of Interior under the auspices of the Spanish EU Presidency.

"ETSC is thrilled to work with Spain under their EU Presidency and hopes this will lead to further action at national and European level." said ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso. *"It is also hoped that the European Commission will consider this as one of the areas for priority in the new Road Safety Action Programme which is due to be published in July".*

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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. 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. See http://www.etsc.eu

(2) (ETSC (2010) 4th PIN Report, Road Safety Target in Sight: Making up for lost time. http://www.etsc.eu/documents/ETSC%20PIN%20Report%202010.pdf

(3) PRAISE is a 3 years projetc launched on 1st of May 2009 co-funded by the European Commission, the German Road Safety Council (DVR), the Swiss Council for Accident Prevention (bfu) and Fundaciòn MAPFRE.

(4) To view the programme: click here