

FACTS IN SUPPORT OF A MAXIMUM EU BLOOD ALCOHOL LIMIT

- Driving whilst under the influence of alcohol continues to be an important cause of road traffic crashes, contributing annually to at least 9000 fatalities on EU roads.
- At BAC levels between 0.5 to 0.8 pro mille, the risk of accident involvement for drivers in general is more than twice that of a sober driver. For some drivers the risk is more than ten times higher at 0.8 than at 0.5.
- There is wide agreement amongst medical and professional experts that a BAC of 0.5 pro mille is the highest level that should be permitted.
- Experience has shown that *without any changes in levels of enforcement* a change in the legal limit from 0.8 to 0.5 pro mille can reduce drinking and driving between those levels by up to 90 per cent
- Despite advice from governments that the safest option is not to drink and drive, many drivers still look to the legal limit for guidance about safe drinking and driving levels.
- Several EU countries still permit drinking and driving to levels of 0.8 pro mille: United Kingdom, Italy, Luxembourg and Ireland. Apart from Sweden, which has a limit of 0.2, the majority has set limits at 0.5 pro mille.
- EU surveys of driver attitudes to road safety have shown high levels of support for a common low limit.
- The need for a common EU blood alcohol limit has been accepted by the European Commission since 1988. The European Parliament has invited the Commission to introduce a new proposal.
- The added value of EU action in this area has been estimated at a saving of 1000 lives annually.
- The benefits far outweigh the costs.