European Transport Safety Council

NEWS RELEASE

ETSC Calls for Safer Driving for Work to be a Top Road Safety Priority in Greece

18 March 2011, Athens – **"Investing in road safety is a win-win for employers, it should be at the heart of every employers' business plan, especially in these times of tough economic crisis" said Ellen Townsend, ETSC[1] Policy Director during the third PRAISE country seminar held yesterday in Greece. The seminar brought together politicians as well as international and national experts who discussed how to improve work related road safety in Greece.**

The PRAISE seminar in Athens provided an opportunity to assess work-related road safety in Greece, and examine existing and possible future initiatives from governments and employers to secure better road safety standards at work. Work-related road safety is an emerging source of concern throughout Europe, requiring renewed commitment from all actors involved. It is estimated that in the EU-15, 39% fatal work collisions are road traffic collisions (ESAW, 2005), and this number would be considerably higher when collisions while commuting to and from work are included. With 129 road deaths per million population the overall number of deaths on Greek roads is considerably higher than the EU average. Over 1400 people died on Greek roads in 2009, amounting to a 23% reduction compared with 2001, which, although welcomed, remains below the average EU.[2]

The seminar concentrated on good practice examples from employers that decided to include road safety planning in their business plans and occupational health and safety policies. Dr. Will Murray, Research Director with Interactive Driving Systems, presented the driver training and risk assessment programme of Australian Roche Company as a good practice example. Dr. Murray's presentation was followed by the examples of companies operating in Greece, showcasing the rewards reaped by investing in company fleet safety management. Sarah Copsey of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work encouraged the audience to take further actions to improve work-related safety presenting an EU-wide selection of good practice cases. Peter Hartzell of the Swedish Standards Institute also encouraged Greek employers to adopt the upcoming ISO Standard 39001 on Work Related Road Safety.

Background

"Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees" (PRAISE) aims to increase road safety in the work context. It aims to "praise" good practices in order to help employers secure high road safety standards for their employees. In the framework of this project, ETSC is organising a series of country seminars in selected member states bringing together companies, fleet safety managers and the government and road safety experts.

The third country seminar in the series was organised in co-operation with the Panos Mylonas Road Safety Institute. The PRAISE project is co-funded by the European Commission, Fundacion MAPFRE, the German Road Safety Council (DVR) and the Swiss Council for Accident Prevention (bfu).

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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. www.etsc.eu

[2] 4th Road Safety PIN Report: Road Safety Target in Sight available here.

[3] To view the PRAISE Seminar programme click here.