NEWS RELEASE

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Moderating driving speeds – little progress but great potential

7 June 2007, Brussels **– The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)[1] is launching today its first Road Safety PIN[2] Report on "Raising Compliance with Road Safety Law" comparing 27 European countries' performance in road safety. The report includes rankings on the three most important aspects of road user behaviour – speed, alcohol and seat belt wearing. It shows that increased compliance with road safety law has been key to success in those countries where road safety has improved most between 2001 and 2005.**

The country data show that **France, Luxembourg** and **Belgium** have reached the greatest reductions in the number of yearly road deaths between 2001 and 2005. Highest levels of seat belt wearing are recorded in **France, Germany** and **Malta,** while the **Czech Republic, Belgium** and **Germany** have achieved greatest improvements in the area of drink driving over the last decade.

The Road Safety PIN Report also compares for the first time European countries' trends in driving speeds[3]. It shows that, overall, there is little progress in Europe. Average speeds and speed limit violations remain high with only few encouraging signs, notably from **France,** but also from **Belgium** and **Switzerland,** where speeds have recently decreased across all types of road – rural, urban and motorways. It is also in these countries that some of the largest reductions have been achieved[4].

In **Great Britain**, **Ireland**, the **Netherlands**, **Norway** and **Portugal**, speeds went down on parts of the network. However, in **Great Britain, Ireland** and **Portugal,** a reduction on one type of road has been coupled with an increase on another. Driving speeds increased on motorways in **Austria** and on rural roads in **Estonia, Latvia** and **Poland.**

The link between speed and road crashes is widely known[5] so it comes as no surprise that largest reductions in road deaths have been achieved in **France** and **Belgium** which are two of the countries that also hold the best record in fighting excess and inappropriate speed[6]. A study from **France** has confirmed that improved speed management has been the main factor in achieving an outstanding 35% reduction in traffic deaths in only four years[7].

Prof Richard Allsop, Chairman of the Road Safety PIN, said: *"The PIN rankings show that some countries are good in one area, others in another. Europe's ambitious target of halving road deaths within a decade can only be reached if all countries learn from one another's experiences."*

"There are great disparities between European countries when it comes to compliance with road safety law. The European Union can help eradicate these disparities by setting high common standards for police enforcement in the three areas highlighted in the report," said Franziska Achterberg, ETSC Head of Communication and Director of the Road Safety PIN.

The Road Safety PIN Report can be found on ETSC's website under www.etsc.be/PIN.
For more information please contact Franziska Achterberg at franziska.achterberg@etsc.be or tel. +32 2 230 4106.

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 37 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See www.etsc.be.

(2) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) compares performance in road safety of 27 European countries. See www.etsc.be/PIN.

(3) The comparison is based on changes during the last decade (1996-2006) in mean speeds on different road types, taking into account only the most recent period of sustained decrease or increase up to 2004-2006, whichever is the latest year for which data are available. In view of possible variability in the data, only changes of more than 2km/h over the relevant period are acknowledged. Up to 15 countries are included, depending on the road type.

(4) Most recent reductions of over 5% in mean speeds on different road types. Source: National data

Country	Road type	Speed limit (km/h)	Highest/ lowest level (km/h)	Lowest/ highest level (km/h)	Period	Reduction (%)	Yearly average reduction (%)
France	National road	90	90,1	80,3	2001-2006	10,9	2,1
France	Departemen-tal road	90	94,6	84,5	2000-2006	10,7	1,7
France	Urban road	50	51,8	47,0	2002-2006	9,3	2,2
Great Britain	Urban road	48,3*	33,0	30,0	1997-2005	9,1	1,1
Switzerland	Rural road	80	78,0	72,0	2001-2006	7,7	1,5
Belgium	Urban road	50	53,9	50,4	2003-2005	6,5	3,2
Belgium	Rural road	90	94,3	88,3	2003-2004	6,4	6,4
Portugal	Urban road	50	48,0	45,0	2002-2004	6,3	3,1
France	Motorway	130	126,0	119,0	2002-2005	5,6	1,8

*30 miles/h

(5) A sound rule of thumb is that, on average, a 1% reduction in the mean speed of traffic leads to a 4% reduction in fatal accidents.

(6) No speed data are available for Luxembourg that comes second in reducing road deaths between 2001 and 2005.

(7) The French Road Safety Observatory has calculated that three quarters of the 31% drop in road traffic deaths between 2002 and 2005 could be attributed to improved speed management based on a new automated camera system. Observatoire national interministériel de sécurité routière (ONSR) 2006: *Impact du contrôle sanction automatisé sur la sécurité routière (2003-2005)*. Paris, France