



NEWS RELEASE

EU's New Road Safety Star Spain Takes Centre Stage

6 January 2010, Brussels – As Spain launches into its EU Presidency the ETSC ⁽¹⁾ presented its recommendations in a Memo on key measures on road safety⁽²⁾. Spain has seen a rapid improvement of road safety over the past years and has become one of the leading countries in terms of progress towards the European road safety target of halving the number of road deaths in 2010 compared to 2001 figures. Spain will preside over the EU during a crucial half a year with the implementation of the new Lisbon Treaty and the preparation of the new EU Road Safety Policy for the next decade.

ETSC urges the European Commission adopt a new reduction target and a new strategy for its 4th Road Safety Action Programme (RSAP) 2011-2020 soon, and that the Spanish Presidency support this fully. In concrete terms, ETSC proposes to adopt a shared target of 40% reduction of deaths and serious injuries in each Member State, and a separate target of 60% reduction of child deaths between 2011 and 2020.

Alongside the main behavioural causes of death and injuries (speeding, drink driving, nonuse of seat belts and child safety restraints, badly designed infrastructure and vehicles), the Programme should tackle new emerging trends such as the increasing numbers of motorcyclists and older people among those killed or injured on the roads.

Given that in Europe 60% of all fatal work-related accidents are road collisions⁽³⁾, the Programme should also ensure that employers – both companies and public administrations – include road safety into their management parameters when managing their fleets and transport operations. This means preparing road safety plans by every employer and encouraging them to purchase vehicles with in-vehicle safety technologies.

The proposal on Cross Border Enforcement of road safety law is currently being re-drafted, ETSC urges Spain as a country with both transit traffic and with a lot of tourist traffic to prioritise this important dossier. ETSC would also like to see that it is extended to include enforcement best practices in the areas of speeding, drug and drink driving and seat belt use so as to encourage all EU Member States to consider improving their quality of enforcement.

To fight drug driving more effectively, ETSC proposes that the public be better informed about possible risks and effects of using both prescription medicines and illicit drugs while driving. Appropriate classification and labelling of medicines that affect driving ability are also needed. Finally, all drivers involved in a fatal collision must be tested for drugs. The Spanish Presidency could take the initiative to promote traffic law enforcement using saliva testers and the extension of European-wide minimum enforcement requirements for illicit drugs, which should be included in the future Directive on Traffic Law Enforcement.

“Even if it is unlikely that the EU as a whole reaches its 2010 target, many countries have made significant, and in some case outstanding progress over the past decade,” said Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC. *“It falls upon Spain, the fourth best performer in terms of road death reduction in the EU which managed to reduce road deaths by 44% in 2001-2008, to keep up this momentum into next decade. We all look to Spain to provide strong leadership.”*

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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 www.etsc.eu.

(2) ETSC Memorandum to the Spanish Presidency. www.etsc.eu

(3) Eurogip 2004.