



NEWS RELEASE

Belgium makes fast progress in road safety *Big challenges lie ahead*

3 December 2008, Brussels – Although Belgium is among the four best performing EU countries in reducing road deaths, it ranks only 15th according to the number of road deaths per million inhabitants.⁽¹⁾ New ambitious targets set recently by the government – bringing down road deaths from over 1,000 currently to 750 by 2010 and 500 by 2015 – are pushing road safety professionals to find new areas with untapped progress potential.

Measures to enhance the safety of powered two wheelers must become a priority for the improvement of road safety in Belgium. Some 60 politicians and safety experts gathered to discuss this at today's PIN⁽²⁾ Talk Belgium, organized by ETSC⁽³⁾, the Infrastructure Commission of the lower chamber of the Belgian Parliament, the Belgian Road Safety Institute (IBSR)⁽⁴⁾ and Toyota Belgium.

Belgium has been reducing road deaths by 6.5% annually since 2001. This is the fourth best result in the EU, after France, Luxembourg and Portugal. However, it is still lower than the 7.4% required to reach the 2010 EU target of halving road deaths on time.⁽⁵⁾ Even with good progress in recent years, the number of road deaths per million inhabitants is still 102, significantly higher than the EU average of 87.

The safety of powered two wheelers is amongst the gravest concerns in Belgium with its long and developed biking tradition. PTW riders account for 25% of all driver and rider deaths in this country, and the risk of being killed in a road accident is 20 times higher for them than for car drivers. Absolute numbers of motorcycle riders' deaths have stagnated over the past several years.⁽⁶⁾

Speaking at the PIN Talk, Herman De Croo, Vice-President of the Belgian House of Representatives and former Transport Minister, said: *"The safety of PTW was always a big concern of mine. Belgium has adopted a number of measures to improve the training for young and novice drivers and PTW riders. The importance of this objective must be stressed."*

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Notes to Editors:

(1) ETSC (2008), 2nd Road Safety PIN Report, *Countdown to 2010*, p. 15.

(2) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme was launched in June 2006 to compare country road safety performances. It currently includes 30 countries. www.etsc.be/PIN

(3) **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 42 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.be

(4) **IBSR/BIVV**, the Belgian Road Safety Institute, is charged with collecting data on road accidents and devising measures to improve road safety in the country. www.ibsr.be

(5) ETSC (2008), 2nd Road Safety PIN Report, *Countdown to 2010*

(6) IBSR