



NEWS RELEASE
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Future of EU Police Enforcement Traffic Safety Law in Hands of EU Transport Ministers

8 December 2008, Brussels – Transport Ministers gather tomorrow on the 9th of December to discuss the Directive on the cross border enforcement of traffic laws in all 27 EU Member States⁽¹⁾. At their last meeting in October the Ministers agreed on the need to seek a solution for the impasse in the discussions. The main objective of the proposed Directive is to apply enforcement measures to non-resident traffic offenders. There is evidence from different Member States that non-resident drivers flout traffic laws when travelling abroad as they do not fear punishment. This Directive would bring an end to this feeling of impunity and would save lives⁽²⁾.

ETSC⁽³⁾ calls upon the Transport Ministers to push forward the adoption of this proposal under the first pillar of the Treaty: Transport Policy. ETSC has been monitoring enforcement⁽⁴⁾ in the EU and concludes that a Directive under the first pillar is needed to introduce new high standards in the cross border enforcement of legislation and save lives. Effective enforcement leads to a rapid reduction in deaths and injuries. Sustained intensive enforcement that is well explained and publicised also has a long-lasting effect on driver behaviour.

If Ministers decide to choose the route of developing a third pillar instrument, under the Police and Judicial Co-operation policy, they would exclude the European Parliament from a process that touches on constituents' everyday lives: safe mobility. MEPs gave their overwhelming support to the proposed Directive with the adoption of the Report in the Transport Committee on September 9th.

There is a large consensus amongst Transport Ministers that the objective of the Directive, for more co-operation in the field of enforcement and reaching the EU 2010 target of halving road deaths, are important priorities. But time is running out and an elaboration of a third pillar instrument or a hybrid instrument made up of a mixture of the first and third pillar would lead to a delay. A delay that would without doubt cost lives. A move to develop a third pillar option would contradict the political will expressed by the Ministers and their delegations to take steps to improve road safety for their citizens today.

Police enforcement forms a crucial part of the equation of improving road safety in the EU. *"We urge Ministers to find a solution which all Member States support under the first pillar of the Treaty. Otherwise the future of police co-operation across the borders and an improvement of traffic law enforcement will be delayed, possibly indefinitely, and in the meantime Europe's citizens risk paying the price"* said ETSC Director of Policy Ellen Townsend.

For more information please contact ETSC Communications Officer Evgueni Pogorelov at evgueni.pogorelov@etsc.be, or Director of Policy Ellen Townsend at ellen.townsend@etsc.be, tel. +32 (0)2 230.41.06 , fax +32 (0)2 230.42.15

Notes to Editors:

(1) The proposal for a Directive facilitating the cross-border enforcement of traffic offences can be found [here](#)

(2) According to the EC impact assessment study the Directive would save between 350 and 400 road deaths a year. *Impact assessment on road safety enforcement and cross-border cooperation, Ecorys, March 2007*. Beyond the immediate impact of the Directive one could expect a certain spill over effect which could increase the potential lives saved and reduce the current annual death figure of 43,000 on Europe's roads. According to the European Commission's cost-benefit analysis, increased enforcement would result in a total annual reduction of 14,000 road deaths and 680,000 injuries in the EU 15, and in a net benefit of 37 billion EUR, or 0.44% of GNP. *ICF Consulting, 2003. Cost-benefit analysis of road safety improvements. Final Report.*

(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) See also:

ETSC, 2007. [Traffic Law Enforcement across the EU: Time for a Directive](#)

ETSC, 2007. [Raising Compliance with Road Safety Law, 1st PIN Road Safety Report](#)

ETSC, 2006. [Traffic Law Enforcement across the EU – An overview](#)

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