



News Release
Safer Streets for Europe's Pedestrians
ETSC address European Road Safety Day

6th of May 2013, Brussels - Pedestrians represent 20% of all road deaths in the EU. We are all pedestrians but we are not all safe. Big disparities exist between countries with much potential for saving lives and preventing serious injuries. Deaths among unprotected road users represent 44% of all road deaths across the EU. Road safety of pedestrians has improved in all EU countries (except one) since 2001ⁱ. According to ETSC's 5th PIN Report as many as 6,900 pedestrians were killed in the EU27 in 2009 alone; 80,800 since 2001. Deaths among pedestrians decreased by 34% between 2001 and 2009, yet they have been decreasing at a lower rate than for vehicle occupants. The safety of walking needs special attention if public health and our environment are to be improved by encouraging these forms of active travel.

The European Road Safety Day 2013ⁱⁱ is dedicated to pedestrian safety as a contribution to the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety and the Global Road Safety Week on the same topicⁱⁱⁱ. The WHO has also launched a Best Practice Road Safety Manual on Pedestrian Safety providing a rich resource for decision-makers and practitioners^{iv}.

Experiences from fast progressing and well performing countries show that prevention measures exist which are both affordable and effective in saving the lives of pedestrians on our streets. The improvements in pedestrian safety are to a large extent a function of the overall improvements in road safety. Portugal, which has achieved an outstanding 11% average year to year reduction in pedestrian deaths over the period 2001-2009 and cut numbers of pedestrians being killed by 56%, cites a specific 60% reduction target for pedestrian deaths in their National Road Safety Plan as well as campaigns raising awareness about pedestrian vulnerability. Improvements in infrastructure were also implemented in several urban and suburban areas, with greater care over the location and signing of pedestrian crossings.

In Sweden, deaths among pedestrians were cut by 50% between 2001 and 2009, while deaths among car drivers were reduced by 30%. Sweden explains this impressive reduction as a result from the improvement in the infrastructure (separating pedestrian and cycling from motorised traffic) and an increase of 30km/h zones in areas where there are many vulnerable road users.

Speed^v is key to reducing pedestrian deaths. An integrated approach including speed enforcement linked to awareness campaigns, promotion of^{vi} Intelligent Speed Assistance systems^{vii} and infrastructure management is crucial^{viii}. ETSC's PIN Report finds that: progress in reducing pedestrian deaths in Ireland and the Czech Republic, and to a lesser extent in France and GB, has been helped by a reduction in mean speed on urban roads. For example, in Ireland, drivers have slowed down markedly in cities. In residential areas, the

mean speed is now 35km/h with only 4% of vehicles exceeding 50km/h, suggesting that there is scope to follow many other European cities by reducing the speed limit to 30km/h.

Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director speaking at the EU Road Safety Day, will cite two important priority areas both speed related, the number one risk factor on our roads: *"Intelligent Speed Assistance which, in restricting speed, can reduce the risk to pedestrians should be fast tracked. We urge the EU to progress on deployment and to prepare digital speed maps."* He added: *"The second priority is improving infrastructure safety, especially in urban areas. We call on the European Commission to prepare Guidelines for promoting best practice in traffic calming measures. These measures should be introduced as an integral part of setting up speed limit zones of 30km/h in urban areas. Reducing speeds especially in urban areas will not only improve safety but also encourage more people to walk without fear of traffic and bring life back into our European streets".*

For more information please contact ETSC Policy Director Ellen Townsend at ellen.townsend@etsc.eu or ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso, tel. +32 (0)2 230.41.06, mob. 0032 (0)484 38.05.79.

Background

On Monday the 6th of May the European Commission organises its 5th European Road Safety Day. The theme will be *Pedestrian safety: vulnerable road users in urban areas*. The conference will end in time for participants to join "a long short walk" organised by the International Automobile Federation from 16:00 to 17:00.

<http://longshortwalkbrussels.eventbrite.com>

ⁱ ETSC (2011) 5th PIN Report, Chapter 2 "Unprotected road users left behind in efforts to reduce road deaths".

ⁱⁱ European Road Safety Day http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/events-archive/2013_05_06_ersd_en.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ Second Un Global Road Safety Week <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/2013/en/index.html>

^{iv} WHO (2013) Pedestrian safety: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners, <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/pedestrian/en/index.html>

^v ETSC (2010) 4th PIN Report, Chapter 3 "Tackling the Three Main Killers on the road".

^{vi} ETSC (2012) ETSC's Contribution to CARS 21.

^{vii} ETSC (2006) Intelligent Speed Adaptation: Myths and Reality.

^{viii} ETSC (2005) Safety of Vulnerable Road Users.