



NEWS RELEASE

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Better car safety does not jeopardise emission reduction

In the debate on CO₂ reduction, motor manufacturers recently argued that safety requirements imposed on the industry have offset efforts to cut emissions⁽¹⁾. ETSC⁽²⁾ shows why this argument is misleading and why cars can be both clean and safe.

It is not safety that makes the weight – it's size, comfort and, most importantly, the top speed capabilities of today's cars.

These are the true factors that are driving CO₂ emissions. Professor Claes Tingvall, Chairman of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP), states: "*Blaming safety is unfair, incorrect and just hides the fact that there are other issues responsible for industry's failure to meet its contract with society. The performance of smaller and lighter cars at Euro NCAP clearly shows that improved safety does not need additional weight*".

It is quite right that as a result of new body materials and an optimised structure, cars have become safer. However, the added weight due to such safety interventions is negligible. Heavier vehicles are the result of an increase in size for comfort, more luxury features (e.g. air conditioning) and more powerful engines to achieve higher speeds⁽³⁾.

Lower speed = better safety = lower emissions

If we want to reduce CO₂ emissions and traffic injuries alike in the long run, we need to downsize power and maximum speed⁽⁴⁾. Reducing speed will contribute a great deal to improving safety on European roads, as speed has been shown to be the most important factor in crashes. The higher the speed, the greater the chance of a crash happening and the more severe its consequences. This is why on most motorways in Europe, no more than 130 km/h are permitted.

"Downsizing vehicle power and speed as well as reducing speeds through Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)⁽⁵⁾ is what manufacturers can do to prevent both environmental and safety hazards", says Jörg Beckmann, ETSC's Executive Director.

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Notes to Editors:

(1) European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA): European Car Industry opposes recent statements of Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas regarding CO2 Commitment. Press release of 5 November 2006.

www.acea.be

(2) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), founded in 1993, 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 35 national and international organisations. www.etsc.be

(3) Johan de Mol/Sven Vlassenroot (2006): Autoconstructeurs moeten dringend op dieet. In: Verkeersspecialist 126

Johan de Mol/Sven Vlassenroot (2005): Waanzinnige race naar nog hogere vermogens. In: Verkeersspecialist 121

(4) Jillian Anable/Paige Mitchell/Russell Layberry (2006): Getting the genie back in the bottle: Limiting speed to reduce carbon emissions and accelerate the shift to low carbon vehicles. In: LowCVP 'Low Carbon Road Transport Challenge'. Proposals to reduce road transport CO2 emissions.

<http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/challenge/>

(5) Oliver Carsten (2005): PROSPER Results. Benefits and Costs. Presentation at the PROSPER Seminar on 23 November 2005 in Brussels.