

NEWS RELEASE

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France's outstanding success celebrated at 1st PIN Conference

11 June 2007, Brussels - France's achievements in reducing road deaths and traffic dangers got Europe-wide acclaim and recognition at the 1st Road Safety PIN⁽¹⁾ Conference today.

In the past several years, France has reduced road deaths more than any other European country. Between 2001 and 2005, the yearly number of deaths decreased by 35%, or 2 844, the best result among EU countries both in terms of percentage⁽²⁾ and absolute figures⁽³⁾. The country has become the greatest contributor to the European target of halving the number of road deaths by 2010.

This success has mainly been achieved by raising compliance with key traffic safety law. Fighting traffic violations on all fronts, France is the only country in the EU which has been able to reduce driving speeds on all types of roads by 6% to 11% in the past half decade⁽⁴⁾. This has been shown to be the single most important factor in the country's road safety success⁽⁵⁾. France also has one of the highest levels of seat belt wearing in the front seats⁽⁶⁾.

These outstanding results have been achieved because improving road safety was hailed as one of the top national priorities by the French authorities back in 2002. This was supported by strict police enforcement and gradual change in attitude and behaviour on the part of the general French public, including the driving community. Starting in 2003, France has introduced a fully automated speed camera system featuring about 1,500 fixed and mobile devices, and tightened police checks and sanctions for all major traffic offences. French driving culture has been revolutionised, which turned a country that used to be responsible for 16% of Europe's road deaths into a leader in road safety progress in just four years.

Receiving the PIN Award for her country's outstanding success, Cécile Petit, France's Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety said: *"The French result is very encouraging. Some 10 400 fewer people were killed and 130 000 fewer wounded over only five years. But the result is still fragile. This is why we need to continue to show that road injury is not inevitable. A sound road safety policy must include ambitious and long-term prevention measures, backed up by strict enforcement. To be fully effective, this policy must tackle all risk factors, including those related to infrastructure, vehicle and users, and involve all national and local actors."*

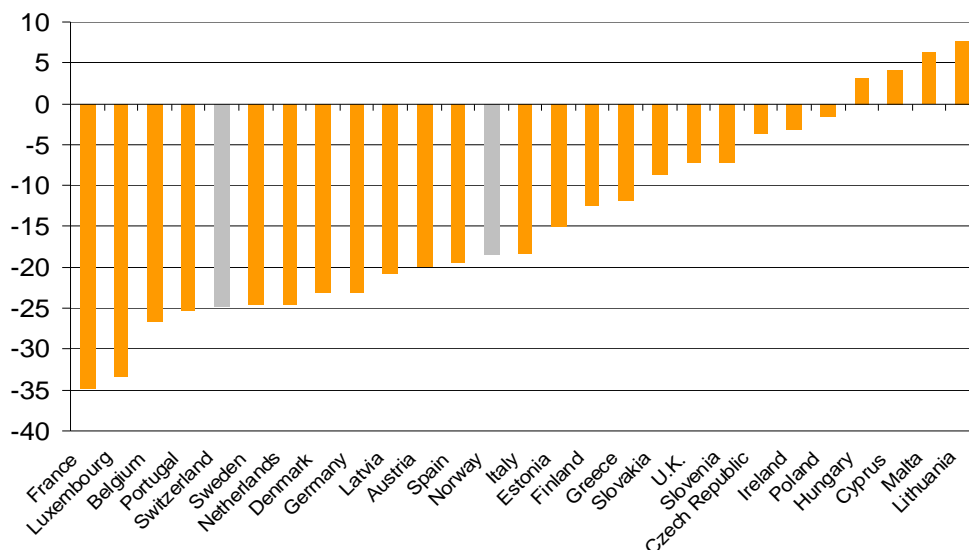
"France's success shows that fast progress depends crucially on political leadership in combination with a sound, evidence-based policy", said ETSC⁽⁷⁾ Executive Director Jörg Beckmann. *"It also shows that reducing driving speeds is possible and yields great safety benefits."*

For more information please go to www.etsc.be/PIN or contact ETSC Communication Officer Evgueni Pogorelov at evgueni.pogorelov@etsc.be, tel. +32 (0)2 230 41 06 or mobile +32 (0)484 94 87 09.

Notes to Editors:

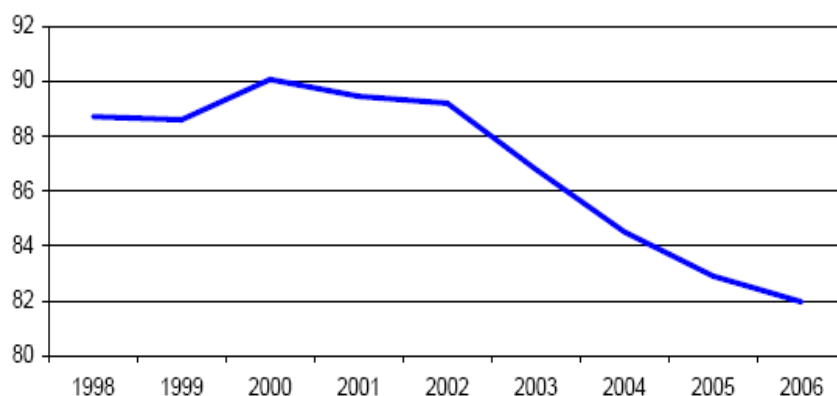
(1) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN), launched in June 2006, compares road safety performances of 27 European countries. See www.etsc.be/PIN.

(2) Change in road deaths in European countries between 2001 and 2005 (in %). Source: CARE and national data



(3) European Commission (EC) 2007: Road Safety: How is your country doing?

(4) Development in the mean speed of passenger cars on all road types together (in km/h). Source: ONSR



(5) The French Road Safety Observatory has calculated that 75% of the 31% drop in road traffic deaths between 2002 and 2005 could be attributed to improved speed management based on a new automated camera system. Observatoire national interministériel de sécurité routière (ONSR) 2006: *Impact du contrôle sanction automatisé sur la sécurité routière (2003-2005)*. Paris, France

(6) European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) 2007: *Raising Compliance with Road Safety Law*. 1st Road Safety PIN Report

(7) 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 37 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. See www.etsc.be