



## NEWS RELEASE

### Brussels, 5 December 2005

#### Austria promises to put transport safety high on next EU Presidency agenda

Austria announced it would put transport safety high up on the agenda of its EU Presidency. The next six months will be crucial for Europe to decide how much support it wants to deploy for the next five years as the European Commission is about to issue the mid-term evaluation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Road Safety Action Programme. Europe has so far reached about 13% of its target of halving road deaths by 2010. Hence, assuming a similar type of effort, it is likely that only a 40% reduction will be eventually achieved.

*"The EU Presidency is a determining mean to circulate new successful initiatives among Member States" says Executive Director Jörg Beckmann from the European Transport Safety Council<sup>(1)</sup>. "Austria has been successful in several areas of transport safety such as data collection, road safety audits and driver training. It should therefore grab the opportunity of its EU Presidency to inspire the rest of Europe".*

Firstly, Austria must ensure that European action is taken to close the gap between the best and worst-performing EU countries. In its Memorandum<sup>(2)</sup>, ETSC invites the Austrian Presidency to come forward with legislation on infrastructure and on cross-border enforcement.

Secondly, the Austrian Presidency should put an end to long-lasting deadlock on the driving licence dossier within the Transport Council. The legislation is ready but needs to be backed by a leading political voice for fine-tuning. The Directive, once implemented, will permit targeted improvements in driver behaviour, through more stringent system of progressive access to motorcycle, promotion of provisional licence for novice drivers, more limited possibility of fraud and easier cross-border enforcement.

ETSC would like to call upon Hubert Gorbach, Austrian Transport Minister, to use his Presidency and leadership *"to result in concrete actions in reaching the EU target of halving road deaths by 2010"*.

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#### Notes to Editors:

- (1) The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes and casualties in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. It brings together 29 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.
- (2) ETSC Memorandum to the Austrian Presidency: [www.etsc.be](http://www.etsc.be)