



NEWS RELEASE

Brussels and Warsaw 19 March 2007

"Poland needs to accelerate action on road safety", says Minister Marek Surmacz

Thirty distinguished experts and state representatives gathered today in Warsaw upon the invitation by the Minister of the Interior and Administration for a high-level debate on road safety. The event was organised upon the initiative of the Polish Motor Transport Institute (ITS) and the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)⁽¹⁾ in the framework of the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme⁽²⁾. The event was kindly supported by Toyota Motor Poland.

Poland is among those countries with the lowest levels of road safety in Europe. In 2005, 5,444 people died on Polish roads. With this toll, Poland ranked 22 among European countries on the basis of road deaths per million population⁽³⁾. Poland was responsible for 13% of all road deaths in Europe.

Latest figures show that in 2006, the number of deaths dropped to 5,243. This means that there has been a reduction by 5.3% over 2001-2006, whereas the European and national targets require a reduction 50% in 2010. In Poland, insufficient progress has been made especially in the key areas of speed and seat belt use. There has however been a significant reduction in deaths related to drink driving, which has made an important contribution to the overall reduction in road deaths.

Marek Surmacz, State-Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, said: *"The evidence presented today clearly shows that in Poland we need to accelerate the implementation of road safety policies. The example of French President Chirac illustrates that ministers at the highest level need to take the responsibility for this."*

"All Member States must contribute their share if we want to reach the objective of halving road deaths in the EU," underlined Dr Stefan Tostmann, Head of Road Safety at the European Commission. *"A lot can be done by improving user behaviour in the three key areas of speed, drink driving and seat belt use,"* he added.

Franziska Achterberg, PIN Programme Director, said: *"Our country rankings show that all countries can achieve good progress, whatever their starting point,"* pointing to the improvements made due to progress in moderating speed (France), reducing drink driving (Czech Republic) and increasing seat belt use (Belgium).

Piotr Stomma, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Transport, explained how first steps to implement the governmental road safety strategy for 2005-2013, termed GAMBIT 2005, are being taken.

"Careful analysis shows that two years into our new strategy, progress does not match our ambitions," concluded Ilona Buttler, researcher at the Motor Transport Institute and member for Poland in the PIN Panel. *"We have good chances to reduce Poland's delay in implementing the EU programme if we act in a professional way. Our road safety measures need thorough preparation, stringent implementation and faster reaction in the case that results fall short of expectations,"* she added.



Notes

(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 37 organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe, including the Motor Transport Institute (ITS), the Foundation for the Development of Civil Engineering and 'Road and Safety' from Poland.

(2) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) was set up in June 2006 to compare Member States' performance in all areas of road safety. It publishes regular country rankings including those in the area of progress toward the target, speed, drink driving and seat belt use. It receives financial support from the Swedish Road Administration (SRA) and Toyota Motor Europe. See www.etsc.be/PIN.

(3) Road deaths per million population in 2005. Source: CARE and national data

