

NEWS RELEASE

Brussels and Madrid 1 March 2007

“Spain should continue its efforts”, says European road safety watchdog ETSC

Under the leadership of the Spanish Traffic General Directorate (DGT) and the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)⁽¹⁾, 30 distinguished road safety experts and stakeholders gathered in Madrid today for a high-level debate on improving road user behaviour in Spain.

Spain faces an enormous challenge if the country is to reach its national target of no more than 3,240 traffic deaths in 2008. In 2005, still 4,442 people died on Spanish roads. With this toll, Spain ranks 13 among European countries on the basis of road deaths per population⁽²⁾. Between 2001 and 2005, Spain reduced its yearly death toll by 19%, while some other countries such as France and Portugal achieved reductions of 25% and over over the same 4-year period⁽³⁾.

At a discussion held today in the framework of the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN)⁽⁴⁾ in Madrid, Mr. Pere Navarro, Traffic General Director at the Spanish Ministry of Interior, said: *“I believe today’s forum has enriched our knowledge with new and useful information. It has also led to new international contacts which will help us in our effort to increase road safety in Spain.”*

“Spain has achieved recent encouraging progress but all the actors - the citizens, the government, the municipalities and autonomous communities, the industry – should remain committed to implement the Spanish Road Safety Strategic Plan.” said Franziska Achterberg, PIN Programme Director. *“European experiences show that improving compliance with safety legislation in the areas of speed, drink driving and seat belt and helmet use is key to fast progress in road safety.”*

“We have seen some positive changes in driver behaviour just after the introduction of the penalty point system. The best way to maintain the first positive effects in the long run is to further increase police checks and awareness raising campaigns, as recommended by the European Commission,”⁽⁵⁾ added Prof. Jaime Sanmartin from INTRAS, Institute of Traffic and Road Safety at the University of Valencia.

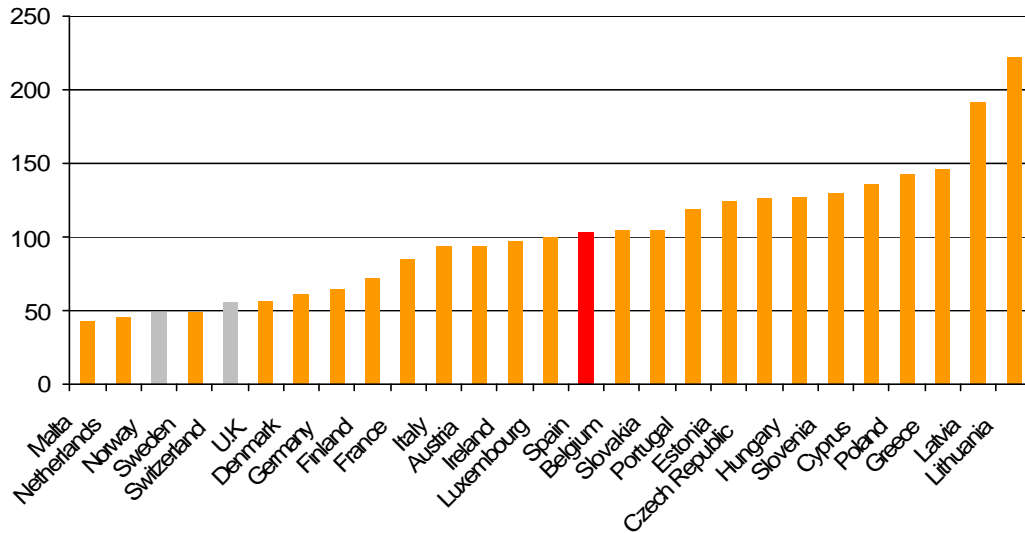
Today’s debate showed that, in overall terms, road safety is improving in Spain. Constructive action is being taken in all the relevant areas: infrastructure, behaviour, and vehicle. But the meeting has also shown that all the institutions vested with responsibility in Spain must do more and do it better in order to achieve the ambitious common EU objective. *“There is a lot of room for further improvement. A better co-ordination of activities among public services and improved actions targeted to the protection of vulnerable road users will be key to success. In addition, we will promote the involvement of other territories’ civil services, autonomous regions and local entities, through their own safety programs and also encourage enterprises to include road safety in their safety plans,”* concluded Anna Ferrer Gimenez, Head of the National Observatory of Road Safety at the Ministry of Interior.

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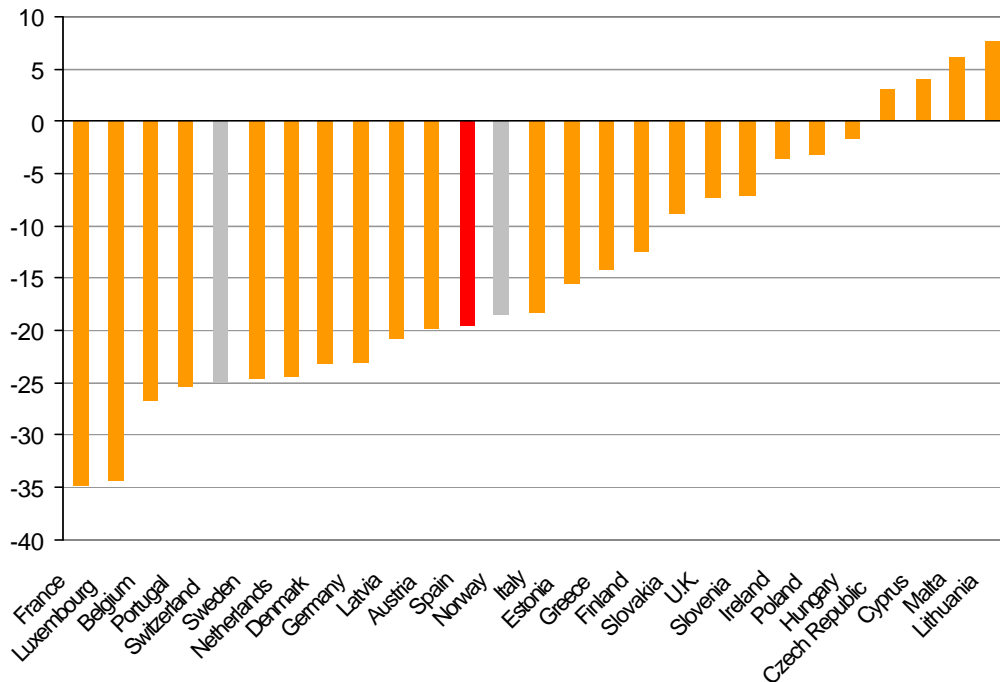
Notes to Editors:

(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 37 organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

(2) Road deaths per populations in 2005



(3) Development in road deaths 2001-2005 (in %). Source: CARE and national data



(4) The Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) was set up in June 2006 to compare Member States' performance in all areas of road safety. It receives financial support from Swedish Road Administration and Toyota Motor Europe. See www.etsc.be/PIN.

(5) Commission Recommendation (2004/345/EC) on enforcement in the field of road safety