

## NEWS RELEASE

Brussels and Nicosia, 15 December 2006

### Improving road safety in Cyprus

At a national road safety debate held today in Nicosia in the frame of the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN)<sup>(1)</sup>, all main road safety stakeholders agreed that road accidents are one of the most serious socio economic problems in Cyprus. Speakers included, among others, Mr. Thrassou, Minister for Communications and Works, Mr. Sofokleous, Minister for Justice and Public Order, Mr. Georgiades, Minister for Education and Culture and Mr. Koulendis, Chief of Police. The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)<sup>(2)</sup> was represented by its Executive Director Jörg Beckmann.

Cyprus faces an enormous challenge to improve road safety over the next years. In 2005, 102 people died in traffic crashes, making Cyprus rank fifth worst country among the EU-25<sup>(3)</sup>. Between 2001 and 2005, road deaths increased by 4%. There is thus no time to lose to adopt concrete measures if the national target of a 50% reduction in road deaths by 2010 is to be met.

The implementation of some measures adopted in the Strategic Plan for Road Safety (2005-2010) has started to bear fruit. The first optimistic results have appeared with a significant reduction of 28% in injuries and a reduction of 13% in fatalities in 2005.

The discussion focused on the achievements and weaknesses of road safety policy in Cyprus. Participants agreed that the progress which resulted from the introduction of two important changes, the introduction of a new blood alcohol limit of 0.5% and the new automatic speed management system (safety cameras) should act as an incentive for further actions. Participants discussed some of ETSC recommendations and committed to increase their efforts in their areas of responsibility. (See separate note on page 3).

*" Significant work in road safety is being done in Cyprus but we are fully aware that further actions are needed to ensure better design and evaluation of road safety policies and measures to maximise efficiency. We will undertake all possible efforts in this direction",* stated Mr. Thrassou, Minister of Communications and Works and Chairman of the national Road Safety Council.

*" The police's commitment to zero tolerance regarding non compliance with key traffic rules is much appreciated. The police forces clearly need to take the lead in convincing dangerous drivers to change their behaviour",* Joerg Beckmann, ETSC Executive Director said.

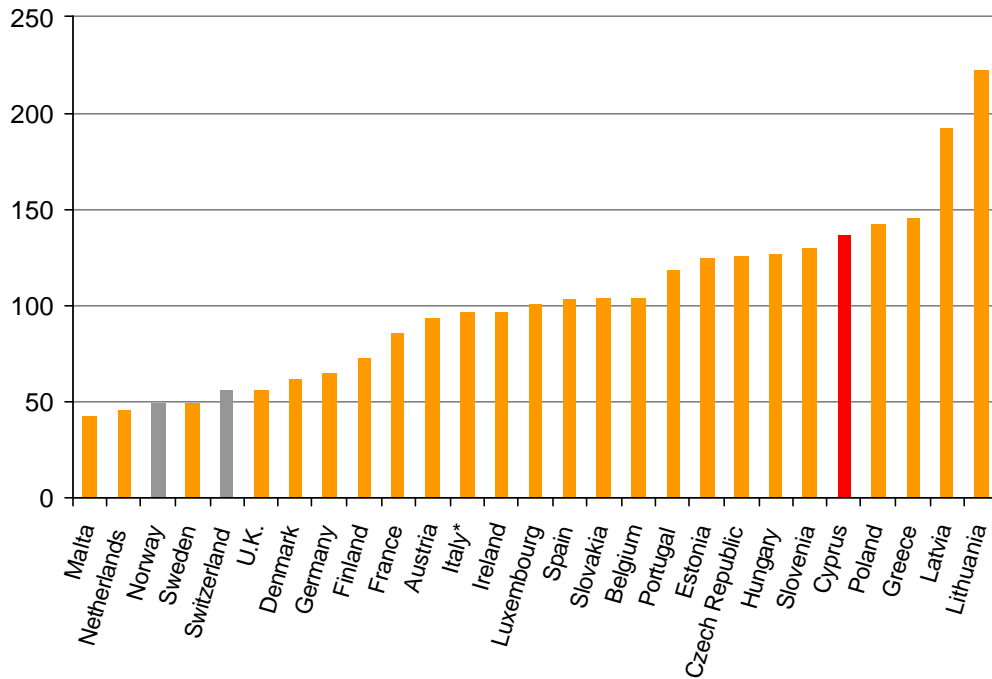
For more information please contact Mr. Morfakis, PIN Panel Member, Ministry of Communications and Works, [gmorfakis@pwd.mcw.gov.cy](mailto:gmorfakis@pwd.mcw.gov.cy), +357 22 800 237, or Mrs Jost, PIN Programme Officer, ETSC at [graziella.jost@etsc.be](mailto:graziella.jost@etsc.be), +32 2 230 41 06.

Notes to Editors:

(1) 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. The PIN Talk in Nicosia was kindly supported by Toyota Cyprus. See [www.etsc.be/PIN](http://www.etsc.be/PIN).

(2) 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 35 organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

(3) Road deaths 2005 (per million population). Source: Eurostat, national data  
\* Except Italy (2004 data)



## To catch up with fast-improving countries

Based on international experience and the particularities of the existing situation in Cyprus, the European Transport Safety Council recommends national authorities to take action in the domains of:

### General road safety policy:

- Improve the coordination of work among the different road safety actors
- Establish efficient data (including safety performance indicators) collection mechanisms
- Establish efficient evaluation mechanisms
- Invest in public transport to ensure an alternative to private car transport

### Behaviour:

- Better prioritise enforcement activities based on in depth analysis of accident data
- Further extend the fixed camera network and increase speed checks at high risk sites
- Maximise the impact of the new speed enforcement devices in communicating the difference in speeds, and casualty reductions to the public after the installation of the cameras.
- Maximise the impact of the new drink driving limit of 0.5 BAC by communicating the casualty reductions to the public.
- Introduce a new special 0.2% BAC limit for novice and professional drivers
- Organise frequent nationwide campaigns on speed, drink driving and seat belt wearing systematically linked to visible enforcement activities
- Improve the testing procedures for acquiring a driving licence.
- Ensure the automatic removal of the driving licence after the maximum of 12 points are lost to ensure strict application of the penalty point system.
- Introduce a system to deter tourists from committing traffic offences

### References:

Commission Recommendation (2004/345/EC) on enforcement in the field of road safety; Respecting the Rules. Better Road Safety Enforcement in the European Union. A Consultation Paper.

ETSC 2006: Enforcement Across the EU. An Overview.

[http://www.etsc.be/documents/Traffic\\_Law\\_Enforcement\\_in\\_the\\_EU\\_An\\_Overview\\_May\\_2006\\_ETSC.pdf](http://www.etsc.be/documents/Traffic_Law_Enforcement_in_the_EU_An_Overview_May_2006_ETSC.pdf)

ETSC 2006: Cyprus country page

[http://www.etsc.be/documents/Countrys\\_Compndium/Cyprus.pdf](http://www.etsc.be/documents/Countrys_Compndium/Cyprus.pdf)

ETSC 2006 " A methodological approach to national road safety policies" .

[http://www.etsc.be/documents/A\\_methodological\\_approach\\_to\\_national\\_road\\_safety\\_policies.pdf](http://www.etsc.be/documents/A_methodological_approach_to_national_road_safety_policies.pdf)

Road Safety PIN Flash 2 September 2006 " Making progress happen"

[http://www.etsc.be/documents/copy\\_of\\_copy\\_of\\_copy\\_of\\_PIN%20Flash%202.pdf](http://www.etsc.be/documents/copy_of_copy_of_copy_of_PIN%20Flash%202.pdf)