

Alcolocks: a life saving technology in the European Parliament's spotlight

6th October, Brussels – In 2009, about 35,000 people died in road collisions across Europe. A total of 25% of these deaths¹ are directly linked to alcohol and drivers who had an illegal BAC-level. ETSC much welcomes the possibility of making use of alcohol interlock devices obligatory in certain specific cases, as outlined in the "European Commission's new policy orientations 2011-2020"². The recent Eurobarometer survey³ showed that drink driving is perceived today as the most important road safety problem and that the majority of the EU population is in favour of additional measures to tackle this problem.

More and more countries in Europe are adopting legislation for the use of alcohol interlock devices in rehabilitation programmes as a substitute punishment of driving license withdrawal. But, in many EU countries, the technology has found its way into vehicles which are used for the transport of goods or passengers on a voluntary basis. ETSC hopes now that the European Commission will coordinate new actions at EU level, thus substantial gains can be expected in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency.

"Gradual introduction of alcolocks starting with target groups (commercial/public transport drivers including buses especially transporting children, dangerous good trucks and repeat drink driving offenders) could reduce the high toll of drink driving casualties every year in the EU and reduce the price for manufacturing those devices" said Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council.

The objective of the "Safe and Sober" Campaign is to raise awareness amongst policy makers, the private sector as well as some key opinion leaders for a systemic approach to reduce alcohol misuse in road transport, especially in the less well-performing EU member states. The campaign is run in cooperation with the Volvo Group and forms a part of the ETSC's commitments in the Alcohol and Health Forum run by the European Commission. Today the 14th Safe & Sober Talk took place at the European Parliament in Brussels, co-hosted by MEPs Anna Hedh and Dieter-Lebrecht Koch and in collaboration with the Swedish Abstaining Motorists' Association (MHF).

Note to the editors:

¹ Source European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/knowledge/alcohol/index.htm.

² Policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020 available at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/events-archive/2010_07_20_road_safety_2011_2020_en.htm

³ Eurobarometer Nr.301, Gallup, 2010 available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_301_en.pdf

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 43 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu

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