



Brussels, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2002

## European Parliament plenary vote on pedestrian protection

On 13 June, the European Parliament will vote on the report on the voluntary agreement negotiated between the European Commission and the European Car Industry on the protection of vulnerable road users. ETSC, BEUC and ANEC<sup>1</sup> urge MEPs to reject this weak voluntary agreement given that:

- it fails to deliver the high level of protection required by the EU Treaty;
- it fails to implement with certainty the state of the art pedestrian protection crash tests developed and scientifically validated by the European Enhanced Vehicle Safety Committee (EEVC). The EEVC tests were developed through a research programme that has been running for 22 years and in which the EU and the Member States invested more than 10 million euro of public funding;
- the results of consumer testing (EuroNCAP) making use of the EEVC tests demonstrate that cars remain excessively, and unnecessarily, dangerous for pedestrians. Yet, the car industry has not adapted car fronts, despite the relative ease and low cost (30 euro per car) by which this could be done.

Safety and consumer organisations urge MEPs to ask the Commission to come forward with a Directive before December 2002 making state of the art pedestrian performance EEVC tests mandatory for new car designs. This could save 2000 lives each year.

ETSC, BEUC and ANEC also urge MEPs to rule out the acceptance of test methods “equivalent” to EEVC. These do not exist, and would just cause more delays and excuses for the car industry not to introduce the EEVC tests by 2010. They make the adoption of EEVC tests uncertain – while the main rationale for legislation was to make them certain!

With so much at stake, it would be unacceptable if MEPs failed to put public safety over industrial convenience.

We hope that this agreement is not an example of what the Commission means with the new approach towards legislation as proposed in the White Paper on governance. We find pedestrian safety too important an area to experiment with new types of co-regulation such as voluntary agreements, all the more so as the European Parliament will only be consulted on the agreement, and will be deprived of its hard won powers of co-decision in this area.

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<sup>1</sup> ETSC, European Transport Safety Council, BEUC, The European Consumers’ Organisation, and ANEC, The European Consumers Organisation.