



NEWS RELEASE

SWEDEN: EUROPE'S ROAD SAFETY CHAMPION STEERS EU PRESIDENCY

1 July 2009, Brussels – The European Transport Safety Council⁽¹⁾ in its Memorandum ⁽²⁾ to the Swedish Presidency has high expectations of one of Europe's leading players on road safety. As the EU prepares its future transport policy for beyond 2010 Sweden's Presidency comes at an excellent time for developing European road safety policy. Much remains to be done in tackling Europe's annual road death toll, 39,000 lives were lost in 2008. In its recent Road Safety PIN⁽³⁾ results ETSC stressed that although this is 15,400 less than 2001 this is far from the 2010 road safety target which the EU has set itself (27,000 deaths).

In the coming months the EU plans to prepare its **4th Road Safety Action Programme (RSAP) for 2010–2020** and it can clearly benefit from Sweden's experience in this field. Sweden is undertaking a similar process preparing its new national strategy and targets. In its *Blueprint for the EU's 4th RSAP* ⁽⁴⁾ ETSC proposed a shared target of 40% reduction of deaths and 20% reduction of injuries with lasting effects in each Member State. In order to achieve this, the EU should focus measures on the main behavioural causes of deadly clashes: speeding, drink driving and non-use of seat belts and child safety restraints. Badly designed infrastructure and vehicles, and increasing numbers of motorcyclists among road crash victims, should also be addressed. A strong link to the 4th Road Safety Action Programme must also be made in the upcoming **White Paper on Transport Policy 2010-2020**. Sweden, as the European champion in road safety⁽⁵⁾, is indeed best placed to profile road safety at the EU level discussions on the future of its transport policy.

Also as one of the EU's leading countries in developing and deploying **ITS technologies** this should be one of Sweden's top priorities in the transport field during its Presidency. ETSC would like to see a specific reference made in the ITS Directive to the three most important technologies according to their life saving potential: Intelligent Speed Assistance, Alcohol Interlocks and Seat Belt Reminders for all seats. The EU can clearly also learn much from Sweden's experience in deploying these technologies in its vehicle fleet.

Another top priority for the Swedish Presidency is to achieve a **new global deal on climate change** in Copenhagen in December. Road transport generates about one fifth of the EU's CO2 emissions, with passenger cars responsible for 12%. These emissions have risen between 1990 and 2004 by 26%. In March 2007 EU leaders committed to a 20-30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions overall by 2020. Speed reduction through speed limit enforcement measures and Intelligent Speed Assistance devices can contribute to reducing CO2 emissions and saving lives at the same time. For these two crucially important reasons legislation which will contribute to reducing speed on Europe's roads, including a revised draft of the Directive on Cross Border Enforcement, must be put back on the Council agenda.

"The EU must benefit from Sweden's strong road safety record at home. It is now Sweden's turn to lead the EU towards adopting a policy on the "Future of Transport" with a strong commitment to reducing deaths and serious injury on Europe's roads" said ETSC Policy Director Ellen Townsend. "Sweden should also support the European Commission in its preparation of the 4th Road Safety Action Programme. Expectations of this strong player are running high."

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Notes to Editors:

- (1) **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 42 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. www.etsc.eu
- (2) ETSC's Memorandum to the Swedish Presidency of the EU
<http://www.etsc.eu/documents/Memorandum%20to%20the%20Swedish%20Presidency.pdf>
- (3) Road Safety PIN Annual Report 2009
<http://www.etsc.eu/documents/ETSC%20PIN%20Annual%20Report%202009.pdf>
- (4) <http://www.etsc.eu/blueprint-4th-road-safety-action-programme.php>
- (5) At 43 road deaths per million population, Sweden is the safest EU country roadwise (after Malta which enjoys special conditions). The year 2008 showed the lowest number of people killed on the roads since 1934. This has become possible because Sweden has been a leading country in road safety management practice.