

Future EU Legislation for new Transport Safety Technologies in Hands of Ministers

28 April 2008, Brussels - Today EU Transport Ministers gather for an Informal Ministerial meeting in Litomerice, Czech Republic to discuss a future Directive on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) ⁽¹⁾. These are based on intelligence placed at the roadside and in the vehicle and by means of communication between these systems and road users road safety can also be advanced ⁽²⁾. In a letter to all Transport Ministers the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) ⁽³⁾ asked them to consider the safety potential of ITS. The European Parliament adopted its report on the 23rd of April.

About 43,000 people were killed in road traffic collisions in the European Union in 2007. Looking forward into the future ETSC proposes a new ambitious target of a 40% reduction of deaths from 2010 to 2020. To achieve this target the EU would have to go above and beyond current reduction trends by implementing new measures including those in the field of ITS.

The ITS technologies and systems that bring about the greatest injury reduction and life saving potential should be fast-tracked for deployment. In consideration of the Directive ETSC would like to highlight the three most important in-vehicle technologies: Intelligent Speed Assistance, Alcohol Interlocks and Seat Belt Reminders.

ISA warns the driver about speeding, discourages the driver from speeding or prevents the driver from exceeding the speed limit. Estimates show that a mandatory ISA scheme could lead to a reduction of 59% in fatal accidents and lower fuel consumption (up to 8%)⁽⁴⁾. Alcohol interlocks require the driver to take a breath test before starting the car and if the driver fails the test, the device locks the ignition of the car. If the number of alcohol impaired drivers dropped to zero, some 6,800 lives would be saved. Seat belt reminders detect occupants and their seat belt use, and then create a series of alarms if occupants are not belted. ETSC's cost-benefit analysis for the mandatory introduction of audible seat belt reminders for front seats found that audible seat belt reminders could increase seat belt wearing to 97%⁽⁵⁾. These three ITS applications focus on the main risk factors in road transport: speeding, drink driving and the non use of seat belts.

The European vehicle industry faces a time of crisis but this makes developing our safety credentials and profiling Europe as the producers of the world's safest vehicles even more important. Ellen Townsend Policy Director at ETSC asks Ministers to: *"work together to elaborate an ITS Directive that would unleash the true potential of EU technological innovation and save lives on Europe's roads."*

Notes to Editors:

(1) ITS Directive http://ec.europa.eu/transport/its/road/action_plan_en.htm

(2) ITS can be divided into primarily vehicle based technologies (ESC, Alcohol Interlocks, Seat Belt Reminders, ISA) and primarily infrastructure based technologies (eCall, Dynamic Traffic Management). *Intelligent Transportation Systems and Road Safety* Brussels ETSC 1999

(3) **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

(4) *Intelligent Speed Adaptation* Carsten et al 2008

(5) *Cost Effective EU Transport Safety Measures* ETSC 2003