NEWS RELEASE

Minister Schouppe announces the implementation of alcolocks in Belgium

9th December 2010, Brussels **- Measures to tackle alcohol misuse in road transport are in the spotlight at a round-table discussion in the Belgian Federal Parliament today. Etienne Schouppe, State Secretary for Transport, announces the implementation of alcolocks in rehabilitation programmes for first time high-level offenders and recidivists. The event is organised by ETSC[1] and the Belgian Road Safety Institute (IBSR)[2] in the framework of ETSC's drink driving policy network[3].**

The 35% decrease in road deaths between 2001 and 2009, down to 955 deaths, has been to a large extent the result of a successful anti-drink driving campaigns combined with increased enforcement[4]. Yet, drink driving accident data in Belgium remain incomplete and patchy, with breath test results available in only 60% of all crashes. IBSR estimates that drink driving is the main cause in 25% of all lethal accidents. The recent Eurobarometer survey showed that people driving under the influence of alcohol are considered to be a major safety problem by 92% of the polled Belgian citizens, and that 68% of them believe the government should do more to tackle this problem[5].

The Belgian government published today the decrees implementing the framework law on using alcolocks[6] in rehabilitation programmes adopted in Parliament on the 4th of June 2009[7]. A judge will now be able to offer the participation in an alcolock rehabilitation programme to a drink driving recidivist or a first time offender caught with a BAC limit of 0.8g/l and over for a period of at least one year up to five years. The alcolock will allow this person to continue driving with the help of the alcolocks and to benefit from a follow-up up with a professional trained for this. The limit for the lock will be set at 0.09mg/ml exhaled air (the equivalent of 0.2g/l BAC, which is lower than the legal limit of 0.5).

"*ETSC congratulates the Belgian government for this initiative. Belgium is the second country in the EU, after Finland, to legislate on alcolock rehabilitation programmes. A number of EU countries are looking at the Belgian experience in adopting this new law. Gradual introduction of alcolocks, not only for recidivist offenders, but also for commercial and public transport drivers, including buses transporting children, will reduce the high toll of drink driving casualties,*" stated Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director.

"The introduction of alcohol interlock programmes is an excellent road safety measure. Such programmes are directed at a small minority of drivers with a high risk profile, and engage them to think about their drinking and driving behaviour. The Belgian Road Safety Institute is ready to implement the accompanying measures for alcolock programmes and provide appropriate guidance for offenders. We also hope that alcolocks will be increasingly used on a preventive level, by private drivers as well as in passenger and freight transport," said Martin Van Houtte, IBSR Managing Director.

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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 deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. 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

(2) The Belgian Road Safety Institute (BIVV-IBSR) is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to improve road safety in Belgium through awareness raising activities, research, data collection, policy recommendations and services to third parties. Its activities cover the three road safety factors: the road user, the vehicle and the infrastructure. www.bivv.be

(3) The aim of the "Drink Driving Policy Network", which is supported by DIAGEO, is to contribute to reducing alcohol-related road deaths and injuries through the identification and promotion of best practice in both policy and advocacy.

(4) ETSC 2010 4th PIN Report "Road Safety Target in Sight: Making up for lost time

(5) Eurobarometer survey on Road Safety 20/07/2010

(6) Alcohol interlocks (also termed 'alcolocks') are devices that require the driver to take a breath test before starting the car. If the driver fails the test, the device locks the ignition of the car.

(7) Belgian Law introducing alcohol interlock rehabilitation programmes for first time high-level offenders and recidivists for offenders.
Implementing decrees to be published in the Moniteur Belge/Belgisch Staatsbald of the 9th of December 2010. http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/welcome.pl