

## NEWS RELEASE

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# Good morning, sleeping beauty

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)<sup>i</sup> welcomes today's adoption by the European Commission of two new legislative proposals in the area of road safety: a draft Directive on infrastructure safety and a draft Directive on the retrofitting of blind spot mirrors for heavy goods vehicles.

These are the first proposals since the 'enforcement package' was adopted by the Commission in late 2003. It has therefore been three years since the Commission last used its right of initiative in this field. EU road safety policy has slumbered all this time, as lives continue to be wasted on our roads.

*"It is good to see that the European Commission has reasserted its lead in the European efforts to improve road safety. Without EU legislative action we will not reach the EU target to halve the yearly number of road deaths by 2010,"* said Jörg Beckmann, ETSC's Executive Director.

*"The last ranking under the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) has shown that some 9 or 10 countries may be on their way to achieving the EU target but the majority, and the EU as a whole, are not. Especially those countries that are not progressing fast enough need the EU's support to spare their citizens' life and limb,"* said Franziska Achterberg, ETSC's PIN Programme Director<sup>ii</sup>.

ETSC welcomes the proposal on infrastructure safety: besides the vehicle and the driver, infrastructure is the third pillar of any comprehensive road safety work. Road infrastructure improvements can have a significant impact as the lay-out of the road is thought to play a role in as many as one in three accidents.

ETSC regrets, however, that the European Commission has opted for adopting guidelines, leaving the details of their implementation to the Member States. Only a proposal setting stringent infrastructure safety management standards in all Member States would have made an impact in countries where road safety levels are below average<sup>iii</sup>.

ETSC also welcomes the European Commission's proposal on retrofitting blind spot mirrors as the existing fleet of heavy goods vehicles will only be fully replaced in around 15 years<sup>iv</sup>. If existing trucks were not retrofitted with blind spot mirrors, an opportunity to save as many as 400 lives a year would be lost.

Sleeping beauty has woken up and these two proposals need to be turned into EU law without further delay.

Ends

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<sup>i</sup> The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes and casualties in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. It brings together 35 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

<sup>ii</sup> The Road Safety Performance Index was set up in June 2006 to compare Member States' performance in all areas of road safety. See <http://www.etsc.be/PIN>.

<sup>iii</sup> See the ETSC response to the Commission's Public consultation on "Road infrastructure safety management on the trans-European networks". [www.etsc.be](http://www.etsc.be)

<sup>iv</sup> See the ETSC response to the Commission's public consultation on "Fitting blind spot mirrors on existing trucks". [www.etsc.be](http://www.etsc.be)