



## NEWS RELEASE

Brussels, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005

### " In-built safety: How vehicle technology can help enforce traffic rules?"

In a policy paper<sup>(1)</sup> published today, the European Transport Safety Council<sup>(2)</sup> (ETSC) presents how three in-car enforcement technologies can contribute to saving lives on roads in Europe. Anders Kullgren, Head of Folksam Insurance Research and Development in Sweden and principal author of the Policy Paper stated that: " These technologies have the potential to reduce the three main causes of death on the roads today. But it is up to the decision-makers and manufacturers to promote their use" .

Despite EU legislation requiring the use of seat belts in all car seats, this simplest life saving feature is only used by an average of 76% of occupants in front seats, and by 46% of occupants in rear seats<sup>(3)</sup>. Seat belt reminders which emit a light or a sound signal to alert the car occupant to belt up could increase wearing rates by between 95-99%<sup>(4)</sup>. Moreover, a recent study has shown that this is the case in Sweden, where 99% of drivers in cars with seat belt reminders are wearing their seat belts<sup>(5)</sup>.

Excessive speed is the main cause of both the likelihood and severity of road crashes in the EU. Yet the introduction of Intelligent Speed Adaptation, a system in the car which warns the driver about speeding or prevents the driver from exceeding the speed limit, could ensure greater compliance and lower speeds. Different trials using informative and supportive systems across Europe have shown that approximately 60–75% of users would accept ISA in their own cars<sup>(6)</sup>.

The other main cause of road deaths in Europe is drink driving. Drivers with an illegal alcohol level cause about 30-40% of all driver fatalities<sup>(7)</sup>. The alcohol interlock, a breath-testing device connected to the vehicle, could prevent the vehicle from starting unless the driver has completed a breath test. Field trials have shown that there is a 28-65% lower conviction rate if there is an inter-lock installed in the vehicle, where the 65% lower rate is reached during the first year after installation<sup>(8)</sup>.

The report shows that much more could be done to tackle main causes of road traffic deaths in the three areas of speeding, drink driving and non seat belt use. ETSC's Executive Director, Jörg Beckmann points out that: " As the EU works towards its target of halving road deaths by 50% by 2010 the swift introduction and promotion of these three technologies could make an important contribution to achieving this goal."

For more information contact: ETSC Programme Officer Ellen Townsend  
[programme@etsc.be](mailto:programme@etsc.be) Tel. + 32 (0) 2 230 4106

(1) The Report *"In-car Enforcement Technologies Today"* is available from the ETSC Secretariat or can be downloaded from [www.etsc.be](http://www.etsc.be).

(2) **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 29 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

(3) ETSC (2003) *Cost-Effective EU Transport Measures*

(4) Turbell (1997) *How to optimise Seatbelt Usage in Europe*

(5) Folksam (2005) *Bältespåminnare säkrar en nästan 100-procentig bältesanvändning (Seat-belt reminders almost ensure 100 percent seat-belt use – A study on seat-belt wearing rates in cars with seat-belt reminders)*, Folksam 10660 Stockholm, Sweden, August 2005.

(6) Peltola H., Tapio J., Rajamäki R.(2004) *Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) – recording ISA in Finland*.

(7) ETSC (2003) *Cost-Effective EU transport Measures*

(8) Beck, K.H., Rauch, W.J., Baker, E.A. (1999) *Effects of alcohol ignition inter-lock license restrictions on multiple alcohol offenders: A randomized trial in Maryland*. Am J Public Health 89(11):1696-1700, 1999.