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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

### **Thousands of lives can be saved by reducing road risks: The unexplored potential of safe road engineering**

#### **Summary**

**Despite the relentless drive towards harmonisation of speed limits, blood alcohol levels and enforcement policies, the fact remains that some European roads are up to ten times safer to drive on than others. With political attention increasingly focused on reducing the number of road casualties, six organisations in charge of road safety programmes are jointly calling for a European legal framework to support safer road design & management.**

#### **Details**

Given the extreme diversity of road safety levels observed throughout Europe and in the wake of the political priorities set in Verona by Europe's Transport Ministers, we the undersigned organisations are asking the European Union to act. Europe has a moral and legal responsibility to provide guidance on safer road engineering in order to ensure Europe's road users are offered the driving conditions they deserve. This can be achieved by:

- establishing which auditing procedures are required at the design, pre-opening and operational stages of roads to ensure they meet all safety standards,
- harmonising accident data collection and mapping to ensure road authorities, traffic engineers and road users share a common understanding of accident risk rates and casualty reduction potential,
- tackling "black spots" through eradication programmes that combine cost-effective remedial measures and long-term road investment programmes,
- promoting a European culture of safe road design, above all for vulnerable road users (cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians),
- setting up expert networks and common reporting mechanisms enabling "best in Europe" approaches to self-explaining roads and forgiving roadsides.

Europe has reached a crossroads in its target of halving road deaths by 2010. Where they have been implemented, integrated road safety policies combining driver, vehicle and road infrastructure safety measures have led to spectacular results.

As Europe's Member States embark on vital transport infrastructure development projects, above all in Central and Eastern Europe, they must be prepared to learn from one another. Safer road engineering is a textbook case where Europe can overcome today's unacceptable patchwork of national standards and practices which needlessly put lives at risk.

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