

Brussels, 22 May 2006

Calling for safer road engineering Thousands of lives and billions of Euros can be saved every year

European road safety targets set in 2001 will not be met unless road authorities rise up to the challenge of absorbing increasing road traffic while offering safer driving conditions to all road users. The European Commission's proposal to offer Member States a toolkit of safety management procedures is the right way to ensure Europe overcomes today's unacceptable patchwork of national standards resulting from decades of under-investment which needlessly put lives at risk.

As the European Commission itself recently recognised, "not enough progress has been made and more effort will be needed, at national and European level, to achieve the objective of halving the number of road deaths by 2010". Ongoing initiatives to improve driver behaviour and upgrade vehicle safety standards are encouraging and should be vigorously pursued. But what of safer road engineering?

Numerous deaths and serious injuries on our roads will be prevented if the European Union lives up to its political, moral and legal obligation of providing guidance to ensure safety is integrated in all phases of road planning, design, construction, operation & maintenance through cost-effective road management practices:

- Road safety impact assessments, providing comparative safety scenarios at the planning stage,
- Road safety audits, as a systematic process for checking new road schemes prior to their opening,
- Road safety inspections, offering a periodical review of road networks in operation,
- Network safety management, to ensure high accident risk road sections are inventoried and eradicated.

Europe has reached a crossroads as it considers new ways of tackling its unacceptably high levels of road deaths. Key decisions on how to build a new road and where to affect maintenance funds are all too often made without a clear understanding of their safety implications. All categories of road users – motorists, professional drivers, two-wheelers and pedestrians – stand to gain from safer road infrastructure. Above all, Europe's millions of road users have a right to know to what safety standards their road networks are operated and what action plans are being implemented to eradicate dangerous roads.

We the undersigned organisations call for the swift release of a Directive on Safe Road Management as a part of a new "safety deal" linking in a realistic way all the actors of the safety chain, the drivers, the vehicles, the roads, the policy makers and the citizens in their common effort to save thousands of needless casualties and billions of Euros every year.

Signatory organisations



Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile



International Road Transport Union



Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations



European Asphalt Pavement Association



European Union Road Federation (ERF)



Association Européenne des Concessionnaires d'Autoroutes et d'Ouvrages à Péage



Association des Constructeurs Européens de Motocycles



European Bitumen Association



Confederation of Organisations in Road Transport Enforcement