

## PARTNERSHIPS *EN ROUTE* TO COMBATING DRINK DRIVING

*Brussels, 6 December 2010:* Around 80 people from across Europe, including policy makers, law enforcement authorities, NGOs, football clubs and civil society stakeholders joined forces Friday, to debate how best to combat the scourge of drink-driving in Europe, and also to reaffirm support for the European Road Safety Charter.

Organised by the Belgian Road Safety Institute and The Brewers of Europe, the multi-stakeholder conference coincided with discussions within the Council on the new EU policy orientations for 2011-2020 on Road Safety, i.e. halving road deaths, and the start of the UN decade for Road Safety.

“The numbers of road fatalities remain unacceptably high in the EU,” said the road safety policy officer representing the European Commission’s DG MOVE. “Fatalities in the EU from road traffic accidents have reduced substantially over the last 10 years to around 35,000 today, but this is still too high and we need to do more to reduce this,” she said, citing “shared responsibility amongst European authorities, national governments, regional and local authorities, private companies, road operators, and actors in civil society, indeed everybody” in having a role to play.

Executive Director of the Belgian Road Safety Institute, Martin Van Houtte, stressed, “hundreds of lives could be saved if all drivers abstained from drinking before driving. The BOB [designated driver] campaign and police controls attached to it represent the best method to pass the message.” Mr Van Houtte went on to talk about how the partnership approach towards combating drink-driving in Belgium had made a contribution “in reducing the number of fatalities on Belgium’s roads by 36% since 2001.” The BOB concept, supported by the Belgian Brewers and now entering its 16<sup>th</sup> year, has been copied and rolled out across 15 other European countries.

Noting the many concrete interventions at the conference, but citing in particular those of the Spanish transport ministry, the Polish motor transport institute, Danish football club FC Midtjylland, and other stakeholders (mentioned above), the president of The Brewers of Europe, Alberto da Ponte said, “if you want to make progress in combating drink-driving and reducing the numbers of fatalities, the multi-stakeholder approach as we’ve seen today is the benchmark.” Da Ponte further opined, “Europe’s brewers will continue to partner and support responsible campaigns. We have already for well over a decade been partnering with a range of stakeholders from across European society, and this is partly evidenced in our public commitments to the EU’s alcohol and health forum and the European Road Safety Charter.” He cited the above examples of recent anti-drink-driving campaigns Europe’s brewers had supported in Spain, Poland and Denmark, along with Italy and Belgium, all of which he said were “practises that could be adapted and replicated across other countries.”

“Actions and partnerships need to sustainably deliver results,” said Jeannot Mersch, President of the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR). “Besides offering support and help to road traffic victims, FEVR continues to campaign for a reduction of the danger on the roads during the next decade, leading therefore we hope to a reduction in the number of broken lives - in our countries, throughout Europe and in the whole world,” he said.

Fittingly, the conference included a signing of the European Road Safety Charter (ERSC) by The Brewers of Europe, the Italian brewers association Assobirra, the European Transport Training Organisation, Zone de Police Bouraine, the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, Politiezone West-Limburg, and FC Midtjylland. The ERSC is an instrument that offers European-wide recognition and visibility to stakeholders that have engaged in road safety actions.

The conference approved 6 recommendations for effective strategies against drink driving. These are:

1. An effective approach to reducing drink driving requires the correct combination of legislation, enforcement, sanctions, education and societal engagement.
2. People who drink drive must not all be placed in the same category and specific approaches are needed to target these different groups of drink drivers.
3. Whilst levels of enforcement, BAC limits, sanctions etc. may vary from one place to another, a clear and consistent message against drink driving is essential.
4. Best practise approaches and partnerships should be identified so that they be reciprocated across other countries and adapted to other cultures.
5. Education on drink driving should reach right into formalised education in schools and into families through parental guidance.
6. Effective strategies against drink driving require a long term commitment that seeks to change mentalities over a generation. Without condemning the whole population, whilst confirming what is the right behaviour, strategies should appeal to people's sense of responsibility, calling upon society to work together in the same direction.

—ENDS—

**Note to editors:**

Presentations pertaining to the conference are available on [www.dontdrinkdrive.eu](http://www.dontdrinkdrive.eu)

**About The Brewers of Europe**

The Brewers of Europe, founded in 1958 and based in Brussels, is the voice of the European brewing sector towards the European institutions and international organisations. It has 27 members, comprising 24 national brewer associations from most EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Among the roughly 4,000 brewers across Europe, the vast majority are small and medium-sized, local and family-run businesses. 2.5 million jobs are directly or indirectly linked to the European brewing sector. [www.brewersofeurope.org](http://www.brewersofeurope.org)

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