

Paris, 22 October 2009

Lower Blood Alcohol Levels Can Save Lives

“Lower blood alcohol levels can save lives”, said **Jack Short**, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum, today in Paris.

He welcomed the proposal in Ireland to reduce blood alcohol limits to 0.5 g/l for general drivers, as is already the case in nearly all EU countries, and 0.2 g/l for young and professional drivers, saying that “there is absolutely no arguing with the scientific research that crash risks increase rapidly with blood alcohol and even faster for young drivers. International work in the ITF and OECD and elsewhere confirm that reducing blood alcohol limits -- coupled with adequate publicity and enforcement -- contribute to reducing the number and severity of crashes”.

Alcohol is implicated in a high proportion of fatal crashes and this measure represents an opportunity to save lives and to continue the significant improvements that have been made in reducing road crashes in Ireland.

“The adverse impacts of tighter limits on social life and on rural communities should not be exaggerated” he said. Other countries have managed successfully to address this issue, including with campaigns on designated drivers.

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