

"THE EUROPEAN ROAD TO INCREASED SAFETY"

A joint press release from MEP Paolo Costa, president of the EP TRAN Committee, and ASECAP – the European Association of Tolloed Road Motorways

Policy makers and experts discuss road safety on TENs

European Parliament, 21st January 2008: an evening of discussions on the sensitive theme of Road Safety and the Commission's legislative proposal on the Road Infrastructure Safety Management on TENs road networks.

The event, entitled "the European Road to Increased Safety", was hosted and moderated by the president of the European Parliament TRAN committee, On. Paolo Costa, co-organised by ASECAP, the European Association of Tolloed Road Motorways, and was designed to raise awareness among policy makers and other interested parties on the latest management and operational practices in the field of road safety.

The first technical session gave the opportunity to national experts from ASECAP members to perform three presentations and highlight the state of the art and safety performance in France, Italy and Portugal. The presentations indicated how ASECAP and its members are constantly improving safety on their network and how the important achievements of the motorways sector relied on the endeavours of experts and engineers, and on the long tradition of a safe management based on the relationship driver – vehicle –infrastructure, offering to its users the highest-quality service.

The second political session, chaired by president Paolo Costa, was devoted to the road safety directive. Mr Grillo-Pasquarelli, DG TREN Director of the inland transport department highlighted the basic political issues of the directive, while Mr. Markov and Mrs Sommer, both members of the TRAN committee and rapporteurs on the draft directive expressed their opinion on the way safety should be tackled, while the stakeholders representatives (M.Rotondo – ASECAP, M.Nielsen – IRU, A.Avenoso - ETSC) noted the need for further actions in the safety environment and asked for a more active role of the stakeholders in the policy making process.

President Paolo Costa noted with satisfaction that all the panellists expressed a common interest in strengthening cooperation in road safety matters. In this complex environment, the European decision-makers should establish the necessary legislative framework for improving safety in all the EU member states. Under these considerations, the safety elements included in the current legislative proposal were considered as a step into the right direction by all the panellists, although Mrs Sommer challenged the choice of a legislative tool and reiterated her wish to see more flexible guidelines that would encourage a better dissemination and exchange of best practices among EU members States.