**Media Information**

**What a difference a little kindness on the road can make this holiday season**

**Study finds that aggressive behaviour on the road by one driver
causes Ripple Effect as others behave in a similar fashion**

Brussels and London, December 3rd 2015 – Winter weather, wet or icy roads, darkness and holiday traffic – there are enough stress factors drivers will face during the upcoming holiday season. A study released today by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and tiremaker Goodyear has highlighted another stress factor: the ripple effect caused by other drivers’ behavior on the road.

Aggressive or combative driving frustrates other drivers on the road, who take it out on the next creating a chain of aggressive, and unsafe driving situations. On the other hand, considerate drivers have the opposite effect, helping to create safer and less stressful road environment.

In the survey across nearly 9000 drivers from 15 European countries, 87% of drivers agreed that another’s considerate driving can prompt them to be considerate to a different driver later on during their journey. Fully 55% were prepared to admit that when irritated or provoked on the road by one driver, they may be more likely to take it out on a different driver later on. A simple act of kindness or one of aggression can initiate a chain of events creating an environment that is either comfortable and safer or stressful and more dangerous for drivers.

*“Setting aside factors such as weather conditions or fatigue, the drivers around us provide an important context to which we respond as our journey unfolds,”* stated Dr. Chris Tennant, of the LSE who led the research project. *“When negotiating road space with others, drivers frequently apply the logic of reciprocity. However, since many interactions are fleeting, the reciprocity is often indirect: our response is made to a different driver later on our journey – thus, the ripple effect on the road.”*

**Other drivers’ behaviour can make anyone drive more dangerously**

While other research in road safety has rightly drawn attention to the challenge of identifying specific problem drivers who are prone to dangerous behaviour, this research demonstrates the need to recognise how other drivers’ behaviour can make anyone drive more dangerously – even if they would not otherwise be considered to be problem drivers.

*“Road etiquette matters to drivers,”* explained Tennant. Reviewing video scenes of interactions on the road, the majority of surveyed drivers all affirmed the importance of gestures of thanks, with fewer than 10%, typically, denying the importance of such acknowledgements. In interviews, drivers readily admit that when one driver neglects to say thank you, they are more likely to drive assertively in the next interaction. The study found a whole range of behaviours likely to antagonise others, from merging tactics at busy junctions to tailgating, and from poor signalling to motorway lane discipline. Yet in interview, drivers acknowledge that they perform these same behaviours themselves, usually inadvertently, potentially initiating the ripple effect of negative interactions.

*“The road is rarely seen as a social setting, particularly one wherein good manners should be used. In fact our road safety research shows that many drivers can see other cars on the road as anonymous machines, and not as vehicles containing another human being,”* added Olivier Rousseau, Goodyear Vice President Consumer Tires, Europe, Middle East and Africa.*“ We urge drivers to remember what strong effect their own behavior has on the behavior of others. Our study suggests that aggressive and combative driving behavior by one driver can initiate a chain of reactions between other drivers and eventually cause a dangerous situation or even an accident some time later while the originator has already moved on. It is up to all of us to stop this Ripple Effect on the road,“* said Rousseau.

**Many ways to be inconsiderate**

*“There are many ways to be inconsiderate on the road: bossing, competing, shouting, gesticulating, intimidating and all of these have the ability to escalate and intensify an inconsiderate and potentially less safe driving culture. However, there are only a few ways to be polite but those few ways are very powerful, such as allowing others to progress in busy traffic, making eye contact and visibly saying thank you when others let you progress, apologising when you impede others – all these oil the wheels of a considerate driving culture from which we all benefit reciprocally,”* concludes Tennant.

Designed to analyse drivers’ interactions with and their attitudes towards other drivers, and their effect on risky driving, the study was composed of a qualitative survey using focus groups and driver interviews in the UK and Italy, as well as of a quantitative online survey of nearly 9000 drivers in 15 countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, Slovenia, Spain, the UK and Austria).

***About Goodyear***

*Goodyear is one of the world's largest tire companies. It employs approximately 66,000 people and manufactures its products in 49 facilities in 22 countries around the world. Its two Innovation Centers in Akron, Ohio and Colmar-Berg, Luxembourg strive to develop state-of-the-art products and services that set the technology and performance standard for the industry.*

***About LSE***

*The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is one of the foremost social science universities in the world. LSE is a specialist university with an international intake and a global reach. Its research and teaching span the full breadth of the social sciences, from economics, politics and law to sociology, anthropology, accounting and finance. Founded in 1895, the School has an outstanding reputation for academic excellence. 16 Nobel Prize winners have been LSE staff or alumni. The School has a cosmopolitan student body, with around 9,500 full time students from 140 countries. LSE has a staff of over 3,000, with about 46 per cent drawn from countries outside the UK.*

***Notes for the editor:***

* An executive summary of the full report can be downloaded at www.goodyear.eu.
* The full report is available on request.
* Press release on collaboration between LSE and Goodyear: <http://www.goodyear.eu/corporate_emea/news-press/newslisting.jsp?year=2015&month=6>
* Press release on driving personalities:
<http://www.goodyear.eu/corporate_emea/news-press/articles/multiple-driving-personalities-clash-on-europe-s-roads_178422>

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