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Press Release

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Toyota Fund for Europe inspires new generation of “EcoDrivers”

The Toyota Fund for Europe today launched EcoDriving – a new programme helping Europeans save money at the pump and cut CO₂ exhaust emissions by as much as 10% through smarter driving habits. Toyota and NGO network, Global Action Plan International, will organise up to 800 workshops, reaching an estimated 12,000 drivers across Spain, Belgium, Iceland, Norway, and the UK. Toyota will invest almost €300,000 in EcoDriving, expanding the programme to 10 countries by 2010. The first wave of workshops kicks off in local communities this month.

‘EcoDriving does not mean that drivers have to purchase costly devices or modify their vehicles. By making simple changes to every-day driving behaviours, every driver, no matter what kind of vehicle they own, can contribute and benefit,’ said Graham Smith, Chairman of the Toyota Fund for Europe. ‘The European Climate Change Programme has calculated that EcoDriving can realise savings of at least 50 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions in Europe and around €20 billion by 2010,’ he added.

The programme will target local authorities, private companies and community groups through half-day workshops that cater for up to 15 people. Under the guidance of trained supervisors, participants will learn new driving practices on specially-designed simulators that recreate the driving experience and test how far drivers can travel on 0.1 litres of fuel.

Toyota and NGO, Ecolife, piloted the programme in Belgium last year, reaching nearly 5,000 people through dedicated workshops and participation in community events. The total potential impact of this pilot is savings of around 415,000 litres of fuel, and over 1,000 tonnes of CO₂ in one year – or, in other words, the annual CO₂ workload of more than 71,000 trees!*

EcoDriving practices include shifting into a higher gear earlier, looking ahead and anticipating the traffic flow, keeping car windows closed and using the ventilation system. Comparable savings can be achieved through proper vehicle maintenance and planning journeys ahead of time. By having the correct tyre pressure, for example, drivers can improve fuel economy by around 3%. Removing roof load to minimise wind drag can realise fuel savings as high as 40%.

Toyota introduced EcoDriving activities to Europe as early as 2006. Since then, the initiative has become part of a wider organisational commitment that involves ‘spreading the word’ to employees, business partners and customers. For more information and to participate in an EcoDriving workshop in your local community, visit www.ecodriving-online.eu.

Notes to the editors:

*One tree absorbs around 14 kilograms of CO₂ each year (measured using Japanese cedar and CO₂ equivalent)

Toyota Motor Europe (TME) established the Toyota Fund for Europe in 2002 to lead and partner with NGOs on local community activities that support environmental protection, technical education and road safety. The Fund has just launched a dedicated website, www.toyotafund.eu, which invites European NGOs to nominate activities and request funding on projects of shared community concern.

TOYOTA MOTOR EUROPE

Toyota Motor Europe NV/SA (TME) oversees the wholesale sales and marketing of Toyota and Lexus vehicles, parts and accessories, and Toyota's European manufacturing and engineering operations. Toyota directly and indirectly employs around 80,000 people in Europe and has invested over €7 billion since 1990. In 2007, Toyota sold 1,238,638 Toyota and Lexus vehicles in Europe, enjoying its 11th consecutive record year of sales. For more information, go to <http://www.toyota.eu>.

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