

eSafety Cocktail
26 February 2008 17.30, Brussels

Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,
thank you all for attending this event.

Special thanks to eSafety Aware and eSafety Support (thank you, Ben Reichert) for making it possible for us to come together and discuss the wider implications of the "Intelligent Car Initiative". I'm glad that a great colleague, the shadow rapporteur of my report, Mr. Koch is so kind to share his thoughts with us today and I'm also looking forward to hear the speech of Mr. Meyer, CEO of Ertico-ITS Europe.

A much greater person than I am once said, "I have a dream". By the way, who know who was this person? (Martin Luther King.) Let me share one of my dreams, one of my visions with you.

In this dream, I see my sons in the future not so far away. They are not my little boys any more, as they are both above 20. (They are now 20 and 18 years old.) They are driving an intelligent car. Thanks to the Adaptive Cruise Control, they are using less fuel so they pollute less. Thanks to the Urban Traffic Control systems, they can run at optimal speed and can avoid traffic jams or other obstacles on the roads. Again, it is resulting in less fuel consumption and air pollution. They contribute to preserving the environment and passing it over in good status to my grandchildren. They are aware of the fact that they are borrowing the earth from their children.

In the same dream, my children are safer in their vehicles because they have Electronic Stability Control so they can avoid skidding. The Accident Avoidance Systems, such as break assist and crash avoidance technology contribute to lowering the danger of accidents or to mitigate their consequences. Nevertheless, if they have an accident they have better chances to recover (or to survive) because the eCall system will automatically call the emergency services and provide them with the exact location of the vehicle and other relevant

information. I would underline here that only 13 Member States signed so far the eCall Memorandum of Understanding!

As I am a woman of action, I don't want these visions to remain only dreams. I want them to come true. Let's make them reality! As responsible European decision-makers, we can possibly have one priority: human life. The protection of human lives should lead our actions.

But let's look around in today's Europe. What do we see? The sad truth is that the penetration rates for intelligent car systems and applications remain very low in relation to their life-saving potential.

As I mentioned a couple of minutes ago, during the TRAN Committee meeting, we must do our best to make these systems widely available. For the consumers, affordability is a key issue. Many consumers simply cannot afford the systems in question. It is therefore important that intelligent transport systems become affordable. Consumers also require clear and understandable information on what they are purchasing. Consumers must be informed about "intelligent cars". Information should be brief, clear and comprehensible and it is important that it should reach the largest audience that possible. Car dealers and their sales staff play a key role in this, as does the media, especially television and the internet.

However, a step-by-step approach is required: intelligent cars also need the support of an intelligent infrastructure but the "intelligent road" is not yet ready. The constraints within which the automotive industry must work should be duly considered. A new car is not designed, produced and tested overnight. The implementation of intelligent systems and applications in vehicles will therefore take time and work. But on the long run, I share Viviane Reding's views on the European Commission's aim to achieve a 100 percent ESC penetration in the European carfleet.

So, dear Friends, this is why we need to unite our forces and for this, we need all of you. Because as Henry Ford said, "*Coming together is*

a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success". Let's make my dream happen!