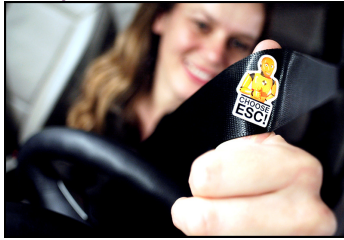


Article: Intelligent cars - just around the corner?

Source: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/062-22624-168-06-25-910-20080229STO22578-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm

Intelligent cars - just round the corner?

Transport - 05-03-2008 - 11:59



Car safety can be glamorous too!

Every year an average of 40,000 people die on Europe's roads and a further 1.7 million are severely injured. With such carnage all around us the search for ways to improve road safety is a pressing one. Parliament's Transport Committee last week discussed an "intelligent car initiative" launched last year by the European Commission. The object is to harness the latest technology to make cars safer and more efficient through devices such as the ESC (Electronic Stability Control).

It all forms part of the eSafety initiative which has been identified as a key element of research and development into a new generation of safer and more efficient cars. Another benefit of greater technology within cars is that it could ease congestion on Europe's roads and motorways by diverting traffic away from hotspots.

eCall - a car that dials the emergency services

One of the most high profile eSafety initiatives is the "eCall" system which the European Parliament has strongly backed. This is a system which automatically calls the emergency services if a vehicle has been in a serious accident (for example if the passengers are too injured to do it themselves). Crucially, it will also call the closest emergency services available from across Europe.

The report on intelligent cars was drafted by Hungarian Socialist MEP Zita Gurmai. Her report calls for Governments and car makers to supply information to the public on the opportunities that intelligent vehicles present. The report also wants Governments to introduce ecological and safety incentives. Finally it also calls for rapid implementation of these systems.

Drawing attention to the urgency of the issue Zita Gurmai said that "30 years ago no one used seats belts. We need to make technology affordable for citizens but also to improve the infrastructure".

Next month the Transport Committee will vote on the report ahead of a vote in Plenary in June.

REF.: 20080229STO22578

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/062-22624-168-06-25-910-20080229STO22578-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm