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## EU wants all cars equipped with emergency transmitters

BRUSSELS (AFP) Feb 03, 2005

The European Union executive unveiled plans Thursday to equip all new cars sold in the EU with an emergency transmitter to ensure rapid medical help in the event of a crash.

Around 2,000 lives could be saved a year once the automatic emergency call ("eCall") technology is in place, the European Commission said, targeting a start date of 2009 for the devices.

The transmitter would be activated automatically by pressure sensors that would detect a sudden impact, or manually by an injured occupant of the car, and send an SOS via the EU-wide emergency call number 112.

The emergency services, through specially adapted call centres, would receive the signal and immediately locate the car by satellite to dispatch an ambulance crew.

"With this technology, your car could save your life," EU Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding said.

The commission unveiled its plan after contacts with EU governments and the auto industry which it said showed that the eCall technology could be fitted in all new cars "as soon as 2009".

The devices would be embedded in the car's electronics with only a button visible on the dashboard, Brussels said.



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The commission said it would like to see field tests carried out next year.

But for the technology to work throughout the EU by 2009, member states' emergency services will need to upgrade their call centres "at the latest in

The commission, however, said the plan already had more than 20 signatories drawn from the EU and the auto, telecoms and insurance industries all committed to its success.

"Advanced information and communication technologies have great potential to improve road safety in Europe," Reding said, pointing to the commission's legal green light given last month to anti-crash radar technology.

The technology could spell the end of smashing into the car in front, or bumping into out-of-vision obstacles in car parks, according to Brussels.

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