



PRESS RELEASE

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European cooperation initiative aims to increase use of life-saving technology on Europe's roads

Key road safety players will come together on 2 and 3 November 2006 to review how hi-tech safety systems for cars, so called eSafety systems, can help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on Europe's roads.

"Each year there are more than 1.4 million car accidents and 40,000 road fatalities in Europe. Increased use of eSafety systems could bring this number down substantially", says Jacob Bangsgaard, Director of eSafety Support. "By decreasing the driver's workload, detecting dangers and providing support in hazardous situations, such systems could save thousands of lives every year."

With at least 93% of accidents caused by human error, the case for increased driver-assistance is clear. For example, an eSafety system such as Electronic Stability Control has been proven to reduce the risk of accidents by 20%. The anti-rollover technology senses when the driver loses control and automatically applies braking pressure to individual wheels to help stabilise the vehicle and avoid skidding. As skidding is the main cause of traffic accidents involving serious injury or death, Electronic Stability Control has been dubbed the greatest road safety innovation since the safety belt.

Organised by eSafety Support and co-hosted by the Swedish Road Administration and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, day one of the European eSafety Observers meeting will take place in Stockholm, while day 2 will be in Helsinki. The aim is to review how stakeholders can work together in order to boost the deployment of eSafety systems such as Electronic Stability Control.

The meeting will feature presentations by European Commission and eSafety Support experts, giving an overview of the eSafety initiative and its current priorities. The initiative, dating from 2002, is dedicated to halving the number of road deaths in Europe by 2010 through the development and deployment of eSafety systems.

Discussions will focus on the roll-out of eCall - the pan-European in-vehicle emergency call. When the car senses a major impact, eCall will automatically report its exact location to the nearest emergency centre. Anyone in the car can also trigger an eCall by simply pushing a button. The technology could save an estimated 2,500 lives every year and provide faster medical care for many thousands more. With the necessary commitment from all relevant stakeholders, the life-saving technology will be available in all new vehicles from 2011.

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Note to editors:

The Commission-funded eSafety Support project actively assists eSafety stakeholders in their efforts to increase public awareness of the enormous impact eSafety systems can have on road safety. The project lends support to the eSafety initiative, which brings together the European Commission, public authorities, industry and other stakeholders in a drive to accelerate the development, deployment and use of eSafety systems.

The project's website - www.esafetysupport.org - is an up-to-date resource for eSafety information.