

Article : Infineon drives European eCall

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MUNICH, Germany — Infineon is the first semiconductor manufacturer having signed a Memorandum of understanding to support the European Commission automotive safety initiative. With the move, the company intends to add momentum to the eCall pan-european proposal for integrating automatic accident alert systems to vehicles.

Infineon sees itself well positioned for the additional business that can be expected should eCall equipment become mandatory: The technology requires that signals from internal car sensors such as air bag or safety belt systems or rollover sensors be fed into a GSM mobile radio device – two business segments in which Infineon holds strong positions.

The EU Commission hopes that eCall will lower the number of accident victims in Europe and save about 25.000 lives annually by helping to get emergency medical help faster than hitherto.

eCall systems record data from key safety components via a CAN bus interface and transmit them in the case of an accident along with data from a GPS navigation module to an emergency call center. This enables an appropriate emergency response to be mounted without delay. The system is scheduled to become a standard feature in all new automobiles within the EU from 2010. Infineon already supplies an eCall platform to the automotive industry that is built around its xGold 101 mobile handset chipset (formerly called eGold Voice). The platform is presently tested by several automotive OEMs, an Infineon spokesperson explained. The spokesperson also said that the company expects a significant aftersales market for eCall devices.

In a press release, Infineon quoted market researcher Strategy Analytics with a statement saying that in 2008 about 5 million eCall systems will be shipped. Within six year's time, this figure is expected to eightfold which translates in an annual growth rate of 37.5 percent.

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