

EU's eCall in-car mobile system: more Member States sign up

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Yesterday, two more Member States of the European Union signed the eCall Memorandum of Understanding that has been initiated by the **European Commission**.

With their signature at a German Presidency eSafety conference in Berlin, Austria and Germany commit themselves to actively support the timely implementation of eCall, the automatic notification system for road accidents that could save 2,500 lives annually when fully deployed in Europe.

This brings to 9 the number of EU Member States that have committed themselves to eCall. Switzerland, Norway and Iceland have also signed.

"I welcome that with the support of the German Presidency, two more Member States are now joining our eCall initiative, bringing the total number of countries to 12," said Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for the Information Society and Media. "We have clearly achieved critical mass today. I now urge industry to keep to the timetable for equipping all new cars with eCall by 2010. I furthermore sincerely hope that at the European Commission's next public event on the Intelligent Car in Versailles on 18 September, other Member States will join eCall. When the safety of our citizens is at stake, neither industry nor public administrations should shy away from their responsibilities."

In November 2006 the Commission called for further efforts to make sure eCall was brought back on track. It called for Member States, which have not signed the eCall Memorandum so far, to catch up with the quicker ones by mobilising their national organisations and by making eCall a national priority. Industry was also asked to renew its commitment to eCall and for its part made 2010 the target date for deploying eCall in new cars across Europe.

In parallel the Commission is assisting by working on privacy and standardisation, and through field tests and public awareness campaigns (see IP/07/621 and IP/06/1271). Such efforts are part of the Intelligent Car initiative within the Commission's i2010 strategy - a European Information Society for growth and jobs.

eCall is an automatic notification system for road accidents, based on the single European emergency number 112. In the event of a serious accident anywhere in Europe, the car automatically calls the nearest emergency centre using 112. Basic information about the crash, including the exact location of the accident scene, is communicated via this call, even when no passenger is capable to respond. The availability of the location information reduces rescue services' reaction time by 50% in rural and 40% in built-up areas. Estimates suggest that this will save 2,500 lives in Europe each year, and lead to less severe injuries in 15% of all non-fatal cases.

The countries that have signed the eCall Memorandum of Understanding already are: Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland. Today, Germany and Austria joined.

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