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## **Extra safety, not extra prices for intelligent systems, say motorists**

***According to a recent Eurobarometer study, European motorists attach high importance to safety in choosing a car, but the perceived high price and lack of understanding of the benefits still slow down market penetration of intelligent safety systems. The European Commission has already recognised this and has increased efforts to raise awareness of the real benefits of intelligent safety systems.***

*"Technology can greatly improve road safety and prevent accidents," said Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media. "Together with industry we are working hard to develop Intelligent Safety Systems. Member States and stakeholders must ensure that these dramatically important and efficient technologies are quickly taken in use in all markets in Europe. These survey results underline how strongly Europeans feel and why we must all act now."*

Road safety is shifting in focus towards accident avoidance. This involves the use of advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to develop Intelligent Safety Systems which can save lives and reduce the severity of injuries. The rapid deployment and take-up of these systems would benefit all road users. This requires, however, that car buyers and others are informed about these systems and understand clearly their benefits.

As a part of the Intelligent Car Initiative, launched in February 2006 (see [IP/06/191](#)), the Commission initiated two surveys to learn about drivers' attitudes towards these systems and their knowledge on their use and benefits. A qualitative survey was performed in six countries (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the UK) and a quantitative one was performed in all EU-25 Member States with close to 25,000 interviews. These allow the Commission to understand users' attitudes towards new technologies and their level of knowledge, and to decide on further actions, such as public demonstrations, media events and campaigns.

The survey showed that for motorists safety is highly important when buying a car but they do not want to pay for extra for the safety systems. This could be because they feel that cars should be safe even without them. The perceived high price of buying and maintaining safety systems was also a factor. No major differences between countries or between categories of road users were found.

Besides price, safety and fuel consumption are the two top criteria in choosing a car.

- Over 80% want Electronic Stability Control (ESC) in their next car. ESC is perceived as an extension of the already well known ABS and drivers are already familiar with its use and its advantages.
- Over 70% want in-vehicle Emergency call (eCall) in their next car (see [IP/06/1720](#)). Drivers understand that eCall can save lives if a crash occurs. Data privacy for eCall does not seem a problem: over 70% consider there is no or only a minor inconvenience to privacy, and its benefits are more important.

The survey underlined the importance of User Awareness: Many citizens do not know enough about new intelligent vehicle safety systems' potential, or recognise them as something that improves safety. This is why the Commission welcomes the recent public-private communication platform "eSafetyAware!" to promote specific technologies through media events and campaigns with large media coverage (see [IP/06/1271](#)).

More information:

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/programmes/esafety/](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/esafety/)

<http://www.eSafetySupport.org>

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