



Media Announcement Embargoed until 1am CET 1 July 2008

Actions needed to change slow take up of life saving vehicle technology

Electronic Stability Control (ESC) could save 4,000 lives each year in Europe alone

The international ChooseESC! campaign to promote the life-saving technology Electronic Stability Control (ESC) is organising a major event in Brussels on 1 July 2008 to show the progress in ESC penetration for Europe, US, Canada and Australia. The campaign warns that the take-up of ESC for new cars in Europe is too slow and in some countries even stagnating. Slow penetration of the technology into new cars will make it harder for the European Union to reach its target to cut road deaths by 50% by 2010. In the United States ESC will become mandatory from 2012. Europe, Canada and Australia now plan to make ESC mandatory for all new cars from 2012.

ESC is a safety technology that identifies the risk of a skid at an early stage – even before the driver – and uses the vehicle’s brakes to steer the vehicle safely back on track. Whether the skid is the result of an emergency avoidance manoeuvre or a simple error of judgement, ESC can help the driver maintain control.

In Europe today more than 40,000 persons are killed in the traffic every year and more than 1 million injured. Large efforts have been made by the car manufacturers, technology providers, authorities and road operators to make mobility safer. Cars are today much safer than they were 10-15 years ago thanks to improved crash test standards, crumple zones, seatbelts, air bags, and introduction of safety technologies like ABS and ESC. Electronic Stability Control can prevent the accident from happening in the first place and it has been hailed the greatest road safety innovation since the seatbelt. 4,000 lives and 100,000 injuries could be avoided every year if all cars in the EU had ESC but more actions are needed to bring safety technologies like ESC to the consumer.

Strong campaign support from the world’s best drivers

The campaign, which particularly focuses on new car buyers, has been strongly endorsed by Michael Schumacher. In a video statement, the seven times F1 World Champion gives the following message to car buyers: “Next time you are buying a car think about ESC. Ask your dealer for a model that is ESC equipped. You never know when a crash might happen so don’t take chances with the lives of you or your family. Make sure you choose ESC”.

Four times World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb is one of the strong supporters of the campaign. Mr Loeb said: "Controlled slides are part of rallying, but when I am driving on public roads with my family, I want to avoid skidding at all costs. That's why I would always choose ESC for my car."

European Commissioner and campaign Patron Viviane Reding said: “The European Commission has proposed to make ESC mandatory from 2012 but that does not mean that we can stop our promotion of safety technologies. We know that thousands of lives can be saved through our campaigning and training activities for safety technologies like ESC. We are obliged to tell the citizens that they should look for safety when they buy a new car as it might save their life one day.”

Dealers fail to explain the benefits of ESC to car buyers

A new “mystery shopper” survey by the FIA Foundation shows that only 18% of the 500 car dealers visited in the survey actively provided information on ESC and only one in seven salespersons focused on safety as an important vehicle feature with the ‘look’ and price of cars mentioned more often.

ChooseESC! Campaign Chairman David Ward of the FIA Foundation said: “We have been campaigning for Electronic Stability Control to be made mandatory for one year now. It’s unacceptable that thousands of lives are lost as too many cars are still not fitted with this crucial life saving system. It’s bad enough that many cars still don’t have this life saving technology fitted as standard. What makes matters worse is that dealerships are doing a very poor job at explaining the benefits of ESC.”

Rapporteur on the European Commission’s “Intelligent Car Communication” and Member of the European Parliament Zita Gurmai said: “Car dealers should be trained and encouraged to talk about safety devices, especially ESC, and to show to the clients why they need this feature in their new vehicle instead of promoting comfort and entertainment devices.”

The European automobile manufacturers actively participate in the eSafetyAware! association which launched the ChooseESC! campaign in May 2007. Secretary General of the manufacturers’ trade association ACEA, Ivan Hodac, said: “It is extremely important that consumers understand fully how technology can help and support them, within the bigger picture of driving conditions and driving style. A greater awareness will help increase acceptance of ESC and the associated fitting costs. Both car price and safety are important elements in any car-buying process. Guidance is needed to ensure a well-informed decision making.”

In 2007 the ESC take-up rate in Europe reached 50% of new car registrations but the fleet renewal rate has an important impact on road safety as today only 20% of the total European car fleet is equipped with ESC.

Lack of availability

A major feature at the event on 1 July is the release by the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) of the updated results of a country by country survey of ESC availability across Europe. The survey reveals that although some manufacturers have made efforts to improve ESC availability across their ranges, on many vehicles this life-saving technology is still being offered as optional rather than as standard fitment. There are also still huge differences between how the technology is offered across countries and vehicle size categories.

Commenting on the survey the Secretary General of Euro NCAP Michiel Van Ratingen said: “Given ESC’s life saving potential Euro NCAP believes there is no reason why ESC should not be fitted as standard on all vehicles and offered to consumers in all countries. Why should only a minority of consumers benefit from this safety technology that has been around for over ten years? Some manufacturers are showing they prioritise safety, but for others ESC is another business decision. Together we must do all we can to raise awareness of ESC’s importance.”

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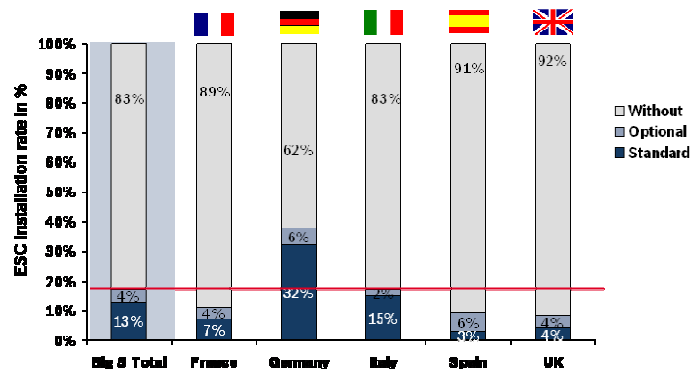
Notes to editors:

- At least 40% of fatal car crashes are the result of skidding. Studies show that ESC could reduce skidding accidents by up to 80%. However, there is a low take-up rate of this life-saving technology across Europe and a lack of consumer awareness of its safety benefits.
- The ChooseESC! campaign is run by eSafetyAware! and is supported by Euro NCAP and the European Commission. eSafetyAware! is a public private partnership which promotes intelligent vehicle safety systems. It includes members from the industry, public authorities, motoring clubs and NGOs (www.chooseESC.eu – www.eSafetyAware.eu).
- The country by country survey of ESC availability across Europe made by Euro NCAP can be found here: www.euroncap.com
- The FIA Foundation funded Mystery Shopper report ‘Pan-European Shopper Study Focusing on Quality of ESC Sales Information’ is available on their website: www.fiafoundation.com/Documents/ESC/final_report_esc_in_car_sales_en.doc
- The European Commission proposal on the mandatory introduction of ESC can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/automotive/safety/new_package.htm
- The European Parliament has adopted an own-initiative report that calls on car manufacturers to make safety technologies, including ESC, cheaper and available to all. The report can be found here: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0311+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>
- ESC installation rates in Europe for new car registrations

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Europe	29%	37%	40%	43%	50%
Sweden*	15%	60%	85%	91%	96%
Germany*	55%	67%	72%	77%	79%
Luxemburg*	N.a.	44%	50%	52%	56%
Spain*	25%	32%	41%	50%	57%
Belgium*	N.a.	33%	41%	42%	47%
UK*	20%	29%	36%	43%	48%
France*	35%	39%	42%	43%	46%
Netherlands*	N.a.	29%	37%	37%	43%
Italy*	14%	24%	31%	35%	42%

(Source: Bosch)

- ESC installation on major European markets for mini and small car segments (2007)



(Figures based on installation rates by new car registrations)