press release

Europe's roads need intelligent vehicle safety systems

Vilnius, 25 September 2008
Key road safety players representing national and European interests meet on 25 and 26 September 2008 to review how hi-tech safety systems for cars, so called *e*Safety systems, can help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on Europe's roads.

Organised by *e*Safety Support[i] and co-hosted by the Stratum OÜ, the **10th European *e*Safety Observers** meeting will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania. The event features presentations by the *European Commission* and *e*Safety Support experts, giving an overview of the *e*Safety initiative, its current priorities and its achievements to date.
National road safety players from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are also invited to provide a detailed status of eSafety development and deployment in the Baltic region through a series of presentations.

The eSafety 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.

"*In 2001 there were more than 1.4 million car accidents and 40,000 road fatalities on Europe's roads. Increased use of eSafety systems could bring this number down substantially*", says Alessandro Carrotta, Project Manager of *e*Safety Support. "*By decreasing the driver's workload, detecting dangers and providing support in hazardous situations, such systems could save thousands of lives every year. However, the current penetration of eSafety systems on European roads is low, and therefore a higher number of lives could still be saved.*"

Companies and public authorities have developed many applications on road safety in collaborative research projects in the last decades. CVIS[ii] and SAFESPOT[iii] are only a few examples of projects coping with the development of new technologies that will contribute to anticipate traffic situations ahead through innovative preventive and cooperative safety systems. Vehicles communicating with each other and their infrastructure can warn the users about hazardous situations ahead and other obstacles threatening their safety.

eCall[iv] – the pan-European in-vehicle emergency call – is another technology that is part of the eSafety system and it is already on the market. 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. eCall also decreases congestion by 15%, which will lead to a reduction in fuel consumption and consequently less harm on the environment. With the necessary commitment from all relevant stakeholders, the life-saving technology will be available as standard equipment in all new vehicles from 2011.

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Note to editors:

[i] The Commission-funded *e*Safety Support project actively assists *e*Safety stakeholders in their efforts to increase public awareness of the enormous impact *e*Safety systems can have on road safety. The project lends support to the *e*Safety initiative, which brings together the European Commission, public authorities, industry and other stakeholders in a drive to accelerate the development, deployment and use of *e*Safety systems. For further information about eSafety Support and the eSafety initiative, please visit: www.esafetysupport.org

[ii] Cooperative Vehicle-Infrastructure Systems (CVIS) is an integrated research project co-funded by the European Commission Information Society Technologies among the initiatives of the 6th Framework Program. CVIS aims to design, develop and test the technologies needed to allow cars to communicate with each other and with the nearby roadside infrastructure. CVIS' achievements will increase road safety and efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of road transport. For further information, please visit: www.cvisproject.org

[iii] SAFESPOT is an integrated research project co-funded by the European Commission Information Society Technologies among the initiatives of the 6th Framework. The objective is to understand how intelligent vehicles and intelligent roads can cooperate to produce a breakthrough for road safety. The aim is to prevent road accidents developing a Safety Margin Assistant that detects in advance potentially dangerous situations and that extends in space and time drivers´ awareness of the surrounding environment.
For further information, please visit:
www.safespot-eu.org/pages/page.php

[iv] eCall - the pan-European in-vehicle emergency call - is a high priority area within the European Commission. The use of in-vehicle emergency call (eCall) to deploy emergency assistance will save lives and reduce the social burden of road accidents by improving the notification of such accidents, speeding up the emergency service response and lowering the subsequent effects on fatalities, severity of injuries and traffic flows. For more information, please visit: www.esafetysupport.org/en/ecall_toolbox/

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