



PRESS RELEASE
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Inter-regional cooperation initiative aims to increase use of life-saving technology on Europe's roads

Key road safety players will come together in Athens on 21 September 2006 to review how hi-tech safety systems for cars, so called eSafety systems, can help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on Europe's roads.

"Each year there are more than 1.4 million car accidents and 40,000 road fatalities in Europe. Increased use of eSafety systems could bring this number down substantially", says Jacob Bangsgaard, Project Director for eSafety Support. "By decreasing the driver's workload, detecting dangers and providing support in hazardous situations, such systems could save thousands of lives every year."

With at least 93% of accidents caused by human error, the case for increased driver-assistance is clear. For example, skidding is an important cause of fatalities on Europe's roads, responsible for as many as 20% of all accidents involving young drivers. Estimates show that Electronic Stability Control systems could reduce the number of accidents resulting in injuries with up to 11%.

Organised by eSafety Support and hosted by the Greek Institute of Communication and Computer Systems, the aim of the Athens eSafety Observers Regional meeting is to review how eSafety players in Cyprus, Greece and Malta can work together to increase awareness of the benefits of eSafety systems such as Electronic Stability Control.

The meeting will feature presentations by European Commission and eSafety Support experts, giving an overview of the eSafety initiative and its achievements to date. The 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. National road safety players will also give a series of presentations, detailing the status of eSafety development and deployment in the region.

High-level participants expected to participate include Francisco Ferreira from the European Commission's Directorate General for Information Society and Media, Furlas Panagiotis and Olga Kakliagou from the Greek Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization, Ioannis Golias from the Greek Ministry of Transport and Communications, Anastasios Tsagklas from the Greek Ministry of Environment, Planning & Public Works, Patrick Murgo and Peter Cordina from the Maltese Civil Protection Department and George Morfakis from the Cypriot Ministry of Communications and Works.

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Note to editors:

The Commission-funded eSafety Support project actively assists eSafety stakeholders in their efforts to increase public awareness of the enormous impact eSafety systems can have on road safety. The project lends support to the eSafety initiative, which brings together the European Commission, public authorities, industry and other stakeholders in a drive to accelerate the development, deployment and use of eSafety systems.

The project's website - www.esafetysupport.org - is an up-to-date resource for eSafety information.