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## Commission plans mandatory car-safety technologies

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A draft regulation, due to be presented by the Commission on Friday (23 May), seeks to impose the fitting of advanced safety features on all road vehicles in a bid to cut the number of road deaths in Europe, according to an early copy of the text seen by EurActiv.

### Background:

Hi-tech cars emerged as a priority in EU transport policy in February 2006, when it became apparent that a majority of member states were well behind their 2001 road safety objective of halving the number of annual road deaths to 25,000 by 2010 ([EurActiv 22/02/06](#)).

At the time, the Commission came forward with an 'Intelligent Car' initiative – as part of its wider 'European Information Society 2010' strategy, which aims to promote information and communication technologies (ICT) so as to boost jobs and growth in Europe.

The objective of the project was to develop ICT solutions for transport-related problems such as fatalities and injuries caused by accidents, harmful health and environmental effects of noxious vehicle fumes, and other economic costs related to congestion and energy waste.

A second 'Intelligent Car' Communication was presented by the Commission in September 2007, with a view to integrating the latest technological and policy developments.

### More on this topic:

News: [EU mulls compulsory safety-technology for cars](#)

### Other related news:

- [Commission cracks down on traffic offenders](#)
- [EU governments clash on car CO2 plans](#)
- [Automotive forum showcases alternative measures to cut CO2](#)
- [Parliament urges restraint on car CO2 cuts](#)
- [Commission plans CO2 fines for carmakers](#)

According to the draft document, **anti-skid electronic stability control (ESC) equipment** will become mandatory on all vehicles as of 29 October 2012.

According to the Commission, skidding is the principle cause of at least 40% of fatal road accidents, meaning that ESC technology could save 4,000 lives and prevent 100,000 serious accidents every year. But up till now, ESC is only found in roughly 45% of all new cars, although this varies from market to market due to manufacturers' differing commercial strategies and varied support from authorities.

Under the new rules, heavy-duty vehicles would have to be fitted with **emergency braking assistance and lane departure warning systems** as of 29 October 2013. The Regulation also lays down requirements for the voluntary fitting of such systems onto other categories of vehicles.

**Tyre pressure monitoring systems** would also become compulsory in all passenger cars as of 29 October 2012, in a bid to enhance both vehicle safety and environmental performance.

The proposal also introduces **stricter rolling noise limits for tyres** and new requirements on wet grip and rolling resistance – which should

also help reduce vehicles' tyre-related CO2 emissions.

Member states are asked to lay down rules on "effective, proportionate and dissuasive" **penalties** applicable to manufacturers who infringe these requirements to make sure that they are implemented.

The initiative also seeks to simplify the whole regulatory framework that currently surrounds vehicle safety and tyre requirements, as it will effectively repeal some 50 existing directives and around 100 other amending texts currently in force.

#### Positions:

The **FIA Foundation** (established by the **Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile - FIA**) believes the proposal will help the EU "make up for lost ground" and cut thousands of road deaths and injuries.

"This is very good news in Europe because we have fallen behind the US on use of Electronic Stability Control, which is the most important car safety device since the seatbelt," it said in a statement released on 21 May.

Without regulation making electronic stability control equipment mandatory, the Foundation says only 77% of new cars would be equipped with the technology by 2012.

**European carmaker association ACEA** believes that the main obstacle to the wider implementation rate of ESC in Europe is the lack of public awareness of the benefits of the technology. **ACEA Secretary General Ivan Hodac** explained: "European manufacturers increasingly equip their vehicles with safety features, both standard or as an option. Unfortunately, the take-up rate is still disappointing. In many cases, customers prefer comfort or entertainment features instead."

The **European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers' Association (ETRMA)** also welcomed the initiative, commenting that correct tyre inflation pressure is essential for the safety and environmental performance of vehicles. Yet currently, it states, 65% of drivers run with under inflated tyres, with 40% having at least one tyre "significantly under inflated" and 12% of cars reported to be in danger of tyre failure.

But the **green NGO Transport and Environment (T&E)** believes the Commission's proposals do not go far enough if it is serious in achieving its goal of halving the number of road fatalities by 2010.

The key criticism made by the group is that the new noise and energy efficiency standards for tyres set out in the proposal are "unambitious" and allow a "blanket exemption for Europe's noisiest and most gas-guzzling sports-utility vehicles (SUVs)".

This, it says, is particularly bad news because new research by the German environment agency UBA has revealed that traffic noise actually causes more deaths than car accidents, notably by provoking fatal heart attacks and other cardio-vascular diseases.

"Half of all Europeans are regularly exposed to traffic noise levels that are potentially dangerous to health," stressed T&E in a statement issued on 21 May. It added: "Today's proposals do not go far enough to address this worsening problem, and giving concessions to Europe's noisiest vehicles is totally incomprehensible."

It called for tougher standards that "inspire innovation", commenting: "If the average tyre sold in Europe was as good as the current state of the art, there would be at least a 5% reduction in overall CO2 emissions from cars."

#### Next steps:

- **23 May 2008:** European Commission due to present its proposal for a Regulation on motor vehicle safety and tyre standards.
- The proposal has to be adopted following the co-decision procedure between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, a process which usually takes about two years.
- Technical specifications necessary for implementation are to be adopted by national experts in specialised committees, according to the "comitology procedure".

#### Links

European Union

- Commission [Draft proposal for a Regulation concerning type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles](#) (May 2008)
- Commission: [Road Safety Website](#)

#### Industry Federations

- European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA): [Road Safety](#)
- European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers' Association (ETRMA): [European Automobile Industry is Active Partner in eSafety Aware Campaign](#)

#### NGOs

- Transport and Environment (T&E): [Tyre noise exemption for SUVs as research shows traffic noise causing more deaths than car accidents](#) (21 May 2008)
- FIA Foundation: [Europe plays catch up with US on key car safety technology](#) (21 May 2008)