



Media Announcement

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4,000 road traffic deaths could be avoided if all cars in Europe were equipped with Electronic Stability Control says new 'ChooseESC!' campaign

A major pan European campaign to promote the life-saving technology Electronic Stability Control (ESC) is launched in Italy today. The 'ChooseESC!' campaign will reveal estimates that if all cars in the EU had the system over 4,000 lives and 100,000 injuries could be avoided.

ESC recognises when a skid is starting to happen. In a fraction of a second the electronic control unit applies the brakes at individual wheels, helping to keep the car control before the skid. Whether the skid is the result of an emergency avoidance manoeuvre or a simple error of judgement, ESC can help a driver maintain control of a vehicle.

The campaign warn that 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 for all new cars in 2011, but so far there is no equivalent initiative by the European Union. Under the patronage of European Commissioner Viviane Reding and FIA President Max Mosley the 'ChooseESC!' campaign will be launched at the Bridgestone European Testing ground in Aprilia, near Rome.

Commenting on the launch FIA President **Max Mosley**, said: "There is no doubt that ESC could contribute significantly to the European Union's goal to halve the number of road traffic fatalities by 2010. But to achieve this, much more needs to be done to inform the consumer about why they must choose ESC when buying a new car. It is frustrating to see that the use of ESC in new cars in Europe is actually falling behind the USA. We should be leading the world in the introduction of a technology that was invented in Europe. Although ESC is often standard equipment in luxury and large cars, in smaller family cars it is not. Across Europe only 42% of new cars are equipped with ESC. We want governments in the EU to give incentives, such as tax breaks to encourage people to buy cars with ESC on board. Thousands of lives could be saved and huge crash costs avoided so it makes sense to give the public a reason to choose ESC on their next car".

At least 40% of fatal road accidents 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 (as shown in a recent authoritative Commission Eurobarometer study).

European Commissioner **Viviane Reding** said: "The European Commission's comprehensive Eurobarometer study shows that over 80% of drivers who are explained about ESC want it fitted in their next car. The problem is that so far the drivers remain largely unaware, or have only a vague idea what ESC is about.

The ChooseESC! campaign is important to provide the necessary information to the consumers. This is why I fully support this campaign. I believe that the target of ChooseESC! is exactly right: We need to reach the consumers at the moment when they have to make a choice on their next car.”

The campaign, which will particularly focus 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!”.

A major feature of the campaign launch will be the release by the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) of a country by country survey of the availability of ESC across Europe. Commenting on the survey the Chairman of Euro NCAP **Claes Tingvall**, said: “This is about everything that Euro NCAP stands for - safety for the European consumer. We must do all we can to raise awareness of ESC’s importance. Car manufacturers respond to the demands of customers but customers will only demand ESC when they become aware of the benefits. The media and organisations such as fleet buyers can play a pivotal role in increasing this awareness and in helping to bring pressure to bear on manufacturers and distributors to fit ESC as standard on all new cars, in all countries.”

Also speaking at the launch in Italy will be a senior representative of the US National Highway Administration (NHTSA). According to NHTSA’s Administrator, **Nicole Nason**, ESC is “the greatest life saving technology since the safety belt”. The US has introduced legislation to make ESC mandatory in all cars in the US by 2011. The NHTSA has also recently proposed an international standard for ESC at the United Nations World Forum for Harmonization Vehicle Regulations (WP29).

The participants at the event include all the major stakeholders in intelligent vehicle safety systems including motoring organisations, consumer groups, motor industry and related service suppliers, national authorities from EU member states and representatives of the news media. The ‘ChooseESC!’ event is organised in cooperation with Euro NCAP and the European Commission.

For further information about the ‘ChooseESC!’ campaign contact:

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The eSafetyAware! Communications Platform is a joint non-profit public/private partnership with 34 members. It is chaired by the FIA Foundation’s Director General, David Ward. The ‘ChooseESC!’ campaign is supported by the European Commission and Euro NCAP.

www.chooseESC.eu