

**INTERNET LAUNCH OF RESULTS
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ESC ONE YEAR ON: CARMAKERS STILL SLIPPING ON STANDARD FIT

Euro NCAP today releases the updated results of its EU-wide¹ ESC availability survey that uncovers the disparities in which ESC is offered to car-buyers across the European Union. This year's survey reveals that there is improvement by some manufacturers, but Euro NCAP is disappointed to find that there are still large discrepancies in the level of standard fit on offer to consumers between countries and size categories.

The European Commission proposed recently that ESC should be mandatory for all new vehicle types from 2012 with all new vehicles being equipped by 2014. Yet that is another four years before some new vehicles must have ESC. In reality it could take several more years before every vehicle in the dealer's showroom is equipped with this safety technology that has been in existence for many years. In the meantime, consumers are dependent on manufacturers' business decisions as to whether this proven life-saving technology is offered as standard. Euro NCAP is concerned that when ESC is offered as optional consumers are charged high prices that then deter them from fitting the technology. Euro NCAP believes ESC should be fitted as standard, simply because 4,000 deaths and 100,000 injuries could be avoided every year.

Euro NCAP's survey reveals that some manufacturers such as Ford, Hyundai, Mazda, and Mitsubishi, are showing an increase in the percentage of ESC fitted as standard on their vehicles. In contrast other manufacturers are not doing as well. There is a disappointing lack of improvement from Opel despite offering ESC as optional on an increased number of its range. Kia, that is now offering more models than last year, have failed to keep pace on ESC, effectively lowering the average standard ESC fitment over their vehicle range.

Michiel van Ratingen, Secretary General of Euro NCAP says "The new results are encouraging but disappointing at the same time. Considering that ESC is the most effective safety device since the seat belt, no car buyer should have to bargain over it. A greater effort to make ESC fitment standard across the board is required."

In the survey, Euro NCAP again finds that executive cars have a high level of standard fitment in all countries, whilst superminis still have a much lower level. As might be expected, ESC is more likely to be fitted to expensive, premium brands than to cheaper models. However, there are also clear differences in ESC fitment rates between makes

¹ All 27 Member States

and models within the same price range. It is clear that some manufacturers need to take action to overcome this anomaly.

The survey also finds that some cars are sold with ESC as standard equipment on all variants in some countries while it is completely unavailable to those buying cars in other Member States. Of these cars, ESC is still most often unavailable in Ireland, Malta and Greece, whereas it is most often fitted as standard in Denmark, Sweden and Germany.

ESC recognises when a skid is starting to happen and in a fraction of a second, the electronic control unit applies the brakes at individual wheels, helping to keep the car under control before the skid develops. The system reacts much more quickly than even the best driver and can apply the brakes to individual wheels, which a driver cannot. 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 his vehicle.

Results of Euro NCAP's ESC survey are released today at the Choose ESC Symposium held at Autoworld, Parc du Cinquantenaire, Brussels, Belgium. The event is organised by the international 'Choose ESC' campaign, which promotes this life-saving technology in collaboration with the European Commission and Euro NCAP. See more at www.chooseesc.eu .

Euro NCAP's test results are released on a quarterly basis. Keep checking our website for details of forthcoming results.

For further information about ESC please contact: Euro NCAP on +32 2 4007740 or info@euroncap.com.