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EC Launches Campaign for Automotive Electronic Stability Control

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The European Commission (EC) and the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP) launched a Europe-wide campaign on May 8 to promote wider use of automotive [electronic stability control](#) (ESC) systems.

ESC is an important active safety device that can help Europe meet its goal of halving road fatalities by 2010, as set out by the European Union (EU) in 2001. Every year more than 40, 000 people die and over one million are injured in road crashes in the EU.

Loss of vehicle control has been identified as the main cause of traffic accidents involving serious injury or death. As a result, ESC is becoming the most promising eSafety technology on the market.

EC vice president Günter Verheugen, commissioner for enterprise and industry policy, said, "The benefits of ESC are undisputed. In line with the CARS 21 programme, we are preparing the obligatory installation of ESC into new passenger cars via international harmonisation. Until it becomes mandatory, the voluntary choice of ESC is more than welcome."

EC commissioner Viviane Reding, responsible for information society and media, said, "It's proven - ESC saves lives! Over 80 percent of drivers who know about ESC say they will choose it for their next car. The Commission sees 'Choose ESC!' as the first step towards all new cars fitted with ESC by 2012."

Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (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."

ESC senses when the driver loses control and it automatically applies braking pressure to individual wheels to help stabilise the vehicle and avoid skidding. This technology could reduce the risk of accidents by as much as 20%, especially in wet or icy conditions.

However, there is a relatively low take-up rate of this life-saving technology across Europe, and consumer awareness of its safety benefits should be improved (as shown by a recent EC Eurobarometer study).

The introduction of ESC is part of the package of measures proposed by the EC in its recent communication on the CARS 21 high-level group to improve safety on European roads through an integrated approach involving all stakeholders (see [IP/07/157](#)).

The "Choose ESC!" campaign launch in Rome featured the release by the EuroNCAP of an EU-wide ESC availability survey. The event also included live demonstrations comparing the performance of a car with and without the ESC system engaged.

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The launch also featured an international workshop with high-level participation from the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and representatives of Australia's State of Victoria. The NHTSA has recently proposed an international standard for ESC systems at the United Nations World Forum for Harmonisation Vehicle Regulations (WP29), whilst a similar ESC awareness campaign was recently launched in Victoria.

Participants at the event included all the major stakeholders in [intelligent vehicle](#) safety systems, such as motoring organisations, consumer groups, motor industry and related service suppliers, national authorities from EU member states and representatives of the news media.

For more information, see the EU's web site on [eSafety](#).

Source: European Commission.

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