

EU says electronic device reduce car accidents by 20 percent

The European Union said on Monday the Electronic Stability Control (ESC) device can reduce car accidents by 20 percent and plans to launch a campaign for obligatory use of the technology.

More than 40,000 people die and over 1 million are injured in road crashes in the EU and skidding or loss of the control of the car has been identified as the main cause of traffic accidents.

ESC, the most promising eSafety technology, is an important active safety device, which can help Europe meet its goal of halving road fatalities by 2010 as set out by the EU in 2001, the EU commission said.

A Europe-wide "Choose ESC" campaign will be launched at the Bridgestone European Testing ground near Rome on Tuesday.

The commission is planning to introduce obligatory installation of the system into new passenger cars, according to Guenter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry Policy.

"The benefits of ESC are undisputed... Until it becomes mandatory, the voluntary choice of ESC is more than welcome," he said.

European Commissioner Viviane Reding, responsible for Information Society, said that "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," Reding said.

ESC senses when the driver loses control and automatically applies braking pressure to individual wheels to help stabilize the vehicle and avoid skidding.

The technology could reduce the risk of accidents by as much as 20 percent especially in wet or icy conditions.