

Euro NCAP laments UK market's place in ESC standard fitment survey

The results of Euro NCAP's survey on Electronic Stability Control fitment were released yesterday in Rome to coincide with a new pan-European 'Choose ESC!' campaign, compelling Euro NCAP to call for manufacturers to fit ESC as standard to all cars. The EU wide survey places the UK, Netherlands, Greece, Malta and Ireland bottom of a country ranking with Denmark, Sweden and Germany topping the list. The results are released today in association with the launch of the new 'Choose ESC' Campaign, led by eSafetyAware! and under the patronage of the European Commission, with the goal of raising awareness of ESC. There are huge differences in the extent to which this crucial safety technology is offered to car-buyers across Europe. The Euro NCAP survey released at the Rome event shows that Denmark and Sweden come out top of the league with ESC broadly fitted as standard equipment. Malta and Ireland come out bottom of the table with extremely low levels of standard ESC fit, especially for superminis and small family cars. And the reasons for the disparity are not technical ones. Some models have ESC fitted as standard equipment in one country, yet it is not available, even as an option, in others.

In presenting the results, Euro NCAP's Secretary General Adrian Hobbs said 'We must all do what 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.'

The RAC Foundation added that many new cars are being sold in the UK with lower levels of safety equipment fitted as standard than cars sold in Latvia and Lithuania, according to new figures released by the RAC Foundation today (8).

Road crashes could be reduced by more than 20 per cent, especially in wet or icy conditions, by cars being fitted with Electronic Stability Control (ESC), yet just 55% of new cars sold in the UK fit ESC as standard as opposed to 76% in Denmark, and 65% in Latvia and Lithuania.

In the UK it has been estimated by the insurer-funded Thatcham organisation that if 90% of cars were fitted with ESC it would save 400 lives and prevent 3,000 serious injuries each year.