



Media Announcement

17 September 2007

ESC live demonstrations in Versailles/France Free test rides for motorists

“ESC – three letters to save your life!” - that’s the strong message the European-wide campaign “ChooseESC!” brings to motorists. During live demonstrations in front of the castle in Versailles/France on Saturday, 22 September, end-users will have a rare opportunity to experience the benefits of ESC in a safe environment. Professional drivers will offer free test rides, demonstrating the safety gains of a car with ESC compared to a car without ESC.

The ChooseESC! campaign, led by the FIA Foundation, under the patronage of European Commissioner **Viviane Reding** and FIA President **Max Mosley**, aims to raise awareness of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and increase the take-up of this life-saving technology.

Electronic Stability Control is a vehicle safety technology that can help to avoid crashes by reducing the danger of skidding. 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 the driver to maintain control of the vehicle.

At least 40% of fatal road accidents are the result of skidding. Studies show that ESC could reduce skidding accidents by up to 80%. **If all cars in the EU had ESC over 4,000 lives and 100,000 injuries could be avoided every year!** However, there is a slow take-up rate of this technology across Europe and a lack of consumer awareness of its safety benefits. In France only 43% of all *new* cars are sold with ESC. When the ESC fitment rate is measured in terms of the *existing* fleet (car stock), this figure drops to only 18 %.

ESC is not yet mandatory in Europe. Though praised as the greatest live saving technology since the safety belt, ESC is mostly available as standard equipment only in premium cars. In medium and small cars it is either offered as an option or not available at all. In 2006, 83% of all new cars in the A-segment and 91% of new cars in the B-segment in France were bought without ESC. These two categories represented 49% of all car sales in 2006 in France. Cars of these segments are often driven by young, inexperienced drivers.

ESC cannot be retrofitted into a car. Consumers should therefore be careful when buying a car. In a video statement, **Michael Schumacher**, the seven times F1 World Champion gives the following message to new 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!”



Notes to the Editor:

1. The ESC live demonstrations are organised in co-operation with the City of Versailles on 22 September from 9.00-17.00h at the Avenue de Paris, just in front of the Versailles Castle.
2. For more information about the ChooseESC! campaign visit www.chooseESC.eu. The campaign video <http://www.chooseesc.eu/en/media/movies/> and the leaflet http://www.chooseesc.eu/en/news/choose_esc_leaflet.htm are available in many European languages.

The Choose ESC campaign is officially supported by the European Commission and Euro NCAP (European New Car Assessment Programme) and has received a strong endorsement by Michael Schumacher, seven times Formula 1 Champion.

3. ChooseESC! is a European wide campaign organised by the eSafetyAware! Communications Platform, a joint non-profit public/private partnership with 36 members, including user organisations, public authorities, motor industry and related suppliers, research institutes and others. It is chaired by David Ward, Director General of the FIA Foundation. For more information, please visit: www.eSafetyAware.eu

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