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Smart cars: Public-private drive to promote accident-avoidance technologies

A major new drive for improving awareness of intelligent vehicle systems and their road safety benefits was announced today. This new platform to promote awareness brings together stakeholders from the public sector, automotive suppliers and users.

"We have for a long time emphasised the importance of user awareness in the take-up of the new car safety technologies," said Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission, responsible for Information Society and Media. "Now we have concrete evidence that users' knowledge of new technologies needs improving. This is why I welcome the launch today of this new platform for promoting user awareness."

The Platform for User Awareness, called eSafety Aware, will focus on pre-commercial promotion campaigns as an independent member's organisation. It will be chaired by the Foundation of the International Automobile Federation, FIA. The Platform has 26 founding members representing automotive suppliers, automotive clubs, road safety authorities, road operators, insurance industry and service providers. The European Commission is participating in the platform as an observer.

The platform will launch public awareness campaigns to catch the attention of the public at large, making them aware of the benefits and why they should use these technologies. The first will be on Electronic Stability Control (ESC), which has been proven to reduce accident risk by 20%. This will be launched in April 2007. Further campaigns are planned in other high-priority topics such as the in-vehicle emergency call, eCall (see [IP/05/1137](#)).

The announcement of the new platform was made at a high-level meeting of the Commission's i2010 initiative - a European Information Society for growth and jobs - in Helsinki, opened by Commissioner Reding, together with Ms Susanna Huovinen, Minister of Transport and Communications for Finland.

The meeting focused on the ubiquitous applications of information and communications technologies in our society drawing from one of the i2010's flagship areas, intelligent cars (see [IP/06/191](#)).

"Intelligent vehicle systems can make a major contribution in solving our most pertinent transport problem, namely road safety, where Europe still has more than 41,000 deaths per year," noted Mr Rosario Alessi, FIA Foundation Chairman. The cost for the families implicated and for society overall are very high. The annual costs of accidents with fatalities are estimated to €50 billion and for accidents with severe injuries, the figure is €40.5 billion. "It is our job to get these systems to the users as quickly as possible. This is why FIA Foundation has taken the lead in the new platform for promoting user awareness. We will work together with partners that share our vision and launch campaigns starting from ESC next year. These systems save lives, but you need to know they exist to ask for them."

Intelligent car and intelligent transport systems are one of the most promising applications of the ubiquitous Information Society. The Commission's intelligent car initiative focuses on measures that support stronger take up and development of new technologies to make cars safer, cleaner and more efficient.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/esafety/index_en.htm