Road safety: the eCall system to citizens, 2nd communication eSafety

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report on road safety and the introduction of the eCall system drawn up by Gary TITLEY (PES, UK) in response to the Commission's communication on bringing eCall to citizens. MEPs welcomed the pan-European eCall initiative as "the first building block of the intelligent car initiative" that "could save up to 2 500 lives a year and bring about a reduction of up to 15% in the gravity of injuries". The report recommended that all European authorities include eCall information within their public road safety campaigns, and said that "the large-scale-roll-out of eCall by 2009 is a priority of the eSafety initiative".

The committee welcomed the motor industry's "unambiguously positive" position on the introduction of the eCall system but noted the disparity between the estimates of the cost of a built-in vehicle eCall system made by the Commission and those made by the industry. It therefore called on the two parties "to pursue a deeper cost-efficiency analysis for every action to be undertaken to implement eCall". Whilst encouraging a "gradual introduction and large-scale roll-out of eCall", MEPs were also aware that new technologies may prove costly and that consumers may be unwilling to pay for these. They therefore called onall stakeholders to work together to define incentives to speed up the introduction of the eCall system. The report noted that the costs involved may be particularly prohibitive in areas where the service is needed most - i.e. rural or isolated areas..

The committee regretted that Member States had been slow in encouraging the use of the single European emergency number 112, given that the e-Call system is based on the use of 112 and E112 (location information requirements in public wireless networks for emergency calls), and therefore urged them to take the necessary measures as soon as possible. It also stressed the importance of all Member States signing the Memorandum of Understanding - a memorandum produced by the eCall Driving Group - which aims to ensure the functioning of eCall in any EU State. MEPs concluded that, for any proper improvement to be realised, this memorandum should be "converted into a letter of intent, signed by all stake holders, as soon as possible".