

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

2005/2211(INI) - 27/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Gary TITLEY (PES, UK) in response to the Commission's communication on bringing eCall to citizens. (Please see the summary of 21/03/2005.) Parliament recalled that, in 2004, 43 000 people died in road accidents in the EU-25 Member States. A pan-European in-vehicle emergency call service/function, eCall, could save up to 2 500 lives a year and bring about a reduction of up to 15% in the gravity of injuries. The introduction of the eCall system would reduce the annual external costs of road traffic by up to EUR 26 billion, thus relieving citizens of a burden of up to EUR 26 billion. Parliament stated that efforts should be made to reduce, not internalise, external costs. The eCall system had the potential to reduce the response time to accidents by approximately 40% in urban areas and approximately 50% in rural areas.

Parliament stated that the system is to be welcomed as the first building block of the intelligent car initiative. It stressed the importance of all Member States signing the MoU as soon as possible, in order to demonstrate a clear commitment to the implementation of eCall to other stakeholders, if eCall is to be fully rolled out in 2009. It suggested that, having regard to the agreed schedule of the Galileo Programme, it would be preferable if the roll-out of eCall could be coordinated with the fully operational phase, but that any delay in the introduction of Galileo should not obstruct the implementation of eCall.

Parliament welcomed the motor industry's unambiguously positive position towards the introduction of the eCall system. A majority of Member States had been slow in encouraging the use of the single European emergency number 112. The Commission should evaluate the implementation by the Member States of Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services in relation to the appropriate answering and handling of calls to the single European emergency call number, including the caller location.

Member States should complete the implementation of E112 as soon as possible, to promote the use of both 112 and E112 and take steps to provide the appropriate infrastructure in the Public Service Answering Points such as language training, availability, location identification, and call handling to comply with the E112 regulation, which will then allow for incremental upgrading to handle eCalls.

Parliament went on to note the disparity between the Commission's and industry's estimates of the cost of a built-in vehicle eCall system. It invited the Commission and industry to pursue a deeper cost-efficiency analysis for every action to be undertaken to implement eCall.

Parliament referred to the potential cost of the eCall system, which might be higher in regions affected by permanent constraints. New car buyers (particularly at the cheaper end of the market) were not always willing or able to pay the full cost. It called on all stakeholders to work together to define incentives to speed up the introduction of the eCall system. Parliament was particularly concerned that the cost of eCall might be prohibitively expensive for those with the greatest need, for example those in rural or isolated areas. The eCall system should eventually apply to all vehicles, including Heavy Goods Vehicles.