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Road safety: bringing eCall to citizens

European Parliament resolution on Road safety: bringing eCall to citizens (2005/2211(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission White Paper 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide' (COM(2001)0370), and its resolution of 12 February 2003 thereon¹,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 'Information and Communications Technologies for Safe and Intelligent Vehicles' (COM(2003)0542),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 'European Road Safety Action Programme – Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility' (COM(2003)0311) and its publication 'Saving 20 000 lives on our roads' of October 2004,
 - having regard to Commission Recommendation 2004/345/EC of 6 April 2004 on enforcement in the field of road safety²,
 - having regard to the Verona Declaration on Road Safety of 5 December 2003 as well as the conclusions of the Second Verona meeting of EU transport ministers of 2004 and the subsequent commitment given by those ministers to regard road safety as a priority,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 'i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment' (COM(2005)0229),
 - having regard to the Commission's 2nd eSafety Communication 'Bringing eCall to citizens' (COM(2005)0431),
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A6-0072/2006),
- A. whereas, in 2004, 43 000 people died in road accidents in the EU-25 Member States and 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,
- B. whereas 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; whereas efforts should be made to reduce, not internalise, external costs,
- C. whereas the eCall system has the potential to reduce the response time to accidents by approximately 40% in urban areas and approximately 50% in rural areas,

¹ OJ C 43 E, 19.2.2004, p. 250.

² OJ L 111, 17.4.2004, p. 75.

- D. whereas the eCall system is to be welcomed as the first building block of the intelligent car initiative as set out in Commission Communication COM(2005)0229,
 - E. whereas the large-scale roll-out of eCall by 2009 is a priority of the eSafety initiative,
 - F. whereas considerable progress has been made in the field of eSafety technologies, systems and services, and the development of Galileo also offers potential for the future,
1. Welcomes the fact that, at the 2nd eSafety High Level Meeting with Member States, four Member States signed the eCall Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), namely, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Slovenia, joining the existing signatories Finland, Sweden and, most recently, Cyprus;
 2. Is encouraged by the commitment of other Member States which have already initiated the process for signing the MoU (the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany) and calls on those which have not already done so to demonstrate the political will to do so;
 3. Stresses 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;
 4. Suggests 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;
 5. Believes that, in order for real progress to be made, the MoU should be converted into a letter of intent, signed by all stake holders, as soon as possible;
 6. Urges the authorities of the Member States, therefore, to include information about eCall in the material for their public road safety campaigns;
 7. Welcomes the motor industry's unambiguously positive position towards the introduction of the eCall system;
 8. Notes that the eCall system is based on the use of 112 and E112 (location information requirements in public wireless networks for emergency calls);
 9. Recalls that a majority of Member States have been slow in encouraging the use of the single European emergency number 112; calls on the Commission to evaluate the implementation by the Member States of Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 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;
 10. Urges the Member States to complete the implementation of E112 as soon as possible, to promote the use of both 112 and E112 and to 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;

11. Notes the disparity between the Commission's and industry's estimates of the cost of a built-in vehicle eCall system;
12. Invites the Commission and industry to pursue a deeper cost-efficiency analysis for every action to be undertaken to implement eCall;
13. Is aware that the technology needed for eCall will facilitate early adoption of other innovative active safety applications by lowering the marginal costs of their introduction;
14. Is aware that the introduction of many new technologies cannot be instantaneous and therefore encourages the Commission and industry to look into the gradual introduction and large-scale roll-out of eCall through a combination of built-in vehicle systems and alternative systems such as the use of drivers' mobile telephones and Bluetooth technology as well as built-in mobile telephones, while having special regard to the right of privacy of drivers and passengers;
15. Having regard to the potential cost of the eCall system, which may be higher in regions affected by permanent constraints, and being aware of the fact that many new technologies may prove costly and that new car buyers (particularly at the cheaper end of the market) are not always willing or able to pay the full cost; calls on all stakeholders to work together to define incentives to speed up the introduction of the eCall system;
16. Is particularly concerned that the cost of eCall may be prohibitively expensive for those with the greatest need, for example those in rural or isolated areas; believes that the eCall system should eventually apply to all vehicles, including Heavy Goods Vehicles;
17. Welcomes future initiatives and Communications of the Commission in the field of eSafety;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.