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Press release

Internal Market MEPs back life-saving eCall system for cars

Committees Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection [11-02-2014 - 12:36]

"eCall" devices that automatically alert rescue services to car crashes should be fitted to all new car models by October 2015, said the Internal Market Committee amending a draft law to this end on Tuesday. This system, using the 112 emergency call number, would enable the emergency services to reach the crash scene faster, saving lives and reducing injuries, MEPs note.

"I believe that as of October 2015, all new models of passenger cars and light duty vehicles will be fitted with 112-based public eCall devices. This technology could help to save 2,500 lives every year", said rapporteur Olga Sehnalova (S&D, CZ).

Each year emergency services across the EU deal with road accidents which in 2012 took 28,000 lives and left 1.5 million injured.

The in-vehicle eCall system uses 112 emergency call technology to alert the emergency services to serious road accidents automatically. This enables them to decide immediately on the type and size of rescue operation needed, which in turn helps them to arrive faster, save lives, reduce the severity of injuries and cut the cost of traffic jams.

Ready from October 2015

The October 2015 deadline for installing eCall devices in new model cars and light vans was set by the European Commission, acting on Parliament's request in a resolution voted in July 2012. However, to meet the industry's request for more time to develop and test the system, MEPs left open a possibility to postpone this deadline.

The Commission will also have to assess whether to extend eCall to other vehicles, such as buses, coaches or trucks, says the committee text.

Free of charge

MEPs note that the eCall in-vehicle system is a public service and should therefore be accessible free of charge to all car users. The committee also inserted a provision that would allow users to use a different emergency call system, provided that it is installed in a car and is compatible with eCall.

Data protection

MEPs voted to strengthen a data protection clause in the draft law. They amended it to ensure that eCall-equipped vehicles are not subject to constant tracking. When an accident triggers an eCall, the data automatically sent to emergency centres should be restricted to the type of activation, the class of vehicle, the type of fuel used, the time of the accident, the exact location of the vehicle, the direction of travel and the number of seatbelts fastened, MEPs add.

Next steps

The legislative resolution was approved by 34 votes to 2 , with 1 abstention. and is scheduled for a plenary vote in Strasbourg in last week of February 2014.

In the Chair: Committee Chair Malcolm Harbour, CBE (ECR, UK)

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