

eSafety that matters

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What is eSafety

There has long been efforts to improve transport technologies with a greater role given to information technology, particularly for road transport. As these technologies were conceived they have collectively been known as ITS, transport telematics and more recently eSafety. With their latest initiatives the Commission is about to rename them as i2010 or the "intelligent car".

What all of these various terms refer to is the increasing use of electrical and telecommunication technology within the road transport sector. Safety devices already commercially available include satellite navigation, adaptive cruise control daytime running lights, alcohol interlocks, seat belt reminders, Electronic stability programmes, and radar sensors. Technology that has been developed and is ready to be implemented or has recently entered the market includes deployable bonnets, automatic emergency call (eCall), brake assist and intelligent speed adaptation. Technologies that are currently being intensively developed include a range of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems that will increasingly see elements of the road infrastructure communicate with vehicles.

Priorities not driven by safety

Many of the programmes designed to facilitate the application of eSafety devices unfortunately have been designed and promoted with a view to harnessing the potential of the strong European Information and Telecommunications sector within the automotive sector. The priority has therefore been set not by the safety potential of the various technologies, but the



need to drive technology development and find new markets in the automotive sector for IT products.

Defining eSafety that matters

In order to maximise the safety potential of intelligent automotive technologies the focus needs to shift away from innovation to implementation. Simple devices utilising robust and proven existing technologies often have large safety benefits. Seat belt reminders, daytime running lights, Intelligent speed adaptation offer the greatest safety potential. These technologies now need efforts from policy makers to ensure their rapid application and deployment.

Other technologies evidently need support from policy makers to realise their true safety potential – eCall for example needs Member State authorities to match the efforts and commitments of the manufacturers as do data recorders and smarter infrastructure.

Other technologies that are already on the market, (ESP, deployable bonnets, automatic cruise control, brake assist etc.) need policy makers to facilitate their greater application across the vehicle fleet. More needs to be done to harness the safety benefits of new technology and the priorities should be set on safety criteria.