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Technical experts and leading racing drivers meet to discuss eSafety

The eSafety Challenge 2009 was launched in Rome yesterday at the Vallelunga circuit and brought together some of the world's leading motoring personalities to discuss and demonstrate the latest developments in automotive safety technology. eSafety refers to vehicle technologies that can assist the driver in case of an emergency situation and by providing vital information and warnings to help avoid the situation occurring in the first place. The systems have an impact on the car occupants' safety by helping the driver make the right decisions and remain in control of the car by informing, advising and alerting the driver about dangerous situations.

The event started with a high-level seminar to discuss eSafety deployment with participation from senior road safety figures, such as: Jean Todt, eSafety Aware president; Paul Clark MP, UK Minister for Transport; Michael Schumacher, seven-time F1 world champion; Ivan Hodac, secretary general ACEA; Monica Sundstrom, president Ertico; and Michelle Yeoh, global ambassador, Make Roads Safe.



The drivers chosen to demonstrate these technologies were selected from amongst the best in the world and included Formula One stars Giancarlo Fisichella, Timo Glock, Heikki Kovalainen, and Robert Kubica, alongside Tom Kristensen, eight-time 24 Hour Le Mans winner, and Susie Stoddart from the German Touring Car series. During the course of the event, each of the star drivers took it in turn to demonstrate an eSafety technology: ESC, which stabilises the car in a skid; Lane Support Systems, which adjust steering if the car drifts out of its lane; Speed Alert, which warns the driver if he or she is speeding; Blind Spot Monitoring, which warns the driver if a vehicle is in his blind spot; and Warning and Emergency Braking Systems, which act to slow the car automatically in the case of an impending impact.

Each of the demonstrated systems has the potential to save lives by addressing the root cause of some of the most common accidents, and could lead to major reductions in road deaths and casualties. Estimates for ESC alone show that in Europe it could save 4,000 lives and prevent more than 100,000 injuries if fitted to every car. The eSafety Challenge is an event co-funded by the European Commission and eSafetyAware! (comprising a wide range of automotive stakeholders) and supported by EuroNCAP.

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