

Press Release  
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## Star drivers back eSafety

Some of the world's best drivers gathered today to take part in the eSafety Challenge, an annual event that promotes and highlights the life-saving potential of eSafety technologies.

Formula One stars Heikki Kovalainen, Robert Kubica, Timo Glock, and Giancarlo Fisichella joined forces with Tom Kristensen, eight-time 24 Hour Le Mans winner and Susie Stoddart from the German Touring Car series, to demonstrate five different eSafety technologies.

The event was opened by a number of distinguished guests, including Jean Todt, President of eSafetyAware, Paul Clark MP, UK Minister for Transport, Michael Schumacher, seven-time Formula One World Champion, and Michelle Yeoh Make Roads Safe global ambassador.

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 Electronic Stability Control (ESC) alone show that in Europe it could save 4,000 lives and prevent more than 100,000 injuries if fitted to every car.

Prior to the launch of the Challenge eSafetyAware released research on the take up of eSafety technologies, highlighting a critical lack of awareness amongst the general population and showing that despite being involved in seven out of 10 car purchase and placing safety as their number priority when buying a car, women are 30 per cent less likely to know about the existence of eSafety systems than men. Encouragingly eSafetyAware's study showed that if consumers were made aware of the technologies, they were willing to pay to have them fitted, and the overall fittings could potentially double.

**Jean Todt, President of eSafetyAware, said:**

"Today's eSafety Challenge shows that eSafety has the backing of policy makers, major automotive stakeholders, and some of the best drivers in the world.

"Just as with a seat belt today, one day it will be unthinkable to buy a car without eSafety on board. Our goal is to save lives by speeding up the process of getting these systems into the market as soon as possible."

**Enrico Gelpi, President of ACI, said:**

"Vehicles manufactures must make an extra effort in promoting and diffusing eSafety technologies. Safety systems should be at disposal of every driver and be offered with every model and not, as is the case today, only the most expensive cars. Dealerships must also make an effort as not all car sellers stress eSafety technologies, both for marketing reasons and because they are not trained enough to do so."

**Ivan Hodac, Secretary General of ACEA, said:**

"Raising awareness is very important to help increase market acceptance. eSafety is a relatively new concept, and car buyers can profit a lot from a real-time driving experience."

"The eSafety Challenge plays an important role raising this awareness, and the presence of so many top drivers today will have helped get the message to the car buyers."

**Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Member of the European Parliament, said:**

"Accidents on the road claim lives every year. eSafety can help reduce this unnecessary waste of human life, we must do everything possible to increase awareness about the latest safety technologies. If the world's best drivers choose eSafety we should ensure that every driver in Europe does the same."

**Monica Sundström, President of ERTICO, said:**

"eSafety technologies can truly improve road safety, which is why it is very important for consumers to understand the benefits of these systems and ask for them the next time they buy a car. Awareness building is key to this goal, and by conducting such high profile events we are helping."

**Seven-time Formula One World Champion Michael Schumacher said:**

"I am proud to be associated with this campaign. I am convinced that these technologies are critical in our collective bid to improve road safety. We must continue to raise awareness of their benefits in order to achieve our goal of reducing the numbers of people killed on the roads."

**Michelle Yeoh, Make Roads Safe global ambassador, said:**

"Most women consider safety to be their number one priority when buying a car whether it be for themselves or their family. Thousands of lives could be saved if women were better informed and understood the benefits of eSafety technologies when buying a car. Style, price and safety needn't be compromised for the other. Nowadays the necessary safety systems are available also in small and trendy cars."

**BMW F1 driver Robert Kubica said:**

"In motor sport when something goes wrong there are numerous layers of safety to protect you. On the road there are no such layers of safety. If you make a mistake, eSafety systems are needed and indeed critical in order to prevent an accident. It is definitely good to have eSafety on board."

**McLaren F1 driver Heikki Kovalainen said:**

"eSafety technologies save lives. When driving on public roads I demand absolute safety for me and my family. Despite my experience, I too can still be surprised or caught off guard when driving. It is the unexpected that is the most dangerous, and it can happen to anyone. eSafety is there to help me rectify such situations safely and hopefully avoid an accident."

**Toyota F1 driver Timo Glock said:**

"As racing drivers in the public limelight, I believe we have a responsibility to support these sorts of campaigns. It is important for people to know about these technologies, to know how important they can be in saving lives and I must admit even I've learnt some new things about safety today"

**Ferrari F1 driver Giancarlo Fisichella said:**

"Even as an experienced racing driver, it is easy to make a mistake whilst driving. Nothing is more important than my safety and the lives of my family. When I drive a car I want to know that the latest safety features are installed so if I do make a mistake we are protected."

**Eight-time 24 Hour Le Mans winner Tom Kristensen said:**

"As an endurance driver, I know exactly how easy it is to make a mistake when you get distracted or are tired. No matter how much training you undertake there is always a risk. When you are outside of the safe confines of a motor sport circuit, the risk can be unforgiving. That is why I always make sure I am fully protected. eSafety systems react faster and more effectively than a human can to potential dangers, I make sure that my car is fitted with them."

**German Touring Car driver Susie Stoddart said:**

“As a racing driver I’ve always known that I probably knew more than the average driver about cars, but I’ve really been surprised to learn how poor every day driver’s awareness of eSafety is and unfortunately lady drivers are no exception. It is especially shocking when you consider how concerned we are about safety. We must act to ensure that these technologies become common knowledge for women and men alike so that they can make informed and safe choices when they buy their car.”

During the course of the event, each of the star drivers took it in turn to demonstrate an eSafety technology, showcasing ESC, which stabilises the car in a skid; lane support systems, which adjusts 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 finally, warning and emergency braking systems, which act to slow the car automatically in the case of an impending impact.

Note to editors

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 eSafety Challenge is an event co-funded by the European Commission, the FIA Foundation and eSafetyAware! (comprising a wide range of automotive stakeholders) and supported by EuroNCAP. The Challenge focuses on innovative vehicle safety technologies and the potential lives to be saved on the roads through increased deployment of these technologies. An important obstacle for deployment is the lack of awareness among both policymakers and end users, which is affecting policy support, user expectations and readiness for change. The key eSafety applications promoted by the eSafety Challenge are:

- Electronic Stability Control
- Blind Spot Monitoring
- Lane Support Systems
- Speed Alert
- Warning and Emergency Braking Systems

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For more information please visit: [www.esafetychallenge.eu](http://www.esafetychallenge.eu).