eCall: new 112 service for citizens

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The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Olga SEHNALOVÁ (S&D, CZ) and Dieter-Lebrecht KOCH (EPP, DE) on eCall: a new 112 service for citizens.

Regretting the delays and lack of progress in the voluntary deployment of eCall to date, the report calls on those Member States that have not yet done so to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the development of an EU-wide interoperable eCall service in Europe. It calls on the Member States to address these gaps as a matter of urgency, and calls on the Commission to step up its monitoring in this regard.

Members consider that **eCall should be a public EU-wide emergency call system**, embedded in the vehicle and based on 112 and on **common pan-European standards** to guarantee technology neutrality. It should ensure a reliable, high-quality, **affordable and userfriendly service** that can work seamlessly and interoperably across the whole of Europe in all automobiles, irrespective of make, country or actual location of the vehicle.

The report considers that if the introduction of eCall is left to market forces, eCall will only benefit people who can afford high-end vehicles, whereas a **mandatory introduction of the system embedded in all vehicles** would lead to lower costs and universal, EU-wide deployment.

The Commission is urged to:

- **submit a proposal** within the framework of Directive 2007/46/EC in order to ensure the mandatory deployment of a public, 112-based eCall system by 2015 in all new, type-approved cars and in all Member States;
- propose any other regulatory measure necessary to avoid additional delays that could result in preventable fatalities;
- consider extending the eCall system in the near future to include other vehicles, such as heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), buses and coaches, and powered two-wheelers (PTW).

PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points): Members note that ensuring that all PSAPs in all Member States are equipped to a high standard is essential if there is to be a uniform level of protection of all citizens throughout the Union. The report calls, therefore, on the Commission to propose legislation requiring Member States to upgrade their emergency response services infrastructures, and to provide **suitable training to operators**, so as to be able to handle eCalls by 2015, in a way that is best suited to their national structures and that makes them accessible to everyone.

The Commission is called upon to:

- adopt the common specifications for PSAPs within the framework of the ITS Directive by the end of 2012, and to propose a directive on the implementation of eCall;
- ensure that the eCall system, and the links to PSAPs, also are compatible with systems that interact with infrastructure and with intelligent onboard systems (such as intelligent safety barriers that warn of the possibility of accidents, intelligent onboard speed systems, etc.).

Private emergency call services: Members consider that a public EU-wide eCall service **can coexist** with private emergency services, **on the condition that all performance standards are met** by both public

and private services, and that – regardless of whether or not a vehicle buyer opts for a private solution – all vehicles are equipped with the public eCall service so as to ensure continuity of the service in all Member States throughout the lifetime of the vehicle.

The report requests that when a consumer that subscribes to a private emergency call service chooses not to use that service, or is travelling in a country where that service is not offered, the public 112 eCall service should automatically be available.

Data protection: the report stresses the fact that the public eCall system must not under any circumstances allow the journey of a vehicle to be traced, signifying that it must remain a dormant system until an emergency call is triggered, in line with the recommendations of the Article 29 Working Party on Data Protection.

Appropriate rules that respect transparency should be included for the processing of personal data relating to eCalls, not only by mobile network operators (MNOs) but also by all other actors involved, including vehicle manufacturers, PSAPs and emergency services, in order to ensure that the principles of privacy and protection of personal data are respected.

Other related fields: the report emphasises that the eCall system uses technical components (satellite positioning, processing and communication capabilities) that could also provide the basis for several other in-vehicle applications and services. In this context, it recommends the following:

in order to ensure **open choice for customers**, the eCall in-vehicle system should be accessible free of charge and without discrimination to all stakeholders such as providers of car aftermarket products and services, equipment suppliers, repair shops and independent service providers, roadside assistance and related services;

that the eCall system is based on an **interoperable and open-access platform** for possible future in-vehicle applications or services, in order to encourage innovation and boost the competitiveness of the European information technology industry on the global markets;

that the Commission and the Member States step up their activities as regards providing extensive practical information through the development of a targeted and far-reaching communication strategy, and implementing **coordinated awareness-raising campaigns**, concerning the eCall system and its benefits, its use and its functionalities.

Lastly, the Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, are called upon to establish and run national pilot programmes to implement the automatic vehicle emergency response system (eCall) in order to identify possible problems, and to prepare the way for the mandatory implementation of the system in all Member States in 2015.