Road safety: pedestrian protection, commitment by the European automobile industry

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PURPOSE : to present a communication concerning the European automobile industry's self-commitment to enhance pedestrian protection. CONTENT : on 21 December 2000, the Commission discussed the possibility of using an industry self-commitment to increase the protection of pedestrians and other road users from injury as a result of a collision with a motor vehicle. This communication presents the Commission's assessment of the terms of the commitment from the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA). The Commission is of the opinion that the commitment corresponds to the mandate given by the Commission in December 2000. The self-commitment would mean the introduction of a range of safety improvements both active and passive to all cars. These changes would be phased in according to an ambitious but realistic timetable. However, before taking a decision on whether to accept the industry commitment to propose traditional legislation in the form for consultation of Member States and the European Parliament. The ACEA commitment contains the following elements: - all new vehicle types will comply with a first set of passive safety measures (design features to reduce injuries when accidents occur) recommended by the Commission's Joint Research Centre from 1 July 2005. This commitment will be extended to 80% of all new vehicles from 1 July 2010. These rules will apply to 90% of new vehicles by 2011 and to 100% of new vehicles by 2012; - the industry will equip all new vehicles with Daytime Running lights from 2002 and Anti-lock Brake Systems (ABS) from 2003; - the industry will not install rigid bull bars on new vehicles nor market them as spare parts as from 2002; - the industry has commitment itself to install progressively additional active safety devices (equipment aimed at preventing accidents from happening) on all new motor vehicles. This will include electronic sensors and other features (promoted by the eEurope Action Plan); - the industry will comply with a more stringent set of pedestrian safety targets proposed by the European Enhanced Safety Vehicle Committee (EEVC). These rules will be phased in from 2010. This commitment will be expanded progressively to cover all new vehicles from 2012, and not later than from the end of 2014. The required standards will be set by EEVC technical prescriptions or other measures which are at least equivalent. This part of the commitment will be subject to a feasibility assessment to be undertaken by 1 July 2004 by a Monitoring Committee set up by the Commission, with industry participation. Finally, the industry commitment incudes provisions regarding the industry's support of future efforts by the Community to achieve international harmonisation in the area of pedestrian protection, as well as concerning compliance of the Commitment with EU competiton rules. The commitment by ACEA would cover only 80% of the Community market of passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. Negotiations are also going on with Japanese (JAMA) and South Korean (KAMA) industries and once they have signed parallel commitments by the end of the year, practically all passengercars and light commercial vehicles sold in the EU would be covered.