

The automotive Spanish multinational sings the eCall Memorandum of Understanding

Ficosa joins the European eCall

Barcelona, 19th December 2008.- The automotive global supplier Ficosa joined the “Emergency Call (eCall)” initiative by signing its “Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)”, which is promoted by the European Commission through the eSafety Forum. This Ficosa’s commitment is aligned with its global strategy based on the research and development of technologies to improve safety, comfort and reduce the environmental impact of vehicles.

The eCall Memorandum of Understanding reflects the commitment of governments, companies and private institutions to be actively involved in the effort to improve road safety by the development and deployment of new Information and Communication Technologies.

The European Commission promotes, by means of the eSafety Forum and working documents like the eCall MoU, the standardization and adoption of a “Pan-European in-vehicle emergency call system” in all member states. Among other commitments, the eSafety partners have agreed to introduce eCall as standard equipment in all vehicles by the end of 2010.

The eCall system is essentially the automatic generation of a call from the vehicle to a PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) in case of an accident in order to alert the emergency services and provide the vehicle’s exact position. This call can also be manual – it can be performed by the driver pressing just a button – or as initially described automatic, triggered by the detection of the accident from vehicle sensors. In both cases, data is automatically transmitted along with a voice call to provide the emergency services with accident relevant data, including precise location and vehicle identification. When fully deployed, this system will allow a reduction in the response time of the emergency services by a 50% in rural areas and by a 40% in urban ones in case of an accident. Expectations are to save up to 2.500 lives per year, and reduce by approximately 15% the severity of injuries.

Ficosa across its Advanced Communications Business Unit is investing in the research and development of vehicular communication technologies, applying its expertise in automotive electronics integration, as well as its proprietary antenna systems based on patented fractal technology®.

In 2006, Ficosa Advanced Communications BU and GMV established the joint venture Advanced Automotive Communications®, to develop telematic modules following the directives of eCall, capable to detect an accident, register the vehicle data and transmit it to the PSAP, both automatically and manually.

The Ficosa & GMV telematic unit has been designed to minimize the installation process and associated costs. The goal is to facilitate the eCall deployment, in accordance with the commitment made with the signature of the document promoted by the European Commission. Furthermore, it presents additional benefits utilizing Ficosa's expertise in antenna design and automotive electronics development and integration. The patented Fractal Antenna® Technology allows the size reduction of multi-band antennas, optimizing their integrability and communication performance.

The communications module developed by Ficosa and GMV is already in the market. Moreover, it can support several telematic applications, such as stolen vehicle recovery, breakdown assistance, pay as you drive and remote payment services. As an added value, both companies are developing additional functionalities of the module such as, in the case of eCall, an evaluation of the vehicle occupant's medical condition for transmit along with the emergency call.

Ficosa and GMV plan to participate in the field operational tests that will take place in the following months in order to contribute in the final definition of the system as well as its standardization and interoperability within the member states.

For further information on the eSafety forum and the eCall Mou, please visit the following website:
http://www.esafetysupport.org/en/ecall_toolbox/

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