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**The Intelligent Car Initiative :
Raising Awareness of ICT for Smarter,
Safer and Cleaner Vehicles**

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

Intelligent car Launching event

Brussels, 23 February 2006

Members of the European Parliament, Members of the press, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the launching event of the intelligent car initiative. I have invited you all - here today to this inspiring museum to present and discuss with you the content of a new initiative in the field of smarter safer and cleaner vehicles and I would like to thank you for coming.

What better a place to discuss vehicle technology than this museum which provides an ideal connection between the past, with the automobiles here inside and the future, which is represented outside in the demonstration area.

To reinforce and support the objectives and the actions described in the document I am about to present, we have organised a demonstration of ICT technologies that is the largest European concentration of intelligent vehicles ever displayed in recent years. Most of these vehicles are the result of European projects supported under Information Society Technologies Programmes 5 and 6. Some of these systems are already commercial products fitted into vehicles that are driving on European roads. Some other systems are the results of National research programmes, underlining the complementarities and collaboration of European and National research programmes.

Research and development is the engine of modern economies, and in the areas with a strong technology nature, research and innovation are essential for growth and competitiveness. Under the 5th Framework Programme (1999-2002), we have invested around 100 M€ in road vehicle related research. Under the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006) we have invested so far about 150 M€. 30M of this is supporting the Integrated Project PREVENT looking specifically at preventive safety applications. Many of the results produced by these programmes are on show outside and I am eager to see and try the excellence of European Research in Information and Communication Technologies based solutions.

I would like to concentrate now on the main subject of today: the Commission Communication on the Intelligent Car. Why a European initiative on the Intelligent Car?

There are an estimated 300 million car drivers in the EU Member States, who would like their driving to be made easier with less trouble, fewer delays, and less chance of getting injured. Of all our daily activities, driving is crucial as our entire life could change in an instant or even end because of a road accident. The intelligent car initiative is an attempt to move towards a new situation, where cars don't crash anymore, and traffic congestion is drastically reduced.

The pollution of the environment, traffic safety and congestion are truly European problems affecting all 25 Member States: common European solutions need to be found. Moreover, despite the quality of the intelligent systems based on ICT, their take up in the market is very slow. Action is needed to make European citizens benefit more from these technologies.

The Commission initiative on the Intelligent Car is an answer to the need of the citizens, the industry and the Member States to solve transport related societal problems and to improve the take up of Information and Communication Technologies. This new Communication presents a policy framework for action. It is part of the i2010 strategy as one of the 3 Flagship initiatives that show how European research & policy on ICT are delivering an innovation.

Before going into the details of the Initiative, let me first briefly describe the challenges that Europe is facing with regards to congestion, energy efficiency and road safety. **Congestion** costs 50 billion € per year or 0.5 % of Community GDP, by 2010 this last figure could go up to 1%. Everyday, 7 500 km or 10 % of the road networks are affected by traffic jams. In 2002, Road transport consumed 83% of the **energy** consumed by the whole transport sector representing more than **26% of the total energy consumption** in the EU. But of all transport problems, **Safety** is the one with the most serious impact on the daily lives of the citizens. With the “White Paper” of September 2001, we set the target to halve road fatalities by 2010. Although the situation has improved considerably, every year there are still over 40.000 fatalities on the European roads, with 1.4 million accidents and a cost of around 200 billion € per year representing 2% of the EU GDP.

How can we deal better with these problems? We believe that **Information and Communication Technologies, which enable the building of intelligent vehicles and infrastructures**, provide new advanced solutions that can contribute to solving the key societal challenges I have just described. These intelligent systems can assist the driver in the driving functions, thus preventing or avoiding accidents. They can provide drivers with real time information about the road network, thus avoiding congestion. They can optimise a journey or the engine performance, thus improving overall energy efficiency.

I would like to give you some examples of the potential of these systems. If all vehicles were equipped with **eCall**, the emergency call system, it has been estimated that a reduction in fatalities between 5% and 10% could be achieved in the EU, saving up to 22 billion €/a year. Moreover, **eCall** could reduce congestion times between 10% and 20% with additional cost savings of between 2 to 4 billion €.

Already, Electronic Stability Programmes (**ESP**) reduce accidents by 20% on average. **Lateral Support systems** could save 1.500 accidents in 2010 with a penetration rate of only 0.6%, while a penetration rate of 7% in 2020 would lead to 14.000 fewer accidents. Solutions are not only focused on board the vehicles, but improved software and real-time traffic data in urban traffic control centres could lead to better **traffic management** and achieve a reduction of up to 40% in standstill traffic and in congestion, thus resulting in considerable energy savings. Solutions exist and they are getting better, more reliable and cheaper.

Unfortunately, despite their potential, most intelligent systems are not yet on the market, and when they are, large-scale deployment has taken a very long period of time due to several problems. This has been the case, for example, with the introduction of the ABS, which took 20 years, and the ESP taking 10 years to reach 40% of market penetration in the EU.

The main reasons for slow take up are legal and institutional barriers, the extremely competitive situation of the automotive sector, the relatively high cost of intelligent systems and the consequent lack of customer demand, and, most of all, the lack of information, throughout society, about the use and potential benefits of these systems.

A recent survey done by EUROTTEST showed that only half the drivers surveyed were familiar with existing basic in-vehicle technologies providing active and passive safety. Only 50% of them, for example, knew the features of the anti lock-braking system that is now fitted in every new vehicle.

The Intelligent Car initiative addresses all these issues thoroughly through three main objectives:

1. Coordinate and support the work of the relevant stakeholders, the citizens, the Member States and the Industry.
2. Support research and development in the area of smarter, cleaner and safer vehicles and facilitate the take-up and use of research results.
3. Create awareness of ICT-based solutions to stimulate users' demand for these systems and create socio-economic acceptance.

The first objective of the Intelligent Car Initiative is implemented with the support of the eSafety Forum. The Forum aims at removing the bottlenecks that prevent Intelligent Vehicle Systems entering the market, through consensus building among stakeholders and recommendations to the Member States, industry and the EU. It was established in 2003 and now has over 150 member organisations. Most of them are present today, representing all road safety stakeholders. The Forum will become one of the pillars of the Intelligent Car Initiative and it will be the essential link to the decision makers. I would like to take this opportunity to invite the eSafety Forum to start the discussions on how ICT could contribute more to the "cleaner" aspect of the initiative.

The second objective of the Intelligent Car Initiative builds upon the achievements and results of EU Framework Programmes on research and technological development. The long-term objectives of the Intelligent Car Initiative can only be achieved through co-operative research and will be part of the ICT priority in FP7: **ICT meeting societal challenges**, contributing to the development of ICT-based intelligent transportation systems and services.

The impressive display of smart vehicles you see here today has to large measure benefited from EU research programme funding for Information Society Technologies.

This part of the programme represents around 20% of the total EU research funding. It is a practical programme which as you can see gives real results of benefit to European citizens and industry. The negotiations for FP7 – the new programme – will start soon and I am sure you will agree that the highest priority has to be given to those areas where we can show in concrete terms that European money is money well spent. That is why we have to avoid at all costs that the IST programmes, my programmes, actually do not get the budget we need to make Europe move ahead on economic growth, on forming the basis for new wealth and job creating industries and on rolling out new services for citizens. The Intelligent Cars we see here today that will make for smarter, safer and cleaner road transport – these are the results of the money Europe has spent on IST research.

On the EU budget for framework 7, we have to be realistic. The overall frame is already largely set. And I cannot say I am not disappointed: our aspirations are far below our international competitors. I remind you again: the US spends 350€ per head on ICT research, Europe spends 80€ per head. No wonder we have productivity growth rates of 1% whereas the US has rates of 3%, 80% of which comes from ICT production and ICT intensive services.

With what we do have left, though, ICT research needs to be strongly reinforced; we have the evidence here today that it can pay off. To do less would send totally the wrong message. I rely on your help to avoid such a trap!

Last but not least, the awareness pillar of the Intelligent Car Initiative will promote in an active manner co-ordinated information dissemination to a wide audience, raise drivers and policy makers' knowledge about the potential of intelligent vehicle systems, stimulate users' demand and create socio-economic acceptance.

In the Communication on the Intelligent Car we propose 12 actions. These actions target the 3 objectives I have described and range from co-ordination and research to awareness activities. These actions are not exclusive and I am planning to add more activities in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have learned that the Intelligent Car initiative emphasises the strategic importance of Information and Communication Technologies, ICT, enabling the building of smarter, safer and cleaner vehicles, helping to solve road transport related societal problems. The Intelligent Car Initiative is a policy framework to guide stakeholders' efforts in this area, aiming at accelerating the deployment of intelligent vehicle systems on the European and other markets through clearly defined actions. These actions encompass the use of policy, research and communications instruments. I would like to invite you all to support the objectives expressed in this Communication and to play an active role in the execution of the proposed actions, together with the Commission, The Member States and the other stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention