

**Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the ‘Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall’**

COM(2013) 315 final — 2013/0166 (COD)

**and on the ‘Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system and amending Directive 2007/46/EC’**

COM(2013) 316 final — 2013/0165 (COD)

(2013/C 341/11)

Rapporteur-General: **Thomas McDONOGH**

On 1 July 2013 and on 5 July respectively, the European Parliament and the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 91 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

*Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall*

COM(2013) 315 final — 2013/0166 (COD).

On 27 June and on 1 July 2013 respectively, the Council and the European Parliament decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

*Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system and amending Directive 2007/46/EC*

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Given the urgent nature of the work, the European Economic and Social Committee appointed Mr McDonogh as rapporteur-general at its 492nd plenary session, held on 18 and 19 September 2013 (meeting of 19 September), and adopted the following opinion by 141 votes with one abstention.

## 1. Conclusions and Recommendations

1.1 The Committee notes 28 000 persons were killed and 1,5 million were injured on EU roads in 2012. The Committee believes strongly that reducing the number of road fatalities to is extremely important for society and endorses the Commission's ambitious goal of reducing the figure to half of 2010 levels during the period 2011 to 2020.

1.2 The Committee welcomes the proposed Decision and Regulation from the Commission on the implementation of eCall, to ensure that from October 2015 all new models of passenger cars and light duty vehicles would be fitted with 112 eCall, and that the necessary infrastructure would be created for the proper receipt and handling of eCalls in emergency call response centres (Public Safety Answering Points: PSAPs), thus ensuring the compatibility, interoperability and continuity of the EU-wide eCall service.

1.3 The EESC agrees with the conclusions of the eCall Impact Assessment which showed that the mandatory

introduction of eCall was the only way to bring eCall's benefits to the Union's citizens. The Committee had advised the Commission in numerous opinions that a voluntary approach would not be successful.

1.4 The EESC notes that the proposals will only apply to new types of vehicles first registered on or after 1 October 2015 and that existing models can continue to be manufactured and sold without eCall after that date. While appreciating the possible financial cost on automotive manufacturers, the Committee calls on manufacturers to also install eCall technology as soon as possible on existing types of vehicles to be manufactured after October 2015.

1.5 The Committee notes that the proposals do not include the provision of eCall technology on motorcycles and other powered two-wheel vehicles. As the risk of death and injury to drivers and passengers on these types of vehicles is a significant problem, the EESC urges manufacturers and Member States to extend the eCall system to powered two wheelers as soon as possible.

1.6 The Committee also calls again on the Commission to submit proposals as soon as possible on explicitly improving the active and passive safety of powered two-wheel vehicles.

1.7 The EESC is impressed by the success of road safety authorities established in a number of Member States to provide oversight on the implementation of national road safety strategy, to advise on road safety policy and to promote road safety best practices. The Committee believes that a European road safety agency should be set up to help harmonise and drive the implementation of road safety across the EU, including the implementation of eCall. This body would include road safety experts appointed by the Member States.

1.8 The Committee directs the Commission's attention to the previous opinions of the EESC that has discussed the topic of road safety, and which commented on the need for the mandatory introduction of eCall <sup>(1)</sup>.

## 2. Gist of the proposals

### 2.1 eCall

eCall is a technology designed to send in-vehicle emergency calls using the EU-wide 112 emergency telephone number either automatically, in the event of an accident, or when activated manually. "eCall" system automatically dials 112 - Europe's single emergency number - in the event of a serious accident. It communicates the vehicle's location to emergency services, even if the driver is unconscious or unable to make a phone call. In 2011 the Commission adopted a Recommendation, 2011/750/EU, that mobile network operators should ensure their networks are capable of carrying eCalls.

2.2 Only around 0,7 % of vehicles are currently equipped with private eCall systems in the EU, with numbers barely rising. These proprietary systems do not offer EU-wide interoperability or continuity.

### 2.3 Draft Regulation

The draft Regulation seeks to create the type approval requirements for eCall technology and mandate its installation to new types of passenger cars and light commercial vehicles from October 2015. The proposal sets out obligations on manufacturers and Member States, the requirements for privacy and data protection for users, the vehicles to which it applies and the date of introduction.

### 2.4 Draft Decision

The draft Decision seeks to ensure that all emergency call response centres – Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) – are mandated to handle eCalls when they are triggered, either

automatically or when activated manually, in the event of an accident. The Commission wants to ensure that by 1 October 2015 that eCalls are generated, transmitted and handled consistently across the EU.

### 2.5 Provisions of the Regulation

The proposed Regulation lays down legal requirements including:

2.5.1 Manufacturers of passenger cars and light goods must ensure that new types of these vehicles are manufactured and approved with compliant eCall systems from October 2015.

2.5.2 Member States would have to ensure that from 1 October 2015 new types of vehicles covered by the proposed Regulation receive European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval.

2.5.3 The type approval authorities must ensure that these vehicles meet the prescribed standards before issuing a type approval certificate.

2.5.4 Manufacturers must ensure that eCall technology does not allow the vehicles to be subject to constant tracking.

2.5.5 Sufficient safeguards against surveillance are required and users must be provided with information about how the data used by the system will be processed.

2.5.6 The Commission is empowered to adopt Delegated Acts to establish the technical requirements of in-vehicle systems, to define the requirements in relation to the privacy of users and, on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis, to exempt certain classes of passenger cars and light commercial vehicles.

## 3. General Comments

3.1 The Committee notes that 28 000 persons were killed and 1,5 million were injured on EU roads last year. When emergency services are called to a road accident, every minute is critical to save lives and reduce the severity of injuries. However, people injured in an accident do not always have the physical ability to call emergency services.

3.2 eCall technology addresses this problem by alerting emergency services immediately even if the driver or passenger is unconscious or otherwise unable to call. The EESC also notes that eCall technology is expected to speed up the arrival of emergency teams by an estimated 40 % in urban areas and 50 % in rural areas, and that once widely deployed, eCall will save several hundred lives in Europe every year, reducing the severity of injuries and trauma in tens of thousands of cases.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 80, 30.3.2004, p. 77, OJ C 168, 20.7.2007, p. 71, OJ C 77, 31.3.2009, p. 70, OJ C 48, 15.2.2011, p. 27 and OJ C 132, 3.5.2011, p. 94.

3.3 A number of Member States have established road safety authorities with a national mandate to evaluate road safety strategy and advise their governments on priority actions. A European Road Safety Agency with a clear mandate for all road safety domains (infrastructure, vehicles and road users) across the Union could help to improve the implementation of a harmonised EU road safety strategy. Such an Agency could have specific tasks in terms of the identification, specification, establishment and promotion of best practices, as well as the enhancement of cross-border information exchange and collaboration.

#### 4. Specific Comments

4.1 The proposal applies only to the type approval of new passenger cars and light goods vehicles and would not impose a requirement to ensure that eCall be fitted prior to first registration, which means that existing types of those vehicles can continue to be manufactured and sold without eCall. The

Committee notes that because of this policy, it will be 2033 before there is full penetration of the eCall service. While understanding the need to take account of the financial impact and design problems that might be caused for automotive manufacturers, the EESC would like manufacturers to also install eCall technology as soon as possible on existing types of vehicles to be manufactured after October 2015.

4.2 The Regulation concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system will not apply to powered two-wheel vehicles (motorcycles etc.). Drivers of powered two-wheel vehicles are 18 to 20 times more at risk of suffering a serious injury on the road than car drivers. Special attention is needed to address the road safety issues of this high-risk vehicle class. In addition to the fitting of eCall technology, proposals are needed as soon as possible on improving the active and passive safety of powered two-wheelers.

Brussels, 19 September 2013.

*The President*  
*of the European Economic and Social Committee*  
Henri MALOSSE

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