In Finland, the eSafety Forum and its activities have been regarded as very useful. The Ministry of the Transport and Communications Finland (MinTC) and Ministry of the Interior are actively aiming to implement the Forum's recommendations they are responsible for. Right now, eCall is a priority action in Finland.

A consortium commissioned by the MinTC produced a national eCall pilot programme and implementation plan in June 2004. The plan concluded that in the short term aftermarket devices together with OEM devices will enable more rapid and cost-efficient penetration than OEM eCall devices alone. The highest possible penetration of eCall enabled vehicles has the most benefits for road safety and social economy. The plan describes the E-Merge compatible system architecture for a national eCall system as well as accompanying technical specifications. The plan also includes an analysis of user requirements based on an interview study. Further work in Finland as well as the latest international development in eCall have resulted in some changes related to the data structure and communications architecture.

Finnish authorities are implementing the applications for receiving eCalls at the national emergency centres as well as other authority infrastructure required. The overall plan is to have authority infrastructures in place for good service level eCall within the next couple of years. A communications test bench http://www.ecall.fi (see page 2), provides a platform for the equipment manufacturers and vendors to verify the operation of the eCall units and service centres according to the national eCall specifications. Finland invites all European actors to utilise this national test bench. A local pilot based on aftermarket devices is in its first stages.

With regard to the current recommendations of the eCall Driving Group,

1) The relevant ministries as well as the other key participating actors have signed the eCall Memorandum of Understanding
2) Finland has appointed members to the Public Safety Officers Communication Forum
3) A national platform for the implementation of eCall has been set up
4) Finland has a national implementation strategy
5) Finland will have an adequate infrastructure in the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) for the processing of eCalls originating from vehicles within the next couple of years, and the location and other information will be utilised in the whole emergency service chain
6) Finland will support implementations based on existing cellular network technologies and standards as well as additional standardisation of data transfer protocols for data-over-voice link between the vehicle and the PSAP
7) Finland will undertake the necessary training of emergency service personnel, and organise public awareness campaigns for the visibility of E112 and eCall
8) Finland will report of the status of E112 implementation and the readiness of national PSAPs to process eCalls at times requested.

Finland strongly supports the rapid implementation of pan-European eCall. To reach the goal, the following principles are set by the Finnish eCall experts:

1. Vehicle to PSAP communications are implemented using existing communications technologies, networks and standards
2. Service centre to PSAP messaging is secure and at the same time, enables free EU-wide competition of service centre business
3. EU-wide interoperability of terminals is ensured by creating a centralised EU-level terminal certification
4. EU member states agree on a rapid EU-wide interoperable implementation of eCall at PSAPs
5. eCall terminal will be made mandatory on all vehicles in a rapid schedule.

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The operation of launching eCall in Finland has proceeded to the second phase. A test bench for eCall units has been developed and is being implemented. VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland is hosting the test environment. The objective of the test bench is to verify the communicational operations of eCall terminals. The tests focus on the integrity and availability of the communications.

Such tests need to be carried out as the authorities must be confident that the service operates properly in a real emergency situation. The test bench is available for everyone wanting to test the functionality of an eCall-terminal. The test bench will be fully operational in the early summer of 2005, but it has already been used successfully to test an eCall terminal prototype provided by one local manufacturer.

The test bench is operating in a simulated service centre and PSAP environment and using any of the operational GSM networks. In the near future, the system will also connect to the real emergency centre environment (ELS used in all emergency centres in Finland) after the implementation of the necessary interfaces has been completed. The communications test bench can be utilised later as a part of a European eCall terminal certification procedure.

Such certification process would include also the physical and environmental tests of eCall terminals as well as verification of usability and vehicle installation. An EU-wide certification for eCall terminals requires multi-national initiative, in which Finland could play a role.

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