**Lingering and snowy winter may be ahead:**

**Goodyear research shows that road accidents are the top worry across Europe**

* The UK Met Office confirms the probability for a harsh tail-end of winter in Europe
* Goodyear consumer research shows that despite the fear for road accidents, preparing for winter weather driving still leaves room for improvement

**Brussels, Belgium, November 26th, 2015** – **Winter is quickly approaching, and recurring weather phenomenon El Niño could turn this winter into a particularly cold and lingering one, according to the UK Met Office. Consumer research by independent research company TNS by order of Goodyear,[[1]](#footnote-1) shows that participants across Europe are afraid of road accidents during winter, but only half of the respondents are taking proactive measures to buying winter tires to prepare for winter.**

**Strongest El Niño since 1950?**

El Niño is a naturally occurring phenomenon and is one of the most important global drivers each year for climate variability[[2]](#footnote-2). This year’s El Niño event is expected to be strong, according to the UK Met Office, the United Kingdom's national weather service: “Our model suggests that an El Niño stronger than 2°C above average on the Pacific sea-surface is most likely for the whole winter period, which would mean this event is among the strongest since 1950”, said Emily Wallace, research scientist at the Met Office[[3]](#footnote-3).

In some parts of Europe this could lead to a colder and lingering winter. “In El Niño years, we are more likely to experience colder winters which last longer into spring. In 2010 El Niño played a part in bringing huge amounts of snow to the UK and parts of Europe. This is because in El Niño years a negative ‘North Atlantic Oscillation’[[4]](#footnote-4) in late winter is more likely than usual. For Eurasia a negative North Atlantic Oscillation often results in greater covering of snow”, said Emily Wallace[[5]](#footnote-5).

In addition to a potentially harsh end to winter, we are currently seeing colder than average conditions across Europe, bringing the possibility of it, seeming to members of the public, to be a particularly long winter season.

“The early season snowfall arrived in eastern Europe (Slovakia, Romania, Poland) on Sunday (11th October), before arriving in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium on Monday and Tuesday (12th and 13th October). Some places received several inches of snow accumulations, with temperatures widely 5-10 Celsius below the mid-October (average) temperatures”, said Paul Hutcheon, Deputy Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office[[6]](#footnote-6).

**Road conditions biggest worry**

The TNS-Goodyear consumer research[[7]](#footnote-7) shows that the majority—on average[[8]](#footnote-8) 6 out of 10 research participants – are aware of the El Niño phenomenon.

Though most consumers surveyed are aware of El Niño, they are not particularly concerned about a harsh winter. According to the research, 44% of Polish and 34% of Germans polled are concerned about a harsh winter, whereas In France, Italy & Belgium only 1 in 4 is worried, and in the Netherlands, only 1 in 10 expresses worry for a harsh winter[[9]](#footnote-9).

When asked about the biggest fears in anticipating a harsh winter, five out of six countries polled indicated that their primary concern was ‘*fear of car accidents as a result of frozen roads’*. Only Polish respondents are slightly more worried about heating costs than road accidents.

However, despite this concern, not all markets polled put buying winter tires at the top of their list[[10]](#footnote-10) in preparing for a harsh winter. For Polish and German participants, 3 in 4 would be very likely to buy winter tires, while for the rest the numbers were lower: 1 in 2 from Italian participants, 1 in 3 from French participants, 4 in 10 from Belgium participants and 3 in 10 from Netherlands participants.

“We are surprised to see these survey results. On the one hand we are pleased to see that winter tires are in people’s consideration, on the other hand we feel that the added value of getting winter tires fitted is still underestimated. For example, last year’s Auto Express test results by order of Goodyear showed that the braking distance of winter tires is 15,7 meters shorter than summer tires on a slippery surface in winter conditions[[11]](#footnote-11). These survey results reinforce our determination to give families across Europe peace of mind when traveling winter roads on Goodyear tires, particularly during a winter that may be longer and snowier than usual,” said Alexis Bortoluzzi, Marketing Director Consumer EMEA.

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About Goodyear
Goodyear is one of the world’s largest tire companies. It employs about 66,000 people and manufactures its products in 49 facilities in 22 countries around the world. Its two Innovation Centers in Akron, Ohio and Colmar-Berg, Luxembourg strive to develop state-of-the-art products and services that set the technology and performance standard for the industry. For more information about Goodyear and its products, go to [www.goodyear.com/corporate](http://www.goodyear.com/corporate).

1. Conducted in 6 countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland) with ca. 1.000 consumers, sample representative of consumer population in each market [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. El Niño is defined as episodes of warmer than normal temperatures of the sea-surface over the equatorial east-central Pacific (UK Met Office) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Interview with the UK Met Office conducted on 16 October 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The North Atlantic Oscillation refers to the difference in pressure between the Azores (usually high pressure) and Iceland (usually low pressure). When the high pressure is less high than normal, and the low pressure is less low than normal this is called a negative phase. The negative phase of the oscillation is associated with more occurrences of easterly wind in northern Europe and greater Eurasian snow cover. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Interview with the UK Met Office conducted on 16 October 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Interview with the UK Met Office conducted on 16 October 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Conducted in 6 countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland) with ca. 1.000 consumers, sample representative of consumer population in each market [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Italy: 66%; Germany: 61%; France: 58%; Belgium: 54%; Poland: 54%; Netherlands: 53% (of all car owning participants in the survey) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In The Netherlands 2 in 3 respondents claim not to be worried at all about winter, much more than the 4 in 10 for Italy, Belgium & Germany; 1 in 3 in France and 1 in 4 in Poland [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Possibilities which are more considered include ‘buying more warm clothes’ and ‘buying salt to unfreeze pavements and driveways’ [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Tests carried out at Goodyear Innovation Center in Luxembourg by Auto Express Magazine, November 2014. Tires used: Goodyear EfficientGrip Performance vs Goodyear UltraGrip 9 Tire size: 205/55R16 91 V (summer) and 205/55R16 94 H (winter) Car: VW Golf Mk7. Wet Braking test done at 80kph, Ice Simulation braking test done at 52kph. Winter conditions: below 5 degrees, ice simulation (Epoxy surface) for braking on low-grip surface [↑](#footnote-ref-11)