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Euro NCAP Puts Autonomous Pedestrian Detection to the Test

Brussels, 10 November 2015 - European safety organisation Euro NCAP is introducing a new test that will check how well vehicles autonomously detect and prevent collisions with pedestrians. With new vehicles offering more autonomous driver assist systems, Euro NCAP's Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) Pedestrian tests will make it simpler for consumers and manufacturers to find out which systems work best.

Euro NCAP Secretary General, Dr Michiel van Ratingen, said: "These new tests are the first in the world to assess highly automated vehicle features and driver assistance systems from the pedestrian's perspective. Many new cars now offer some form of AEB system that can help prevent car-to-car collisions, but only some are also able to detect pedestrians. By checking the results on Euro NCAP's website, consumers will be able to verify manufacturers' safety claims and choose the right AEB option."

Improved protection for drivers and passengers has helped lower Europe's road death toll significantly over the past 20 years. Europe now needs new car technologies to address the number of pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists killed and injured on its roads every year. In 2014 these vulnerable road users accounted for almost half (47%) of Europe's 26,000 road deaths. For every death, there are an estimated four permanently disabling injuries, such as damage to the brain or spinal cord, and eight serious injuries.

Independent analysis of real world crash data in the UK and Germany indicates that the fitment of effective autonomous emergency braking systems on passenger cars could prevent one in five fatal pedestrian collisions. Most collisions occur when drivers fail to brake, brake too late or brake too gently – often because the driver is distracted or because the pedestrian crosses unexpectedly. Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) functions use lasers, radar and/or cameras to detect the imminent collision, perform an effective emergency stop or reduce the impact speed significantly.

Euro NCAP will test vehicles' response to pedestrians in simulations of the three most common urban scenarios: adults walking and running into the vehicle's path and a child stepping out from behind a parked car. To earn a good score in the test, vehicles should be able to prevent collisions with specially developed pedestrian dummies at speeds of up to 40kmh (25mph). At more challenging speeds of 40-60kmh (25-37mph), the tests aim to reduce the collision speed to less than 40kmh, making the impact more survivable.

"Although this technology is rapidly developing, it's not yet possible to prevent every collision with a pedestrian in the real world," said Van Ratingen. "But vehicles designed to perform well in these tests will be better equipped to prevent these thousands of needless deaths and life-changing injuries on our European roads. Therefore, from 2016 the rating will give credit to those vehicle models that offer this capability. At the same time, these tests will make it possible for new car buyers and fleet operators to make an informed choice."

Euro NCAP has been assessing pedestrian protection since 1997 and has awarded higher scores in its safety ratings to vehicles designed with forgiving front-ends. The organisation started testing the effectiveness of manufacturers' AEB systems in preventing car-to-car collisions in 2013 and is planning to extend the assessment of AEB systems for vulnerable road users to cyclists in the coming years.

AEB Pedestrian systems are already offered on several vehicles tested by Euro NCAP, including Audi Q7, BMW 2-Series and BMW i3, Ford Mondeo, Lexus NX, Mercedes C-Class, Mini Cooper, Volvo V40, XC90, Toyota Avensis and VW Passat.

Pictures and videos illustrating AEB Pedestrian tests are available on our Media Center. For media information, please contact Marie Brasseur, Euro NCAP Communications Manager at Marie_Brasseur@euroncap.com.

About Euro NCAP

Euro NCAP organizes crash tests on new vehicles and provides motoring consumers with a realistic and independent assessment of the safety performance of some of the most popular cars sold in Europe. Established in 1997 and backed by several European Governments, motoring, consumer and insurance organizations, Euro NCAP has rapidly become a catalyst for encouraging significant safety improvements to new car design. Visit our website: www.euroncap.com