

4 February 1997

**CONSUMER CAR CRASH TESTS -
FIRST EURO-NCAP RESULTS PUBLISHED**

Results from the first phase of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro-NCAP) were published today.

The programme, carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) in Berkshire, UK, provides comparative consumer information on the protection provided by cars in frontal and side-impact collisions and to pedestrians hit by a car's front.

In this first phase, the crashworthiness of seven popular super-mini sized cars has been evaluated. The cars tested were the Fiat Punto, Ford Fiesta, Nissan Micra, Renault Clio, Rover 100, Vauxhall Corsa, and the Volkswagen Polo.

Organisations contributing to Euro-NCAP include the United Kingdom's Department of Transport, the Swedish National Road Administration, the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), International Testing (which co-ordinates joint testing and research done by independent European consumer organisations), the Royal Automobile Club, and the Automobile Association.

Consumer information summarising the test results is being published today in a coloured pull-out brochure in the February edition of *What Car?* magazine. The results are also being published in several European consumer magazines.

Speaking for the Swedish National Road Administration (SNRA), which is responsible for all road infrastructure targets in Sweden, Director of Safety Claes Tingvall said:

“Our long term target is zero fatalities and serious injuries in the road transport system. The strategy for achieving such a radical target is to build a road transport system that is more forgiving to human failures and mistakes. Increased passive safety is one of the areas that fits well into this strategy.

“SNRA has, therefore, actively promoted the development of Euro-NCAP, as public demand for better passive safety of cars will rapidly increase the willingness to develop and market better cars.”

Max Mosley, President of the FIA said:

“Car buyers today are given a wealth of information about car performance and fuel economy but very little on safety. Now, for the first time, the Euro-NCAP will give the public a reliable guide to the crashworthiness of cars.

“The FIA believes that this crash test programme will help to build a market for safety and improve car construction standards.”

International Testing’s Chief Executive, Peter Sand, said:

“For the first time consumers will be given independent factual information about the protection given by cars in frontal and side impacts and also about the effects of different car designs on the safety of pedestrians.

“Publication of the Euro-NCAP results will provide an incentive to car manufacturers to improve their designs more quickly. They will help consumers to cut through advertising hype and, when choosing their next car, to make up their own minds about which cars give the best protection.”

The RAC’s Chief Executive, Neil Johnson, said:

“This is an historic day for road safety. As a result of the Euro-NCAP, motorists will for the first time be able to make an informed choice of car on grounds of safety rather than just colour, style and performance.

“Motorists have the right to know how their car would perform if it came to the crunch. These results should make motorists choose safety and encourage manufacturers to further improve safety.”

David Lang, the AA’s Chief Engineer, said:

“Independent crash tests have been saving lives in America and Australia for many years and it’s high time that British motorists had access to similar information about the cars they buy.

“The Euro-NCAP programme will force improvement to vehicle safety because motorists will be able to make a more informed choice.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Details of the Government’s support for the first phase of Euro-NCAP are given in the Department of Transport’s Press Notice No.29, published today.
2. In Euro-NCAP, cars are tested to provide consumer information about the relative protection provided by new cars on sale to the public. This consumer testing provides information to help car buyers choose safety and provides an incentive for manufacturers to improve their cars. Those manufacturers who choose to emphasise safety also get recognition for their efforts.

3. The United States Department of Transportation started a new car testing programme in 1978. Australia followed some ten years later and Japan has just started its own programme. Euro-NCAP is unique in that it includes tests on front and side impact and also gives information on pedestrian protection whereas others concentrate on front impact only.
4. The front impact test is carried out at 64km/h (40mph) into an offset deformable barrier, the side impact at 50km/h (31mph approx), and the pedestrian tests at 40km/h (25mph).
5. The technical test results data will be published shortly in a report by the Transport Research Laboratory.
6. The consumer brochure is being circulated with the March issue of *What Car?* magazine, on sale on 6 February. Additional copies are available from *What Car?*, Back Issues Department, tel: 01235-534323 (price £3.75 including postage and packing).
7. Consumer information on the crash testing of family size cars will be published in the summer and on cars in the Ford Escort/Volkswagen Golf group in 1998.