

Press Release

Golf, Puma and Juke join the ranks of top performers, MG surges while Opel Zafira Life tanks

Euro NCAP rounds off a busy year with the results of ten more vehicles. Five stars were awarded to the [Ford Puma](#), [MG ZS EV](#), [MG HS](#), [Nissan Juke](#), [VW Golf](#) and [Audi Q8](#). Three stars were handed out to the [Aiways U5](#), the [VW up!](#) and its twins, the [SEAT Mii](#) and [Škoda CITIGO](#).

The VW Golf has been a benchmark of compact cars since its debut 45 years ago. Previous versions tested by Euro NCAP have rated well against the requirements at the time and the all-new eighth-generation Golf again has achieved the five full stars thanks to excellent crashworthiness and standard fit of number of assist systems. The Golf is also the first ever Volkswagen to make use of V2X connectivity (vehicle to vehicle, vehicle to infrastructure) to enable advance hazard warnings, an important new technology that will be soon be included in Euro NCAP's rating.

However, after the Sharan released last month, the Golf was the second successive VW tested by Euro NCAP to suffer a door opening in a side impact crash test. VW states that the Golf has been type-approved with a standard automatic door-locking function and believes this would prevent such door-opening in real-world accidents. Nevertheless, VW is looking into the root-cause of the door behaviour as it has not been seen in Golf tests before. Michiel van Ratingen commented "Door openings during crash are penalised in Euro NCAP since the start as they represent a critical ejection risk to occupants. Door openings are rare nowadays and it is important that VW is committed to finding the root cause."

Volkswagen also facelifted its up! supermini and its twins the SEAT Mii and Škoda CITIGO. AEB, available as standard when the cars were last tested in 2011, has been dropped and, despite some new improvements, the cars lose two stars compared to their previous rating. Ford went the other way and has re-visited the Puma name for its all-new supermini. The small car has performed very well, scoring high marks in all four categories of tests. With 5 stars under its belt, the Puma has entered the market as one of the safest choices in the lower price segment.

Also new on the market are the MG ZS EV and MG HS, both in the already crowded compact SUV segment and built and shipped over straight from the Chinese auto conglomerate SAIC Motor. With an impressive equipment list and good performance in Euro NCAP's tests, the cars are a match for many European, Japanese or Korean models. Not shying away from tough competition, Nissan has updated its high-selling small off-roader Juke, which also got a top rating.

Less fortunate was the all-electric Aiways U5, the first car from the Chinese start-up to be launched on the European market and tested by Euro NCAP. The slick-looking, futuristic SUV had problems in the side impact tests, losing all points for the side pole impact, and narrowly missed out on points for the pedestrian and cyclist functionality of its AEB system. This has capped the rating at three stars for the moment. Aiways has responded

that they are already working on the weaknesses of the car and are hoping to re-submit the car for further evaluation in order to make the U5 one of the safest mid-size SUVs available next year. Michiel van Ratingen said “It is the first year that we see three Chinese cars tested by Euro NCAP. Clearly the capabilities to engineer safe vehicles in China has leapfrogged over recent years, but the U5 example shows that meeting 5-star requirements can still be a hurdle for young companies. None of these issues however can not be overcome and we look forwards to verify the cars’ performance when the shortcomings are effectively addressed”.

Last on the list and in this year’s programme is the Audi Q8. This stylish large SUV matches its partner the Q7 tested two weeks before: an accomplished 5-star car.

Euro NCAP also intended to rate the new Opel Zafira Life but halted testing after it became clear that Zafira Life is not a replacement for the previous Zafira. Instead, the Zafira Life (Vauxhall Vivaro Life in the UK) is a rebranded PSA van, also available as the Peugeot Traveller and Citroen Spacetourer tested in 2015. Following the takeover of Opel-Vauxhall by Groupe PSA in 2017, the “new” Zafira Life has been brought to the market, as a placeholder until the next generation vans will become available in a few years from now. All brands combined, PSA holds a 25% to 30% market share in the light commercial vehicle segment.

Michiel van Ratingen said “Fleet operators and consumers are getting old wine in new bottles, as there is not much new about the dated design of the Zafira Life. The equipment and the expected performance have fallen so far behind the latest requirements that testing has become pointless. Pressured by Euro NCAP over its lack of transparency and their false safety claims, Opel-Vauxhall are introducing some changes to the 2020 model year vans. These, however, cannot make up for the lack of ambition that PSA has demonstrated for improving safety in the business van segment”.

Editor’s note

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