

Survey 2008

ELECTRONIC STABILITY CONTROL



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Electronic Stability Control (ESC) is a technology that saves lives. Studies have shown that ESC could save as many as 4,000 lives a year and avert nearly 100,000 injuries. Cars fitted with Stability Control are involved in fewer accidents than those which are not. Put simply, you are safer with it than without it.

Fortunately, ESC's life-saving potential has been recognised by lawmakers. In Europe, the European Commission proposed recently that ESC should be mandatory for all new vehicle types from 2012 with all new vehicles being equipped by 2014. Good news, on the face of it. Yet that is another four years before some new vehicles must have ESC and it could take several more before every vehicle in the showroom is equipped with a safety technology that has been in existence for many years.

How does ESC work?

ESC first became available over ten years ago and its benefits quickly became apparent. By comparing a car's speed and direction with the driver's steering input, ESC recognises when a skid is starting to happen. In a fraction of a second, the electronic control unit applies the brakes at individual wheels, helping to keep the car under control before the skid develops. The system reacts much more quickly than even the best driver and can apply the brakes to individual wheels, which a driver cannot. Whether the skid is the result of an emergency avoidance manoeuvre or a simple error of judgement, ESC can help a driver maintain control of his vehicle.

ESC should be fitted as standard equipment to all cars in all countries.

Since Euro NCAP began to carry out its fitment survey in 2007, some manufacturers have improved the availability of ESC in their cars. Yet despite this, Euro NCAP is still finding huge differences in the extent to which it is offered to car buyers across the European Union. Executive cars have a high level of standard fitment in all countries, whilst superminis still have a much lower level of fitment. As might be expected, ESC is more likely to be fitted to expensive, premium brands than to cheaper models. However, there are also clear differences in ESC fitment rates between makes and models within the same price range. It is clear that some manufacturers need to take action to overcome this anomaly. And Euro NCAP's great concern is that when the system is offered as an option its high price can be a deterrent to fitment.

ESC should be available to all consumers in all countries.

Remarkably, some cars are sold with ESC as standard equipment on all variants in some countries while it is completely unavailable to those buying cars in other Member States. Of these cars, ESC is still most often unavailable in Ireland, Malta and Greece, whereas it is most often fitted as standard in Denmark, Sweden and Germany. The differences between countries are also still at their greatest in the category of superminis. On average, 56 percent of superminis are offered with ESC as standard in Denmark compared with only 7 percent in Malta.



Euro NCAP'S ESC FITMENT RATINGS

Euro NCAP's fitment rating is an illustration of the availability of ESC to new car buyers. Since 2007, it is possible for consumers to see at a glance the extent to which ESC is fitted as standard, as an option or is unavailable for each car model.

In the following example, in one country a car model is available in two different body styles, with two different engines and five different specification grades – that's twenty variants on sale to the public. ESC is fitted as standard equipment to two (10 percent) of those variants, as an option to ten (50 percent) and is unavailable on eight (40 percent). For this example, the model range would be rated by Euro NCAP as follows.



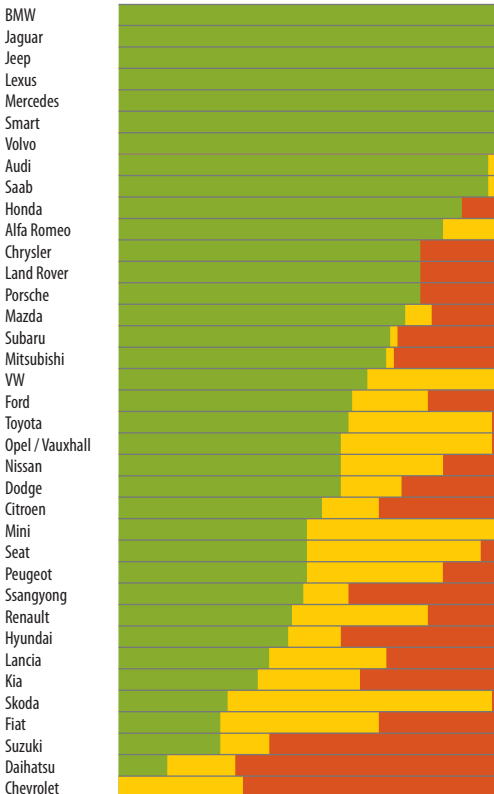
The proportion of standard fit is represented by green, optional fit by yellow and unavailable by red. From this example, consumer should take care when buying such a car. Only a small proportion of the variants have ESC as standard. The buyer must make sure that his chosen variant has ESC fitted when he orders his new car. In contrast, if the rating was all green, he could buy that car with confidence, knowing that he will be protected by ESC whichever variant he chooses. Consumers should avoid choosing cars where ESC is unavailable, represented by an all red rating.

It is important to note that the rating is based on availability and not on the proportion of car sales. All of the ratings are available in detail on www.euroncap.com.

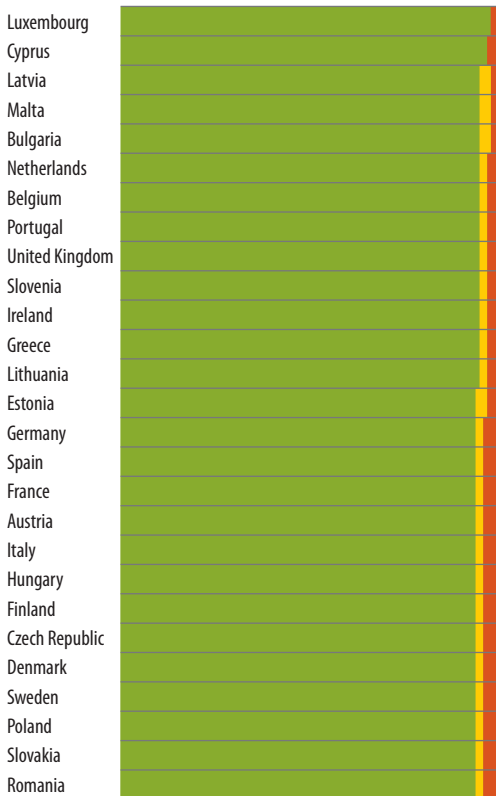


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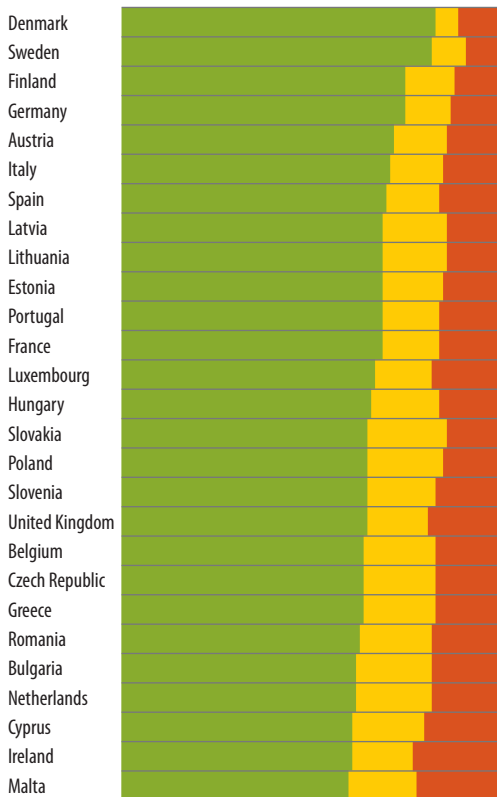
ESC fitment by manufacturer, averaged over all models



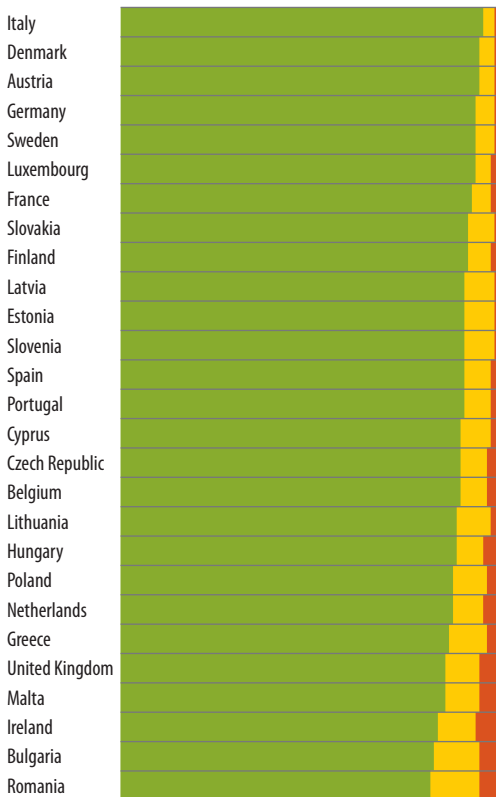
Country ESC fitment for Executive cars



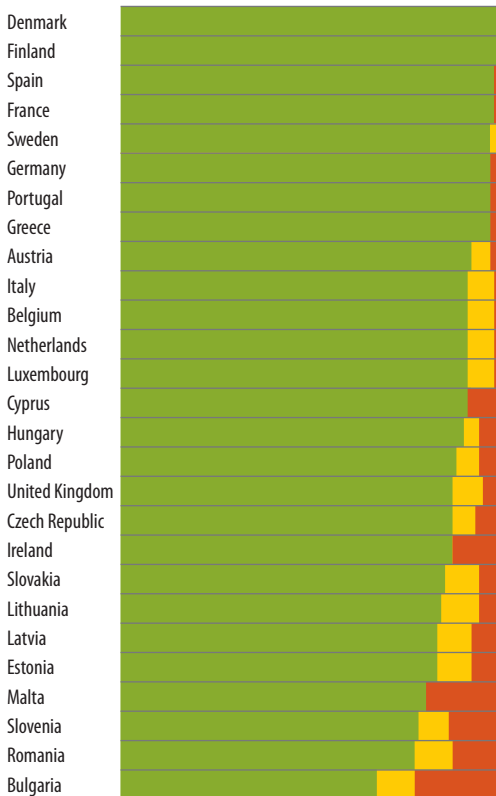
Country ESC fitment across all size categories



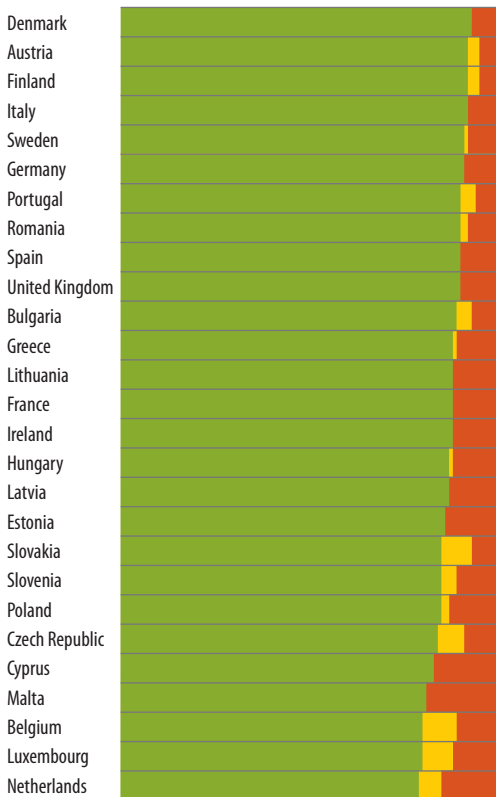
Country ESC fitment for Large Family Cars



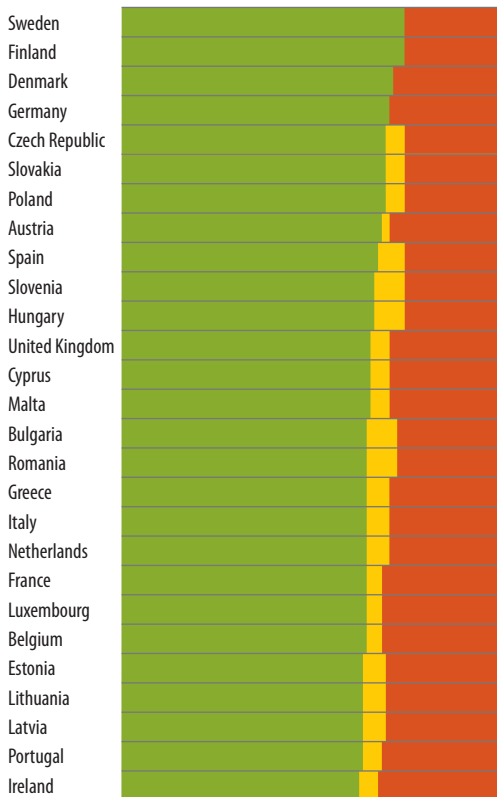
Country ESC fitment for Large MPVs



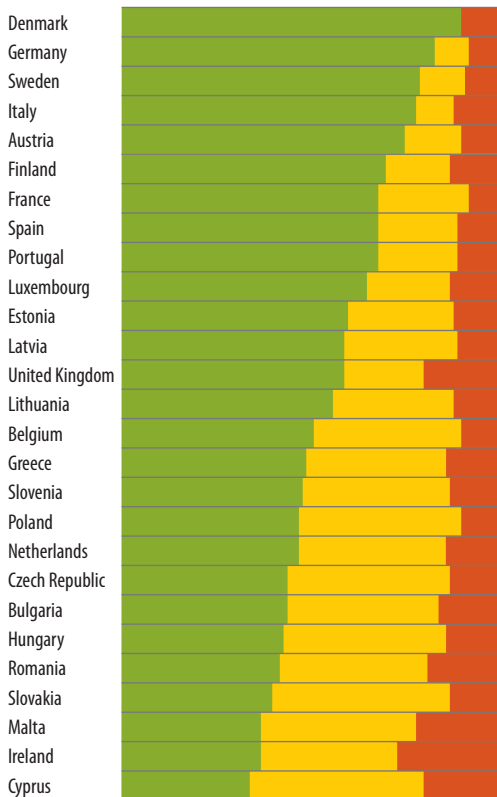
Country ESC fitment for Large Off-Roaders



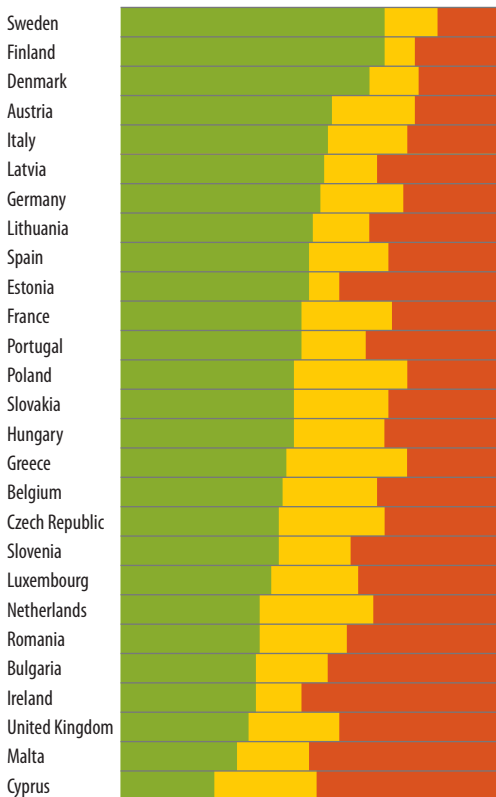
Country ESC fitment for Roadsters



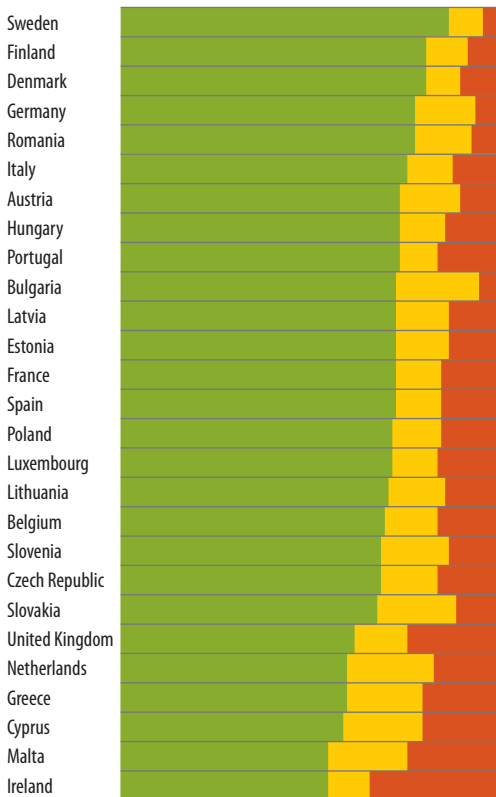
Country ESC fitment for Small Family Cars



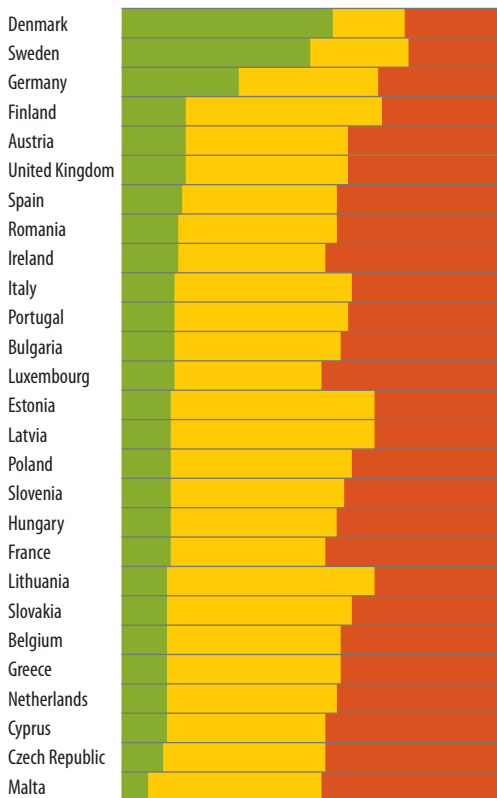
Country ESC fitment for Small MPVs



Country ESC fitment for Small Off-Roaders



Country ESC fitment for Superminis

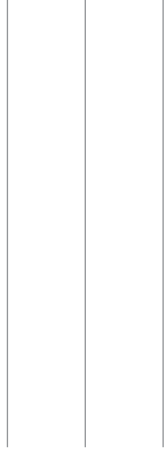
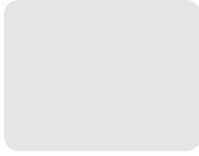


The information contained within is based on data supplied to Euro NCAP by vehicle manufacturers between September 2007 and April 2008. The information covers the EU27.



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European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) sets out to provide a realistic and independent assessment of the safety performance of some of the most popular cars sold in Europe.

Check out www.euroncap.com
to ensure you put safety first in your car.



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