



EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE  
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

ACEA

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

**Monsieur Jean Gérard Koenig**  
**Directeur du BEATT**  
**Ministère de l'Ecologie, de l'Energie,**  
**du Développement Durable et de**  
**l'Aménagement du Territoire**  
**Tour Pascal B**  
**F - 92055 La Défense Cédex**

Bruxelles, le 26 mars 2009

**Concerne : Rapport d'enquête technique sur l'accident survenu le 14 juin 2007**  
**entre un autocar et un ensemble de signalisation sur l'autoroute A4 à**  
**Thillois (51)**

Monsieur le Directeur,

Veuillez trouver ci-joint le courrier que je viens d'adresser aux présidents des constructeurs d'autocars membres de l'ACEA, afin de leur rappeler l'importance que présente pour la sécurité une bonne conception de l'interface homme/machine, répondant aux recommandations de la Commission européenne en ce domaine.

Ce courrier fait suite à la lettre que vous m'avez fait parvenir sur le rapport d'enquête technique concernant l'accident survenu le 14 juin 2007 entre un autocar et un ensemble de signalisation sur l'autoroute A4 à Thillois (51).

Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Directeur, à l'assurance de ma considération la meilleure.

Ivan Hodac



ACEA

**TRANSLATION**  
**BEATT letter dated 05.03.2009**

Paris, 5 March 2009

Dear Secretary General,

Please find herewith the report of the technical analysis carried out by my office of the accident involving a coach and a road sign installation that occurred on the A4 highway on 14 June 2007. This report concludes the technical analysis ordered by the Minister of Transport on the basis of the Law of 3 January 2002 and the Decree of 26 January 2004 regarding the technical analysis of road transport accidents.

One of the five recommendations in the report is addressed to ACEA.

In accordance with article 9 of the abovementioned Decree, I would be grateful if you would let me know within 90 days how ACEA will follow up on this recommendation and, if appropriate, within which timeframe. In accordance with the Decree of 26 January 2004, your reply will be made public together with our report on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Gérard Koenig  
Director

Office for the analysis of road transport accidents, Ministry for ecology, energy, sustainable development and territorial development.

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A C E A

Brussels, 26 March 2009

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W. Reinhardt, ACEA

D. Lamerigts, ACEA

**Subject: The importance of the human-machine interface for road safety**

Dear Board members,

The French Ministry for ecology, energy, sustainable development and territorial development has asked me to remind you of the importance for road safety of the correct design of the human-machine interface in buses and coaches (see attachment).

This request follows an inquiry into the causes of an accident involving a coach that occurred on the French motorway A 4 on 14 June 2007. The inquiry revealed that one of the causes of the accident was that the driver had been distracted while trying to activate the audio/video system. In particular, it found that only the driver could activate the switch button for the audio/video system, that the positioning of this button was ergonomically far from ideal and that the function of this button was not readily identifiable for the driver.

Even though the manufacturer of the coach in question (Bova, based in The Netherlands) is not a member company of ACEA, I would hereby like to urge all ACEA member companies that build buses and coaches to continue doing their utmost to improve the safety of their vehicles and in particular to ensure the best possible design of the human-machine interface in their products.

With respect to the latter, I would urge members strictly to observe the guidelines laid down in the European Commission's Recommendation of 26 May 2008 on safe and efficient in-vehicle information and communication systems. More specifically, the following principles would appear to be relevant in this case:

- Visually displayed information presented at any one time by the system should be designed in such a way that the driver is able to assimilate the relevant information with a few glances which are brief enough not to adversely affect driving (§ 4.3.3.1)
- System controls should be designed in such a way that they can be operated without adverse impact on the primary driving controls (§ 4.3.4.5)

- System functions not intended to be used while driving should be made impossible to interact with while the vehicle is in motion, or, as a less preferred option, clear warnings should be provided against the unintended use (§ 4.3.5.3).

I trust that your companies will continue complying with these guidelines.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivan Hodac". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ivan Hodac