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euroFOT: Volvo Trucks at the service of safety
14 July 2009

Volvo Trucks has joined the research project euroFOT, which involves 28 European companies and organisations. Volvo's aim is to put 80 Volvo trucks, packed with monitoring technology, into circulation by 2010. The project's aim is to achieve safer, more efficient road transport.

"The project is completely in line with our ambition to build the world's safest trucks," comments Carl Johan Almqvist, Volvo Trucks' Traffic and Product Safety Director.

EuroFOT (Field Operation Test) is the first large-scale project of its kind in the EU, although major FOT projects have previously been conducted in North America and Japan. The project's basic aim is to collect valuable data from the actual traffic environment using truck mounted cameras and other monitoring systems.

Volvo Trucks' Accident Research Team (ART) has spent 40 years studying truck accidents and the factors that cause them. EuroFOT offers Volvo Trucks a new opportunity to register potentially dangerous situations in detail, evaluate the feasibility of new accident prevention systems, and build knowledge for developing new systems.

"We want to find out even more about situations and behavioural patterns that can cause accidents, so that we can continue to drive traffic safety development even further," explains Carl Johan Almqvist.

30 of the trucks involved in the project will be equipped with Volvo Trucks active safety systems such as Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Keeping Support, while another 50 trucks will have additional technology for measuring fuel efficiency on board.

In addition to Volvo Trucks, Volvo 3P, Volvo Logistics and Volvo Powertrain will participate in the project. Project manager at Volvo Technology, Karsten Heinig says, "New systems such as adaptive cruise control and monitoring of the 'blind spot' angles will help to significantly increase safety for drivers and other road users, as well as for the truck and the cargo. The data gained from euroFOT will give us a new opportunity to demonstrate this."

Four video cameras

The participating Volvo trucks will collect data for a year. Each truck will be equipped with a central computer unit and four video cameras:

One filming the area in front of the truck (the driver's front view).
One covering the 'blind spot' angle on the co-driver side of the truck.
One filming the cab interior from above.
One directed at the driver's face.

The cameras will record every second the truck is being driven, allowing every little incident to be studied and evaluated. After the tests are completed, the project is expected to have gathered over 70,000,000 megabytes of traffic safety data for analysis.

"The project is currently in the start-up phase. The tests will be conducted in collaboration with a number of safety-conscious haulage companies, but there's still room for interested hauliers to join the project," explains Karsten Heinig, who is convinced that hauliers also stand to benefit enormously from the experience and data gained through euroFOT.