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Airbiquity Develops OnStar Technology For eCall in Europe

Wireless modem technology supplier to promote its software for pan-European eCall service through facilities in Belgium and the U.K. Trials of OnStar aqLink technology in Europe are already underway.

Airbiquity is attempting to promote its wireless modem software for use in the eCall European location-enhanced automatic emergency assistance service. Offices are being established in Belgium and the U.K.

“Airbiquity is engaged with ETSI (European Telecommunications Standards Institute) on adopting our technology as a standard,” says Kamyar Moinzadeh, president and CEO of Airbiquity, based in Seattle, Washington.

Airbiquity says its aqLink software modem is used in General Motors’ OnStar in-car telematics service installed in 4 million vehicles. Trials of the aqLink technology are underway in Europe and a licensing agreement with a European carmaker is expected to be announced later this year.

“We are working on multiple trials with different stakeholders in several European Union countries,” explains Moinzadeh. “However, we cannot disclose any details at this moment.”

“There will likely be different specifications for the technical implementation of eCall,” says Moinzadeh. “However, there are already some requirements on how the eCall system will work. For instance a set of performance criteria has been developed regarding the time for transmitting the eCall from the vehicle to the PSAP (public service answering point” and a target success rate for transmitted eCalls,” he adds.

“The PSAPs have requested that they receive the eCall in one standardized way across Europe,” explains Moinzadeh.

The European Commission is promoting the deployment of a pan-European eCall service through technical projects supported by Ertico ITS Europe and through a political initiative based on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for national governments. The current deployment plan calls for all new vehicles from the end of 2009 to be equipped with eCall systems.

Progress towards deployment of eCall is very slow (see *TIH Online*, July 1, 2006). Only nine European national governments have signed the MoU, with France, Germany, and the U.K. still not committed.

“All (European Union) member states support the eCall initiative and many member states are conducting studies to evaluate the benefits,” claims Moinzadeh. “Both Germany and the U.K. are looking very positive and if these two member states sign the MoU, it will be incentive enough for the OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) to start looking seriously into how eCall can be deployed in all new type-approved vehicles in Europe.”

“Airbiquity’s goal is to bring to Europe the solution that it has implemented in over four million vehicles in the U.S., a solution that is saving lives every day. Airbiquity is working with OEMs for both mandated eCall and commercial services,” says Moinzadeh.

Wavecom

Airbiquity cooperates closely with Wavecom, a French company that develops embedded wireless communications technology. Earlier this year, Wavecom bought Sony Ericsson’s telematics business and NexGen Software (see *TIH* Online, April 15, 2006).

Sony Ericsson supplies technology to Motorola, one of the developers of OnStar. In Europe, Wavecom works with Autoliv, Magneti Marelli, and Peiker. Motorola uses aqLink in its in-vehicle modules.

“Airbiquity and Wavecom continue to coordinate field trials testing aqLink as an embedded feature in Wavecom’s next generation modules,” says Mike Brennan, a communications official at Airbiquity. “These proof-of-concept trials are in addition to trials now being conducted by Airbiquity with other partners also developing modules designed for Europe’s emerging market for telematics services.”

In the U.S., Airbiquity has started to cooperate with 3Soft to develop a navigation system that uses modem technology and Bluetooth communications.

Airbiquity’s Brussels office will be led by Rasmus Lindholm, formerly the project manager at Ertico for Global system for telematics (GST) Rescue. John Archer, a former official at GM, Nissan and Ford, will head the U.K. facility.

For more information, visit www.airbiquity.com, www.esafetysupport.org, and www.wavecom.com.