New Tech for All-New Ford Focus Could Help Prevent the Nightmare of Wrong-Way Drivers on the Motorway

- Ford Wrong Way Alert for the all-new Focus warns drivers before they drive on to the wrong carriageway of a motorway or dual carriageway

- In Germany alone, 22 people were killed in accidents caused by wrong-way drivers on motorways and federal highways in 2017

- Wrong-Way drivers are known as “Geisterfahrer” in Germany, “spookrijder” in the Netherlands and “conducteur fantome” in France, all translating as ghost driver

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug. 6, 2018 – Few mistakes have consequences as terrifying as turning on to a motorway in the wrong direction. To help prevent every driver’s worst nightmare, Ford has introduced Wrong Way Alert technology for the all-new Focus.

Wrong-way crashes are likely to result in serious injuries and fatalities because the speeds of both cars are combined on impact. In Germany, in 2017 alone, 22 people were killed in accidents involving wrong-way drivers on motorways and federal highways. *

In several languages, the phenomenon has given rise to the term “ghost driver”: “Geisterfahrer” in German, “spookrijder” in Dutch and “conducteur fantome” in French. During 2016, German radio stations interrupted programmes 2,200 times to issue “geisterfahrer” warnings. **

“These accidents can be devastating. Drivers who are tired, confused by poor road signs, or driving in bad weather can take the wrong turn, only to find they have put themselves and other people on the motorway in real danger,” said Jan Guesten, development engineer, Driver Assistance Technologies, Ford of Europe.

See how the technology works here https://youtu.be/V-au9oHm7xY

Wrong Way Alert builds on Ford’s existing Traffic Sign Recognition technology, that uses GPS information from the onboard navigation system to identify the car’s location and a forward-facing, windscreen-mounted camera to detect important signs such as speed limits and displays them to the driver on the dashboard or Head-up display. In situations where a driver passes two “no entry” signs on either side of a slip road on to a motorway or dual carriageway, Wrong Way Alert sounds a warning and displays to the driver a red “no entry” symbol as well as a message to “check driving direction”.

Ford tested the technology, which is initially available to customers in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, on the company’s test track in Lommel, Belgium, using “no entry” signs erected on the slip roads. To test a wider variety of junctions, the system’s camera was mounted in front of a computer monitor displaying a virtual driving environment created using real-world GPS data.
Wrong Way Alert is one of a range of advanced, confidence-inspiring technologies offered for the Focus, including features that enable it to automatically brake if the car detects a potential collision with pedestrians or bicycles, or help drivers take evasive action to avoid obstacles ahead. A rear camera provides a 180-degree view for reversing from parking spaces or driveways.

If there’s a wrong-way driver ahead…

The Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club (ADAC) gives the following advice if there is a wrong-way driver on your route. **

- If you see a wrong-way driver, or hear a warning on the radio, turn on your lights and hazard lights
- Move to the right-hand lane, or out of the path of the oncoming vehicle with care, keeping aware of other cars and brake lights ahead. Use the emergency lane if necessary
- If you have not already seen the wrong-way driver, take the next possible exit
- Ask a passenger to call the police, or call once you can stop safely
- Listen carefully to traffic information on the radio to find out when the danger is over

If you are a wrong-way driver…

ADAC advises: **

- As soon as you notice that you are driving on the wrong side, switch on your headlights and hazard warning lights
- If there are no cars on the road, drive immediately to the emergency lane. If you are in the left-hand lane, and it would be dangerous to cross lanes, pull over as much as possible to the side of the road
- Park close to the barrier
- Get out with care and stand behind the guardrail
- Call the police emergency number and wait for help
- DO NOT try to turn.

* De Statis Statistisches Bundesamt www.destatis.de

** “Geisterfahrer: Tips for an Emergency” (2017)