
JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT

CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A CROSS-BORDER TESTBED FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF AUTOMATED VEHICLES

Introduction

The Federal Minister for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure of the Republic of Austria, Mr. Peter Hanke; the Minister for Mobility of the Kingdom of Belgium, Mr. Jean-Luc Crucke; the State Secretary of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Tomislav Mihotić; the Minister of Transport, Communications and Works of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Alexis Vafeades; the Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, Mr. Ivan Bednarik; the Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Kuldar Leis; the Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Finland, Ms. Lulu Ranne; the Minister for Transport of the French Republic, Mr. Philippe Tabarot; the Federal Minister of Transport of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Patrick Schnieder; the Alternate Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Konstantinos Kyranakis; the Minister for Transport and Public Works of Hungary, Mr. Dávid Vitézy; the Minister of State for Transport of Ireland, Mr. Sean Canney; the Vice-Minister for Infrastructure and Transport of the Italian Republic, Mr. Edoardo Rixi; the Minister for Mobility and Public Works of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, H.E. Yuriko Backes; the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr. Vincent Karremans; the Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Dariusz Klimczak; the Minister for Infrastructure and Housing of the Kingdom of Sweden, Mr. Andreas Carlson, hereafter referred to as "Side" or jointly as "Sides" convened under the chairmanship of Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy and Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. All present desire to enable the deployment of automated vehicles in their respective territories, with the aim to foster and develop the potential benefits of automated vehicles for road safety, improved mobility solutions for all, in an accessible and sustainable manner. Doing so will benefit the economy, with use cases for automated passenger and logistics vehicles. This initiative takes into account the initiative of the European Commission, announced on 5 March 2025, to establish large-scale, cross-border testbeds between Member States under the European Automotive Action Plan, to facilitate the deployment of automated vehicles. It also responds to the necessity of reinforcing the European Union's economic security and competitiveness in the automated vehicle sector and creating predictable growth in domestic demand for European innovators. The Sides recognise that the successful scaling of automated vehicles from testing to real world deployment depends not only on harmonised vehicle approval and safety frameworks, but also on the existence of consistent and predictable Single Market conditions for the provision of automated road transport services. Having regard to national political initiatives and legislative action that outline strategies to foster a positive environment for the deployment of automated vehicles, the Sides have thus come to the following understanding:

Part 1 – Regulatory framework for the approval of automated vehicles and automated road transport systems in the context of the cross-border testbed

The Sides will, together, strive to apply harmonised rules and processes to the approval of safe automated vehicles, and to develop common processes for the deployment of automated vehicles. The objective is fast and streamlined deployment of automated vehicles, including in continuous cross-border operations. Phased scaling approaches will begin with small-scale or geographically limited deployments.

The Sides will take into consideration that approved automated vehicles will be integrated within a given transport system, before being deployed within a broader mobility system approach.

In particular, regarding the approval of automated vehicles:

- The Sides will **use a common set of technical requirements for the approval of automated vehicles in the testbed**, based on Regulation (EU) 2018/858 and Regulation (EU) 2019/2144, and its implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1426 (or other comparable legislations, e.g. UN Regulation No. [184] on Automated Driving Systems (ADS)).
- The sides will **jointly work on a cooperative exchange of information** in order to be involved in the **approval and testing process for automated vehicles within the testbed**; a single authority will remain responsible for administrative approval provisions for a given vehicle type. This means that all interested type-approval authorities from all Sides will have the opportunity to participate in the process.

This approach will be particularly relevant for:

- interpretation of technical requirements;
 - implementation of regulatory concepts tied to the approval of automated vehicles, such as assessment of the scenario-based approach and testing procedures performed for confirmatory testing;
 - assessment of an ADS designed to operate in several countries within the testbed;
 - management of post deployment safety in line with in-service monitoring and reporting procedures.
- The Sides will seek to facilitate mutual recognition of approved vehicles by the type approval authorities in the testbed, and ease commercial operations without a safety driver.

Mutual recognition for the purpose of the testbed is based on:

- national type-approval of vehicles produced in small series as defined in article 42 of Regulation (EU) 2018/858, the validity of which is detailed in point 3 of article 43;
- national individual vehicle approvals as defined in article 45 of Regulation (EU) 2018/858, the validity of which is detailed in point 3 of article 46.

On the commissioning of transport systems, which is addressed in supplement to the type approval of automated vehicles:

- The Sides will strive to jointly establish high-level principles to facilitate the development of harmonised national regulations on automated vehicles, and to allow smooth deployments into transport services across the testbed. This means that the Sides remain responsible for deploying approved vehicles on public roads, in accordance with their preferred national legal framework – for testing or deployment, for example. Nevertheless, the Sides should aim at allowing automated vehicles to drive on public roads if this is not already possible.

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- The Sides will mutually support the process of obtaining regional or local permits (those not awarded at national level), deployment decisions, or licences, where applicable for the deployment of automated road transport services in locations that are part of their jurisdictions.
 - The Sides will take advantage of this collaborative network for the deployment of automated road transport services to (further) support their national legal and regulatory framework, where applicable.

Part 2 – Use cases leading the deployment of automated road transport services on public roads

In cooperation with relevant stakeholders, the Sides will consider **use cases to develop a common understanding of how existing regulations are applied**, prior to the deployment of automated road transport services, effected in conjunction with **relevant stakeholders**.

The Sides recognise that automated mobility requires that a system-level approach is applied when designing a service for end users, e.g. interactions between vehicles and external devices, passengers, and other road users will be considered. This might include defining quantitative objectives for specific readiness levels, such as regulatory, operational, market and commercial.

- The Sides share the opinion that the testbed and the respective regulatory approach (see Part 1) are intended to consider all national public and private stakeholders from each Side.
- The Sides concur that the implementation of this Joint Declaration of Intent will not be use-case-driven, and will remain agnostic concerning any specific technology-driven use. More specifically, use cases are understood as providing mobility and transport solutions in response to needs identified by service providers, public transport authorities, privately owned companies, or recommendations from research organisations.
- The Sides thus will facilitate efforts to meet the needs expressed by relevant European public and private stakeholders, and they will support all related use cases, provided that they contribute to the shared European goals of road safety and improved accessible and sustainable mobility solutions for all.
- The Sides share the opinion that the identification of use cases depends on both the technological maturity of automated driving systems and the development of operational integrated mobility solutions. This includes the availability (if needed) of digital infrastructure and cooperative intelligent transport services (ITS) for monitoring and scaling.
- The Sides will remain open to any use case proposal coming from a relevant public or private stakeholder.

Part 3 – Roles and responsibilities

The Sides concur to leverage their **leading role** in the deployment of automated vehicles to create a nexus between **subnational entities (e. g. Länder, regions, public transport authorities) and their national industrial and technological ecosystems**.

In particular:

- The Sides highlight the strategic role of their regional and local authorities in identifying mobility needs when required, and defining relevant use cases for the deployment of automated road transport systems – both for passenger transport, and freight and logistics applications.
- The Sides will encourage their regions and local authorities – such as public transport authorities – to proactively participate in defining replicable or transferable use cases and new mobility solutions involving automated vehicles.

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- The Sides express their intention to facilitate participation by industrial and technology stakeholders in the testbed, with a view to supporting predictable growth for European innovators and innovation ecosystems across the wider mobility domain.

Therefore, the Sides as well as participating stakeholders, will take the following considerations into account:

- (a) Their involvement is expected to bring added value to the European mobility and transport value chain, including automotive and related smart mobility sectors, and to help identify strategic domains that help enhance European competitiveness — whether through contributions at vehicle level, at the level of the ADS, or at the level of the wider mobility system (including operational and service components).
 - (b) To encourage the timely deployment of European Autonomous Driving products and services, preference may be given, where possible, to vehicles, systems, components and separate technical units considered as providing significant added value within the automotive value chain, and to the wider mobility ecosystem. This also applies to elements that align with the interests expressed by European public and private stakeholders established in the European Union (EU), or demonstrating a significant presence within the EU.
 - (c) Non-EU stakeholders can be integrated within the testbed, provided that they form a strategic partnership with at least one stakeholder from the EU automotive, mobility and / or transport value chain over an appropriate transition period. The EU stakeholder is expected to demonstrate a meaningful footprint (manufacturing, employment, R&D, IP, ...) within the EU. The testbed participants are encouraged to demonstrate an increased EU footprint regarding the deployment of automated vehicles and services over time. This will ensure the building up of substance within the EU, and generate a positive spill-over onto the EU innovation ecosystem.
 - (d) When a partnership with a non-EU stakeholder is envisaged, partners should aim to provide a declaration describing the EU and non-EU hardware and software content within a reasonable timeframe. In addition, partners are expected to use all reasonable efforts to ensure that all data and data flows linked to testbed activities are kept within the EU, and to avoid transfers of sensitive content outside of the EU.
 - (e) The Sides are encouraged to source base vehicles, software and hardware components of the ADS, and mobility platforms manufactured within the EU, at an acceptable cost where possible. Entities responsible for research and innovation are encouraged to actively engage so as to support predictable growth and resilience for European innovation ecosystems.
 - (f) The Sides should aim to exclusively rely on technical services designated by the Sides, and on testing carried out within the territories of the Sides, for type-approval processes. The processes should guarantee rigorous and sovereign oversight over system safety, cybersecurity and supply chains, software and data control, in line with the previous sections.
- The Sides will encourage their regions and local authorities – such as public transport authorities – to proactively participate in defining replicable or transferable use cases and new mobility solutions with automated vehicles.
 - The Sides will rely on the involvement of their private stakeholders for the definition and sizing of use cases, if they contribute to the shared European goals of road safety and improved accessible and sustainable mobility solutions for all.
 - The Sides will discuss sharing safety-relevant data (like accident and near-miss data, or – reports of cyber security events, including in-service events reportable under implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1426) both between each other, and with the European Commission and other Member States.

Part 4 – Governance

- The Sides are free to organise themselves into different workstreams according to the needs, progress, and expertise of their relevant national bodies.
- The Sides will in particular strive to:
 - coordinate the different parallel workstreams to ensure consistency across the testbed;
 - develop high-level regulatory principles for the deployment of automated road transport services;
 - implement common requirements and procedures to allow national type-approval authorities to grant vehicle approvals.
- The Sides will collaborate with the European Commission to facilitate implementation of the testbed.
- The Sides welcome the European Commission’s work to facilitate interactions with industry stakeholders, without prejudice to the Sides’ joint understanding of stakeholder involvement within the testbed.
- The Sides will remain fully transparent with the European Commission on progress achieved with regard to the testbed.

Part 5 – Concluding remarks

This Joint Declaration of Intent may serve as a multilateral cooperation plan for the development of relations between the Sides for the deployment of automated vehicles in their respective territories. It is not intended to constitute an international treaty or to create any rights or obligations under international law. It may be amended at any time by the Sides, by mutual written consent.

This Joint Declaration of Intent was signed in Luxembourg on 8 June 2026 in the English language.