High-Level Dialogue on Connected and Automated Transport

Joint Commitments and Call for Action

19 June 2024, Ghent, Belgium

Setting the Scene

Eight years have passed since the 2016 Declaration of Amsterdam, acknowledging the potential of connected and automated vehicle technologies to improve road safety, traffic flow and the overall efficiency and environmental performance of the transport system.

Since 2016, significant work has been performed and several High-Level Meetings have taken place to explore and agree, where possible, on a common and systemic approach. However, various technological, societal, ethical, legal, safety, security and privacy-related challenges linked to the development and deployment of connected and automated vehicles still remain to be addressed. Only by embracing innovation and fostering a coordinated approach, we jointly can maximize the benefits of Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility (CCAM) with respect to the transport system as a whole – notably by defining what is needed from a societal perspective and therefore which aspects require further research & development and how to implement large scale deployment.

Whereas industry is progressing steadily in the development and deployment of automated functionalities in specific use-cases, Member States (MS) and the European Commission (EC) have an important role to play in fostering the necessary societal embracement of new mobility services made possible thanks to automation and, implicitly, guaranteeing the overall efficiency and competitiveness of European industry. However, CCAM-based mobility solutions and services must consider and respond to clear societal needs, and all relevant stakeholders need to align their deployment timeframes to enhance the effectiveness of use-cases of common interest. This in particular is the key to a successful deployment of connected and automated transport in daily life – which should remain the key focus of the dialogue, as defined already in 2016.

The progressive roll-out of intelligent transport systems, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and co-operative applications (C-ITS) certainly has and

will continue to contribute to improved road safety, better informed drivers and more fluid traffic flows, building on (already existing) structured collaboration and alignment among key stakeholders. This is clearly depicted in the European Commission Staff Working Document on the status of progress on Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility in Europe[1], that takes stock of the activities launched and achievements accomplished at European level in the past six years. With regard to the transition towards automation, the document however confirms this is a strongly innovation driven effort, with notably the CCAM Partnership established under the umbrella of Horizon Europe, the EU programme for Research and Innovation, playing a significant role in clarifying and putting in place the enabling conditions for effective implementation.

While the R&D effort will continue at both European and national level, limited deployment in specific use cases has already started, possibly triggering a societal transformation comparable to the motorized vehicle hitting the roads at the end of the 19th century. In order to ensure a smooth integration of connected and automated transport in the existing mobility frameworks for both passengers and freight transport, it is important to further improve the legal clarity and certainty for the stakeholders, and to work towards an aligned legal framework.

MS and the EC are in the lead to jointly develop and foster a stable regulatory environment at EU level providing trust, societal acceptance, inclusiveness and affordability of future mobility solutions while at the same time stimulating industry to continue investing and respond to the mobility challenges identified at national, regional and local level. Considering the final aim of maximizing the positive societal impact of CCAM, it is clear that MS, the EC and industry have a common direction with regard to automation in transport.

[1] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/1720a5ef-01bf-498e-85f5-c61bb3a7bc31_en

Joint Commitments of the Member States

In view of the above, Member States:

- Acknowledge that initial applications of connected, cooperative and automated transport are already operational, including specific Connected and Automated Driving use-cases with a limited scope and that the next stage is to prepare for broader deployment of automated transport, fully enabled by appropriate connectivity and digital infrastructure(s) as key supporting technologies.
- Acknowledge that data and data exchange remain key factors to evaluate and improve safety conditions as well as the efficiency of automated mobility solutions. Further co-operation and standardisation in this domain will be needed.
- Acknowledge that autonomous vehicles in public transport and shared mobility services could lead to significant societal benefits such as reduced traffic congestion and pollution, enhanced inclusiveness through better territorial coverage, as well as mitigation of the shortage of qualified drivers for public transport. This could, overall, lead to a better performance of the mobility system.
- Recognise that large-scale deployment may have a significant impact on society as a whole and brings both opportunities as well as challenges, and that further steps therefore are to be defined from a user centric and mobility systems perspective rather than solely from a technology-oriented one.
- Recognise the need to explore cost-effective approaches to digital and physical infrastructure development and deployment and to agree where possible on the related services to be provided.
- Recognise the importance to inform the public about and getting society accustomed to the transformation that could unfold over time, and to ensure safety and legal certainty in Europe for all road users, especially in case of incidents.
- Commit to work closely together by building on the outcome of existing working groups and on the results of past, ongoing and future CCAM-

projects, conducted both at national and European level, to foster a (cost-) effective scaling-up and deployment of automated mobility technology and solutions.

- Commit to duly involve affected stakeholders including road operators, first responders, insurance companies, transport companies, driver education schools and maintenance companies.
- Acknowledge the importance of sharing and aligning approaches across Europe for the (pre-)deployment projects of automated transport on open roads and that pursuing and facilitating cross-border testing is crucial for ensuring automated transport to operate safely and predictably all across Europe. In this respect, the MS welcome the joint efforts by the CCAM Partnership and the CCAM States Representatives Group, also further refined during the present High-Level Dialogue (HLD) meeting, to reach such objective and invite to consider and refer back to the HLD on the identified recommendations.
- Acknowledge the need to intensify the exchange of views and to foster skills and knowledge on the proper use and implementation of automated transport in light of spurring sustainable EU-wide deployment of automated transport.

  In this respect, the MS welcome the initiative by the European countries (and the European Commission and industry upon invitation) to jointly discuss policy and regulatory issues related to the deployment and in-use stage of automated transport and to make recommendations for coordinated action and harmonization if needed. Typically, such topics are not yet satisfactorily addressed in existing European working groups. The MS take note of the terms of references for the initiative as proposed by The Netherlands, which can be found in Annex I.
- Commit to collaborate with the EC, industry and the research community on clear principles for the scaling, deployment and implementation of automated transport and to provide guidance to industry on the applications and use cases which directly contribute to identified societal benefits.
- Commit to explore and support the actions required to open up the transition from small series to large series approvals of fully automated driving vehicles,

and to collaborate with EC on this.

- Acknowledge the importance of making Real Time Traffic Information (RTTI) available across Europe and ensuring service providers process and include this data in their services. A RTTI task force, consisting of willing MS, will work with NAPCORE, relevant stakeholders and the European Commission to help establish agreements on minimum quality requirements and to promote harmonized implementation of the Delegated Regulation on RTTI.
- Commit to continue to feed the National Access Points with high-quality data sets, and to effectively use this data themselves wherever possible.
- Recognise the added value of having a common approach for the evaluation and impact assessment for CCAM to be applied by research projects launched at both European and national level. In this respect, the MS welcome the European Common Evaluation Methodology (EU-CEM), initiated by the CCAM partnership and realised through the EU funded project FAME, and invites the project to report back in future related meetings on lessons learned and on the recommendations it develops to further facilitate cross-border testing.

Call for Action to the European Commission

The Member States invite the European Commission to:

- Continue a systemic approach with ambitious, consistent and coherent policies boosting multimodality and making the most of the digitalisation of transport, amongst others by aligning timelines for the publication of regulations for the development, type-approval, deployment and use of automated transport means in Europe.
- Endorse a socially sustainable development of user-centric and inclusive connected, cooperative and automated mobility solutions, accelerating the innovation pace and fostering the implementation of automated transport in Europe.
- Ensure that the EU-wide goals and strategy for CCAM and automated driving

systems (ADS) in particular are the reference for further development of global harmonized regulations (in e.g. UNECE).

- To work towards the timely transition from small series to [the option of] large series approvals of fully automated driving vehicles.

Call for Action to Industry

The Member States invite industry to:

- Ensure that large-scale demonstrations in mixed traffic focus on use cases supporting the sustainability and safety of transport (in line with the promising use cases already trialled in some Member States).
- Put further efforts into bringing CCAM and use cases of automated transport in particular to the market that convincingly contribute to the societal challenges and objectives of European, national, regional and local authorities, in particular regarding improving road safety and providing sustainable, inclusive and affordable transport to all.
- Exchange data for collective learning and continuous improvement of the performance of both automated technology and operations in real-life situations.
- Improve road safety, traffic efficiency and sustainability by actively utilizing the online data provided by MS (e.g. national access points), and to foster completeness and quality of these data according to FAIR data principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable).

Annex I - European initiative to exchange views on the deployment and use of automated transport: European Forum for Automated Transport (EFAT) - Terms of Reference

ACKNOWLEDGING that the EU has made substantial progress on the topic of automated transport since the adoption of the Declaration of Amsterdam. Highly automated vehicles will gradually start to appear on our roads thanks to the General Safety Regulation (GSR), the Implementing Act (EU) 2022/1426 for Automated Driving Systems and the UN/ECE Regulation R157 for Automated Lane Keeping Systems. In contrast to 'conventional' vehicles and driver assistance systems, these vehicles can perform the dynamic driving task themselves for longer periods, without human interference;
ACKNOWLEDGING that the technology for automated transport is getting ready and available for deployment, at least for use cases with limited Operational Design Domains (ODDs) and under specific conditions. The next step is to enable safe and responsible use of automated vehicles in traffic, to make automated transport a mature element of existing mobility systems across Europe and to ensure public confidence in its the deployment. This requires a mobility system-oriented thinking rather than a vehicle technology centric approach, with a key role for national/regional governments;
RECOGNISING mixed traffic as one of the biggest concerns of the future road safety, involving both social acceptance, human-machine interaction and a qualitative change in the skills and habits of drivers and other traffic participants, which must be addressed by the relevant authorities;
ACKNOWLEDGING the properly understood role of ethics, seen more broadly than just an administrative procedure, as the formation of social relations, in shaping both public acceptance and the responsibility of business and governments;
RECOGNISING that embedding automated vehicles in traffic thus raises complex and interrelated policy and regulatory issues and dilemmas. Whereas individual countries are free to make their own decisions both with respect to the deployment policy and the use of automated vehicles on their roads, it is important to cooperate on enabling European-wide deployment and to ensure safe and seamless cross-border use;
ACKNOWLEDGING that European countries will benefit from sharing their views and approaches on the deployment and the use of automated vehicles and transport to ensure that choices made on a national level will be compatible with those made by other countries;
RECOGNISING that this requires close cooperation between European country's representatives on ministry level to discuss the integration of automated vehicles into national mobility systems and the use of these vehicles in traffic. This includes member states of the EU, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom;
RECOGNISING that this work would be done in addition to the technology-oriented discussions and R&D activities on automated transport (for example in the Motor Vehicle Working Group and the CCAM Partnership);
RECOGNISING that experts with different backgrounds and competences may be needed to participate in discussions, depending on the topic addressed;

COMMITTING to take the initiative as European countries to:

- Establish a joint agenda of the relevant policy and regulatory issues with the aim to:
    - Share information about national strategies, roadmaps, regulations and programs relevant for the safe, sustainable and trustworthy deployment of automated vehicles and automated transport. A preliminary list of topics that have already been identified can be found in Annex A.

- Exchange best practices in national regulations and policies on how automated transport is integrated within the mobility policies (i.e. use cases and implementation phase) and regulatory frameworks at the national level.
- Favour mutual understanding of the typical national implications once automated vehicles hit the road, for example traffic enforcement, road worthiness, infrastructure maintenance, driving licenses and social acceptance.
- Optionally produce recommendations for next steps, needs for coordinated action and harmonisation or alignment of regulations, including associated action holders (competent group or body).

- Invite ministry representatives from participating European countries, on a voluntary basis, with the appropriate background and competences for the topics under discussion.
- Invite the European Commission to join discussions, where relevant, to ensure alignment of future EU regulations and that the EU legal framework remains feasible for and in the interest of all EU member states, and creates a true level playing field for the industry within the EU.
- Establish that the scope of the working group is limited to the policy and regulatory issues *related to the deployment and use of automated transport* as currently referred to in the EU Implementing Act 2022/1426 and the UN/ECE regulation R157. Though equally relevant, related topics like Driver Control Assistance Systems (DCAS), remote operation and V2X communication will not be part of the scope, at least for now;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the engagement of all European countries is crucial as they will be confronted with similar implementation challenges even though the EU regulations may not directly apply. Indeed, close cooperation between EU Member States and other European countries is needed for a successful deployment and safe and seamless cross-border use of automated transport across Europe. Therefore, other European countries will be invited to attend the meetings, either as an active participant or observer (where discussions about alignment of EU regulations are concerned);

ACKNOWLEDGING that the discussions may be relevant to other stakeholders (e.g., industry, knowledge institutes, NGOs) as well. Therefore, they will be invited to meetings if appropriate and informed about the outcomes of the topics discussed;

REFERRING to Annex B for a draft outline of the working process for the initiative. The process will be elaborated on while organising the first series of meetings, taking into account the questions already raised by some of the participating countries.

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Annex A: Joint agenda – preliminary list of topics to discuss

The participating and invited European countries have proposed a wide variety of topics. These topics can be assigned to three main themes. These themes reflect the conditions for safe use and deployment of automated transport:

1. The use of automated vehicles needs to be integrated in the regulatory framework for the admission to traffic.
2. Responsibilities and liabilities are well-defined in case of damage, injuries or traffic infractions to ensure legal certainty for all road users.
3. Use cases for automated transport need to have added value for society.

Categorised by three themes, the following topics have been identified for discussion:

1. The use of automated vehicles:
    a. Views on having additional conditions on or rules for the use of ADS in traffic (why, how and by means of which legal arrangements) additional to the type approval (and what body will do the assessment).
    b. Approaches to regulating the circulation of such vehicles on public roads to enable cross-border traffic and to deal with mixed traffic situations.
    c. Implications for traffic enforcement (including how to recognise automated vehicles in traffic) and how to act in mixed traffic situations.
    d. Sharing information of national regulatory frameworks (either existing or under development).
2. Responsibilities and liabilities:
    a. Jurisdiction issues in responsibility and liability attribution.
    b. Arrangement of national legal systems.
    c. Implications for human driver competences, education and driver licenses.
    d. Tackling identified ethical issues.
    e. Views on necessary data exchange between ministries and manufacturers/operators of automated transport. Appropriate formats for accident reports and other in-vehicle users data.
3. Use cases with added societal value:
    a. Views on what use cases could provide societal added value for their society, for what purpose and under what conditions. Including corresponding time lines for desired deployment.
    b. Views on how to implement and further develop/support the use-case of so-called "hub to-hub" transport.
    c. Approaches for monitoring the (societal) effects of automated vehicles, additional to the in-use/in-service monitoring and reporting by manufactures to the type-approval authorities.
    d. Monitoring and promoting stakeholder engagement and societal acceptance.