Autonomous driving in European transport

2018/2089(INI) - 15/01/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 585 votes to 85, with 26 abstentions, a resolution on autonomous driving in European transport.

General principles

Parliament welcomed the Commission's communication "On the road to automated mobility" but stressed that European actors must join forces to take on a role as world leaders in autonomous transport.

While several countries around the world (including the United States, Australia, Japan, Korea and China) are in the process of marketing connected mobility, Europe should **react much more proactively** to the rapid evolution of this sector, encourage initiatives and promote strict safety requirements for users.

Members called for the development of a new legislative framework to regulate autonomous mobility. They invited the Commission to:

- present a strategy, in particular on data, data access and cybersecurity, in accordance with its resolution of 13 March 2018, to ensure a technology-neutral, market-ready approach;

- ensure that obstacles to the use of such data are dismantled and a robust regulatory system in this respect is put in place before 1 January 2020.

Members also proposed clarifying the current regulatory framework, in particular as regards liability in the event of an accident caused by a completely autonomous vehicle, insurance, and the registration and protection of personal data.

Road transport

Parliament underlined the importance of adopting an ambitious new General Safety Regulation for motor vehicles. It called for clear legislation, that is regularly reviewed, updated where necessary, and harmonised, obligating the installation of event data recorders in line with the revised General Safety Regulation in order to improve accident investigations and to clarify and enable the tackling, as soon as possible, of issues of liability. It underlined the need to incorporate safeguard systems right from the transition phase, during which automated vehicles will coexist with vehicles with zero connectivity and zero automation.

The Commission is called on to:

- reach a common position, with the Member States, and to cooperate in order for the EU to take and maintain a leading role in the international technical harmonisation of automated vehicles within the framework of the UNECE and the Vienna Convention;

- ensure that all systems that include digitally communicated road traffic information are interoperable;

- pay particular attention to data protection, vehicle and route data use, and cyber security;

- lay down clear ethical guidelines for artificial intelligence.

Air transport

Members urged the Commission to present without delay detailed rules for automated aircraft given that a single unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), and operational approach is not appropriate to ensure the safe integration of automated aircraft into airspace shared with manned aircraft. UAVs will need safe, and where appropriate, certified intelligence systems, as well as a specific air space management environment.

Suitable test areas for autonomous aircraft technologies, including drones, should be created in order to provide safe conditions for simulating new technological solutions before their final implementation.

Waterborne transport

The resolution called on the Commission to:

- define the levels of automation for both inland and sea navigation and common standards, including for ports, in order to harmonise and stimulate the uptake of autonomous vessels in interaction with automated and non-automated users and infrastructure;

- develop a comprehensive strategy with the aim of stimulating further automation in inland shipping, its infrastructure, fairways and traffic management and the development of automated ports.

Rail transport

The Commission is called on to continue the Shift2Rail programme with a view to providing for further developments towards a digital rail network and fully automated train operation, including the development of cybersecurity.

Research and educational needs

Members stressed the need to develop key autonomous technologies in the EU to keep up with global competition and create new jobs.

The Commission is urged to:

- propose initiatives promoting the skills, education and training needed to keep the EU at the forefront of the autonomous transport sector. They recommended that research and innovation programmes be continued and extended for all modes of transport in the next multiannual financial period for 2021-2027 (Horizon Europe);

- establish a Joint Undertaking along the same lines as Shift2Rail for rail transport and CleanSky for the aeronautics industry, so as to create an industry-driven strategic initiative on autonomous transport.