

Press Release

Draft law enables autonomous driving in Germany

'Black box' technology to play decisive role

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Berlin (gtai) - Germany's federal government has approved a draft law allowing for autonomously-driving cars to be active on German streets. Crucially within the law, responsibility for mishaps continued to rest firmly in the hands of the driver, but allows for the driver to hand control of his or her vehicle to the vehicle's own control system in certain situations and for certain periods of time. The draft law also stipulates that the driver must be able to instantly over-ride or deactivate the system at any time.

Most intriguingly, the law would require autonomously driving cars to carry a form of 'black box', which would record all driving data and thereby be decisive in disputes over liability, should the autonomous driving technology fail. The preparations and specifications of such a piece of technology are currently being processed through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Germany is a pioneering country in the quest to make autonomous driving a reality. Sections of public highway have already been approved as live testing zones, while the country has been feverish in its R&D activities; the institute for the German Economy (IW) reckons Germany has registered 58% of all global patents in autonomous driving since 2010.

"The developments within this industry allow German carmakers, and especially their suppliers, the chance to jump into a new market and establish themselves as leaders, or challengers to established brands," said Rico Trost, Manager of Transport Technologies at Germany Trade & invest, the federal economic development agency. "Legislation often moves slower than the technology itself, but this draft law shows the willingness of the German government to support the development of disruptive, innovative technology. Through taking the lead in this way, Germany will continue to be a pioneering location in the field of autonomous driving for years to come."

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