

New 5G cross-border corridors for connected and automated driving announced at the Digital Day 2018

At the Digital Day 2018 several Member States took important steps to extend the 5G European network by signing regional agreements on 5G corridors. Following those new agreements and with previous agreements between many European countries, a pan-European network of 5G corridors is now emerging with hundreds of kilometers of motorways where tests will be conducted up to the stage where a car can operate itself with a driver present under certain conditions (third level of automation).



Last year, 27 Member States agreed to develop large scale testing of connected and automated driving on European motorways (cross-border corridors) in the context of Digital Day 2017. One year on, the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union represented by Deputy Minister Ivan Dimov, Ministry of Education and Science, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel gather Member States in Brussels at this year's Digital Day to take stock of the progress made, announce additional corridors and discuss the next steps.

This collaborative network between European countries will enable a better environment for the testing and deployment of 5G technology. There are already several important initiatives in place: France, Germany and Luxembourg have announced a joint corridor between Luxembourg, Metz and Merzig; followed by Norway, Finland and Sweden with the E8 corridor between Tromsø (Norway) and

Oulu (Finland) and the E18 corridor between Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo; the Netherlands and Belgium join in with the Rotterdam – Antwerp – Eindhoven corridor.

Today, during the Digital Day 2018, we made further progress: Spain and Portugal signed a Letter of Intent to have two joint corridors between Vigo and Porto and between Evora and Mérida, allowing connected automated driving to be tested across borders; Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia are working together on the corridor Thessaloniki – Sofia – Belgrade; In addition, Italy and the three presidents of Euroregion Tirol-Südtirol-Trentino have confirmed their intention to work, in cooperation with other interested Member States, on the development of the 5G Corridor on the Brenner pass motorway which has traffic of over 60 million vehicles per year.

The 5G corridors make Europe the biggest experiment area rolling out the 5G technology. This confirms Europe's leadership in large-scale testing and early deployment of 5G infrastructure enabling connected and automated driving. This pan-European effort will create a secure and safe environment for citizens to be able to enjoy the benefits of connected and automated driving.

European Commission's support

5G connectivity will be a fundamental enabler for the digital transformation of our economy and society. The 5G Action Plan adopted by the European Commission in September 2016 sets ambitious targets with regard to 5G roll-out starting in 2020. The commercial launch will take place in European cities and comprehensive deployment in cities and along major transport paths.

Member States have recently moved forward on spectrum by agreeing to allow the operation of 5G services in all designated pioneer bands by 2020. Spectrum authorisation procedures have already started in many Member States and The recent political agreement on the spectrum conditions of Electronic Communications Code will facilitate timely and adequate spectrum availability as well as investment in network rollout along transport paths (e.g. through longer license durations).

The extension of the network of European cross-border, 5G-enabled corridors covering a significant European territory marks an outstanding development in this context. The European Commission will continue to support these efforts by facilitating the exchange of best practices and helping to address issues of security, privacy and data governance.

Globally, market players and public authorities are focussing on large-scale trials and showcases that validating the technology and building cross-sector partnerships to drive early network deployment. In this context, a specific call for projects in the framework of the 5G PPP with indicative funding of €50 million is dedicated to 5G for Cooperative Connected and Automated Mobility building on the network of cross-border corridors. This will be the largest set of initiatives world-wide ensuring Europe's leading position in 5G connectivity and enabling the digital transformation of the automotive sector.

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