

Question for written answer E-004001/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Barbara Bonte (PfE)

Subject: Authorisation of self-driving vehicles in the European Union

Self-driving vehicles are perceived worldwide as an important innovation with potentially significant benefits in terms of road safety, efficiency and mobility. However, while countries such as the United States and Japan are already experimenting extensively with commercial applications, self-driving vehicles remain largely prohibited or very restricted in the European Union.

1. Why is the European Union lagging behind with regard to the authorisation and regulation of self-driving vehicles?
2. What legal or technical obstacles are currently preventing these vehicles from driving freely in the EU?
3. When does the Commission expect to be able to propose a European framework that will enable the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles without unnecessarily slowing down innovation?

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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.1.2026)

The EU type approval framework requires that vehicles only enter the market after certification against existing standards, including high safety standards, whilst other jurisdictions rely on self-certification. The EU is working at United Nations level with other countries (such as Japan and the United Kingdom) on making that framework fit for highly automated vehicles. This work is ongoing and is scheduled for completion in 2026.

Type approval of highly automated vehicles is already possible today under Regulation EU 2022/1426¹ and the Commission is working on removing the biggest remaining barrier for highly automated vehicles, namely the small-series limit (of 1,500 registrations per year per model, far exceeding current deployment levels, and its removal is thus only needed for future large-scale commercial deployment. The latter requires the technology to mature and a market for highly automated vehicles to emerge).

This framework alone however is not sufficient as few Member States have national traffic rules that allow highly automated vehicles on their roads, hindering the potential of the single market for autonomous driving. Cooperation between all those that develop and build those vehicles, as well as road operators and infrastructure managers is crucial. Indeed, testing innovative automated driving technologies on public roads in Europe typically requires permits based on exemptions from national rules, which requires multiple approvals across different Member States. The Commission is working with Member States to propose cross-border testbeds with a single regulatory sandbox in early 2026 to facilitate commercial pre-deployment of highly automated vehicles on open roads across the EU, as announced in COM/2025/95².

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2022/1426/oj/eng.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0095>.