

Press Release

DEKRA presents Road Safety Report 2023 in Brussels

Research and innovation play a crucial role in making roads safer

- ▶ Automation and digitalization can benefit road safety
- ▶ At the same time, new risks may arise that need to be countered
- ▶ Currently available assistance systems leave responsibility with the driver

“Research and innovation play a crucial role in supporting ‘Vision Zero’ and drastically reducing the number of accidents and fatalities on our roads,” Markus Schulte, Head of the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Education, said at the presentation of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2023 in Brussels. “Our Horizon Europe program is the largest research and innovation funding program of its kind in the world. Among other things, this program contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This also includes a smarter and safer transport system”, continued Schulte. By pointing out that the development of automated driving in particular must focus on safety, he made a link to the DEKRA Road Safety Report. It is the 16th of its kind since 2008 and is entitled “Technology and People” and deals with the tension between greater safety and new risks arising from the increasing automation and digitalization of mobility.

“Technology may significantly contribute to reducing accident numbers, but there are no doubts that, today, humans will make the real difference”, Toni Purcaro, Executive Vice President of DEKRA Group, said in his introduction to the event.

All those involved are called upon to make the best possible use of the potential to further improve road safety, said Jann Fehlauer, Executive Vice President of DEKRA Group and Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH, at the presentation of the report. “Automated and connected driving systems in particular have an important role to play here.” By equipping vehicles with assistance systems and communicating with each other or with the infrastructure, dangerous situations can be recognized at an early stage and accidents avoided or their consequences mitigated, according to Fehlauer.

Date Stuttgart / Brussels, 14.11.2023 / Nr. 107-A
Contact Wolfgang Sigloch
Phone +49.711.7861-2386
Fax +49.711.7861-742386
E-Mail wolfgang.sigloch@dekra.com

DEKRA e.V.
Corporate Communications
Handwerkstraße 15
70565 Stuttgart, Germany
www.dekra.com/en/press-overview

At the same time, it must always be ensured that any useful technology does not distract or even overwhelm the driver. “The basic prerequisite for the use of assistance systems is that they are easy to understand for all users. Their operation must not lead to new risks or dangers that would jeopardize the successes achieved in road safety to date”, said Fehlaue.

The research carried out by DEKRA exclusively for the Road Safety Report – a study with test subjects on operating concepts in vehicles and a forsa survey – shows that this risk does exist. The results are presented in more detail in the report. In driving tests at the DEKRA Technology Center at the Lausitzring in Brandenburg, the question of what consequences sensor misalignments can have on road safety was also investigated. In further driving tests, the DEKRA experts showed that the technical potential of emergency brake assist systems in trucks is not being fully exploited by all manufacturers and that the effectiveness of some systems can be unintentionally impaired by the driver's behavior.

Responsibility currently remains with the driver

Regardless of which assistance systems are installed in a vehicle today, the responsibility remains with the driver. Drivers must therefore pay full attention to the road at all times and intervene or override the systems if necessary. “However, systems that function very well and reliably, particularly in the areas of distance control and lane keeping, tempt many road users to turn their attention to tasks other than driving”, Jann Fehlaue pointed out. Several serious accidents have already been the result of such misjudgments regarding system design. Such systems could also become critical if the driver develops health problems and this is not recognized. As the degree of automation continues to increase, everyday driving experience also decreases. “However, it is indispensable in critical driving situations in which an automated system hands back over to the driver”, says Fehlaue. There is currently no satisfactory solution to this challenge.

“Game changer” – but safe!

According to Kristian Schmidt, EU Road Safety Coordinator, automated driving systems can be a game changer. “Connected and automated driving has great potential to make mobility safer and more accessible”, writes Schmidt in the DEKRA Road Safety Report. In his view, however, there are also new challenges – for example regarding cyber security and the safe operation of highly automated vehicles in mixed traffic. “We need to ensure that automated vehicles are safe before we let them drive on

Europe's roads. If type approval fails here, the entire technology could be discredited", Schmidt writes.

Despite all the technical developments in the motor vehicle sector, the DEKRA Automobil Managing Director believes that it must never be forgotten that acceptance and compliance with the relevant traffic regulations are essential safety components for any type of road use. Participating in road traffic requires constant caution and mutual consideration at all times. "For the foreseeable future, it is and remains the individual who makes the essential contribution to road safety through their behavior."

The DEKRA Road Safety Report 2023 "Technology and People" is available to download online at www.dekra-roadsafety.com. All previous reports can also be found there, including additional content, for example in the form of moving images or interactive graphics.

Picture Caption

Large attendance at the presentation of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2023 in Brussels with Jann Fehlauer, Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH and Executive Vice President of DEKRA Group.

Photo: Alexander Louvet / DEKRA

About DEKRA

DEKRA was originally founded in 1925 to ensure road safety through vehicle inspection. With a much wider scope today, DEKRA is the world's largest independent non-listed expert organization in the testing, inspection, and certification sector. As a global provider of comprehensive services and solutions, we help our customers improve their safety, security, and sustainability outcomes. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 49,000 people who offer qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.