Council of the European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council on 30 November 2026 Accelerating harmonised deployment of autonomous vehicles across Europe - Information from Estonia, **Austria,** Latvia, the Netherlands, **Portugal,** Slovakia **and Spain**

Autonomous driving is one of the key technologies determining the future competitiveness of the European automotive industry. Artificial intelligence and the growing importance of data-driven services are rapidly transforming the sector. Europe does not lack technical expertise, industrial capacity or ambition. The challenge is to translate these strengths into large-scale deployment, supported by a regulatory framework that enables innovation. Without further practical steps, Europe risks falling further behind global competitors such as the United States and China.

The Joint Declaration of Intent concerning the creation of a cross-border testbed for the deployment of automated vehicles, initially signed by 18 Member States in June 2026, now brings together 22 participating countries. This is an important step towards harmonised vehicle approval and coordinated deployment. The declaration also recognises that successful deployment depends not only on vehicle approval and safety frameworks, but also on consistent and predictable Single Market conditions for automated road transport services. Building on this commitment, further work is needed to address fragmented rules governing the provision of these services.

Autonomous driving should be recognised not only as a transport innovation, but as a strategic technology for Europe's competitiveness, technological sovereignty, road safety and security. Therefore, the EU must ensure that the necessary legal framework and conditions for the development of automated driving system software in Europe are in place. Given its broader application potential in logistics and dual-use fields, we must also make sure that autonomous mobility is governed by European rules on cybersecurity and data protection. This is essential to safeguarding Europe's technological sovereignty and strategic autonomy.

To move from pilots to real-life deployment, autonomous mobility must therefore be treated not only as a vehicle technology, but also as a Single Market services issue. We call on the Commission to prioritise work towards harmonised rules for autonomous passenger services, software development, enabling proportionate market access, predictable conditions for scaling up and greater investment certainty, without compromising safety or other public policy objectives.