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EU-funded project develops 'smart' communications to improve road transport

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Until now, information communications technology (ICT) driven safety systems for car drivers and other road users have been predominantly autonomous or stand-alone devices. However, a recently-launched EU project has set itself the task of developing a 'smart' system to allow vehicles and road infrastructure to communicate, which promises not only to improve traffic flow, safety and the environmental impact of road traffic, but also to enhance driver comfort.



The CVIS (Cooperative Vehicle-Infrastructure Systems) Integrated Project has been awarded 22 million euro under the Information Society Technologies (IST) section of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The project, which is led by ERTICO, the European multi-sector, public/private partnership on the development and deployment of intelligent transport systems and services (ITS), brings together a total of 63 partners from across Europe, including car manufacturers, telecommunications companies, research institutes and universities, and local authorities.

According to project manager Paul Kompfner of ERTICO, the project aims to 'begin a revolution in mobility for travellers and goods, completely re-engineering how drivers, their vehicles, the goods they carry and the transport infrastructure interact.' Indeed, if successful, CVIS would enable drivers to influence the traffic control system directly, and to be guided to the quickest route to their destination, which would help drastically reduce road congestion. Information shown on road signs would be available wirelessly and be shown on a display inside the vehicle.

Such displays, the project consortium claims, could also warn drivers of approaching emergency vehicles and allow emergency personnel to reach accidents faster with less danger for themselves and for the vehicles along their path. Similarly, the transportation of hazardous goods could be tracked at all times and have priority along a pre-selected safe route.

However, the project's success depends largely on the full interoperability between different makes of vehicle and between vehicles and different types of roadside systems. To address this, CVIS intends developing what it claims is a world 'first': a networking terminal or 'box' based on ISO CALM, a standardised set of air interface protocols for high-speed ITS communication, which may be used in vehicles or as part of roadside equipment. Through the terminal, many different types of media, including mobile cellular and wireless local area networks, short-range microwave (DSRC) or infra-red may continuously and seamlessly communicate with one another.

In addition to the technical obstacles, the project also faces the challenge of ensuring the take-up and large-scale deployment of this interoperable technology by car

manufacturers, public administrative authorities and the general public. In preparation for such likely stumbling blocks, the project is creating a toolkit to address issues such as user acceptance, data privacy and security, system openness and interoperability, risk and liability, public policy needs, cost/benefit and business models, and roll-out plans for implementation.

To validate the project's results, all CVIS technologies and applications will be tested at one or more test sites in six European countries: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands/Belgium, Sweden and the UK.

Contact person:

For further information, please visit the following website:

http://www.ertico.com/en/activities/projects_and_fora/cvis.htm

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