

## **EC public consultation on European Partnership on Safe and Automated Road Transport 26<sup>th</sup> August 2019.**

### **EARPA feedback**

The European Automotive Research Partners Association – EARPA – representing 52 RTOs active in road mobility research, appreciates the ongoing developments and discussions towards a European Partnership for Safe and Automated Road Transport within the framework of Horizon Europe. Within our membership it is clear and appreciated that for the next stages of Safe, Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility, coordinated and collaborative research will be key to bring the European citizen and the European transport system solutions which are safer, cleaner, smarter and more efficient – both on a systems level as on user centric levels.

As is sketched in the Inception Impact Assessment, within the Horizon 2020 programme, a growing number of expert fields are cooperating to get connected and automated driving functions in place. These fields include of course transport and automotive, but to a growing extent also ICT, human-machine interaction and human behaviour, user acceptance, infrastructure, sensor and communication technologies. Having a solid partnership on Safe and Automated Road Transport would allow for a much more programmatic and systemic approach, and a better coordination and exchange between the actors. A good coordination with other future partnerships, including those on AI, HPC, 5G, Cyber Security, Electronics and Smart Systems, Batteries and 2Zero would be seen as very valuable for the impact and success of the partnerships.

Nevertheless, after the first sections the European partnership the document introduces as the “European partnership for safe and automated road transport” seems to be rather a partnership for automated road transport. Under the “problem the initiative aims to tackle”, it clearly states that “this initiative is expected to address the [...] two problems that hinder the uptake of automated mobility systems and services on roads in the EU”. The safety aspect seems to be dropped there, as it is not one of the primary problems which the initiative aims to tackle, nor is it reflected in any of its specific objectives.

Therefore, it is felt like road transport safety research in name is clearly and dominantly part of the partnership, yet in future situations it may well be very hard to find a good framework for this field of work. It is not one single technological solution, but the combination of innovations targeting all elements of the road transport system which may bring Europe closest to Vision Zero. Innovation in CCAM needs to be complemented by the development of new approaches to address a multitude of safety risks which will not be avoided by CCAM.

Therefore, it is recommended not to mix the technological solutions which Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility can bring, with one of the most important intended social impacts: improving road safety. This would then be in line with the recently published Commission Staff Working Document “EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 - Next steps towards "Vision Zero", 19th June 2019.

EARPA feels like such a partnership can indeed help to overcome several of the hurdles in the cooperation between public and private stakeholders, which currently is patchy. Nevertheless, one should be aware that there is a huge urge and momentum in the European industry and research to make true progress in this field. The large number of launched new companies and emerging start-ups in this field, shows this to some extent. For a future partnership, one should take into account this willingness and the increasing speed of developments, as well as the creativity and possibilities many SMEs can offer.

Based on experiences in existing partnerships within the framework of Horizon 2020, it therefore would seem to fit best to work in a co-programmed partnership (Option 1). The openness, flexibility and speed in this type of partnership will be beneficial for both the speed of R&I as well as uptake of

results. In our experience, this type of partnership is better suited for participation by SMEs and non-West-European partners with a less active network.

In further developing the partnership and the way it will be functioning, it will be important to limit the request for administrative activities for the members. In this, it will be essential to have central and national reporting systems fully aligned (timing, contents, language). Having an internationally harmonised funding framework for participants all over Europe would to a large extent decomplicate the collaboration across all stakeholders.

As opposed to what is mentioned in the Inception Impact Assessment, it would be advised to ensure that the Strategic Research Agenda of a future partnership is developed by all stakeholders, including Member States and RTOs. EARPA as such would be happy to contribute to such Strategic Research Agendas. Support of the full stakeholder field is needed anyway, to effectively make use of the Agendas.

EARPA clearly is willing to actively contribute to the next steps in the preparation of this partnership. The stakeholder workshop, mentioned in “Consultation of citizens and stakeholders” would be an excellent opportunity to exchange further ideas, and to jointly build further on this essential new partnership.