Mercedes-Benz

Intelligent World Drive – five continents in five months

Press Information

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On the road to autonomous driving:

Mercedes-Benz on automated worldwide test drive

Stuttgart. With the "Intelligent World Drive", Mercedes-Benz is testing automated driving functions on all five continents using a vehicle based on the S-Class. At the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt, Dr. Dieter Zetsche, President and CEO of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars, fired the starting gun to send the test vehicle off on its worldwide test drive. The test vehicle is based on the new series production saloon. Between now and January 2018, this S-Class, which has been automated for test purposes, will face a variety of complex traffic situations. In the process, it will gather valuable experience on the road to autonomous driving. After the launch in Germany the next test drive will take Place in China followed by others in Australia in November and South Africa in December. The final stop of the tour will be the CES in Las Vegas in January. The purpose of the "Intelligent World Drive" is to collect information on what happens under real traffic conditions around the world, so that future automated and autonomous driving functions can be brought into line with country-specific user/traffic habits.

"Recording, processing and interpreting highly complex traffic situations is the key to safe automated and autonomous driving. This is particularly demanding in dense urban traffic. This is why we are deliberately testing our automated driving functions in everyday driving situations in large cities", says Ola Källenius, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG responsible for Group Research & Mercedes-Benz Cars Development. "In this way not only do our vehicles become more intelligent, they also become safer."

New technologies need legal certainty

In addition, the Stuttgart-based automotive company is an advocate of an internationally harmonised legal framework for automated and autonomous driving. There is a need for action especially in relation to international agreements on road traffic law, which set the binding framework for national legislation and which currently still compulsorily require a driver. Further changes are also important with regard to vehicle certification as well as data storage.

"Progress must not stop at national borders. Legislation must keep pace with technological development. Otherwise it will not be possible for important innovations in automated and autonomous driving to hit the road," says Renata Jungo Brüngger, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG, responsible for Integrity and Legal Affairs. "Legal certainty is essential for the acceptance of autonomous driving in society. So we quickly need further international harmonisation of the legal framework."

Autonomous driving is one of the four strategic areas for the future which form an integral part of the corporate strategy of Daimler AG under the acronym CASE. CASE – these letters are shaping the future of mobility. They stand for Connected, Autonomous, Shared & Services and Electric. The aim is to provide intuitive mobility for customers by intelligently intermeshing all four CASE areas.

"Intelligent World Drive" – each continent with different test focuses

While the main area of interest in Germany is specific driving behaviours on motorways and in traffic jams, the focus of the test drive in China is on driving behaviour in the dense traffic of Shanghai with its millions of inhabitants. On a drive from Sydney to Melbourne, the developers in Australia will test the latest, digital maps from HERE. Also in the Cape Town area in South Africa, the focus is on testing the available maps in everyday use as well as on country-specific peculiarities. The test drive in the Los Angeles area and afterwards on to Las Vegas will concentrate on an evaluation of driving behaviour in dense urban traffic and traffic jams as well as traffic overtaking on the right on highways.

As lighting also plays a key role on the road to automated and autonomous mobility, Mercedes-Benz's "Intelligent World Drive" is additionally testing a prototype headlamp featuring innovative DIGITAL LIGHT technology. This revolutionary lighting system allows features that were unveiled as a vision of the future in the F 015 Luxury in Motion research vehicle in early 2015. The non-dazzle continuous high beam in HD quality uses chips with over one million micro-mirrors, and therefore pixels, per headlamp. Among other things, DIGITAL LIGHT is thus able to project light corridors onto the road in order to communicate with the surroundings.

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About CASE:
CASE – these letters are shaping the future of mobility. They stand for the fields of networking (Connected), autonomous driving (Autonomous), flexible use (Shared & Services) and electric powertrains (Electric). The four CASE fields are an integral part of the corporate strategy of Daimler AG. The aim is to shape intuitive mobility for our customers through intelligent dovetailing of the CASE topics.
Mercedes-Benz Cars already plays a leading role in all four areas today. For example, all activities in the area of connectivity are focused on the digital brand Mercedes me, which gives customers access to an extensive and personalised range of services by app, website or straight from their car.
On the road to autonomous driving, Mercedes-Benz has for years been a key driver of development and has repeatedly set the benchmark. To this end, the Mercedes engineers use what is known as sensor fusion. The data from different sensors, such as cameras, ultrasound and radar, are intelligently combined and analysed. With the smart vision EQ fortwo, the smart brand also demonstrates how driving without a steering wheel could look in the future of car sharing.
The inventor of the car already plays a leading role in the field of 'Sharing & Services'. The mobility services used by over 14.5 million people range from free-floating car sharing (car2go) and private peer-to-peer car sharing (Croove), through ride-hailing (mytaxi) to the mobility platform (moovel).
Mercedes-Benz pursues a comprehensive approach in powertrain electrification, and develops the EQ brand with a family of vehicles and an all-encompassing ecosystem, which, in addition to the vehicle itself, also comprises a comprehensive range of products related to electric mobility. This extends from intelligent services and energy storage units for private and commercial customers to charging technologies and sustainable recycling. On the road to emission-free driving, Daimler is systematically pursuing a three-pronged powertrain strategy to be able to realise maximum environmental compatibility across all vehicle classes (incl. commercial vehicles, vans) – with an intelligent mix of state-of-the-art internal combustion engines and partial electrification through 48-volt technology, tailor-made EQ Power plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles with battery or fuel cell powertrains.
By focusing on CASE, Daimler is preparing for the intuitive mobility of the future.
More at: http://www.daimler.com/CASE