

Press Release

Vehicle inspection, road policing and accident analysis need data access

Connected vehicles: European legislation must cover data needed for sovereign tasks

- DEKRA CEO: Legislation should go beyond business-to-business use cases
- ROADPOL, EVU and DEKRA join forces to call for sector-specific regulation
- Data Act proposal appreciated for setting up basic principles

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The European network of traffic police forces, ROADPOL, the European Association for Accident Research and Analysis, EVU, and the global leader in vehicle inspection, DEKRA, have welcomed the Data Act proposal of the European Commission for setting up general principles for access to and use of data generated by products. At the same time, the experts are calling on the Commission to draw up specific legislation concerning data access in the automotive sector. From their point of view, it is imperative for this legislation to cover access to in-vehicle data which is needed to carry out sovereign tasks, such as road accident investigation and analysis, vehicle inspection, and prosecution.

“The sector-specific legislation cannot only pertain to business-to-business use cases”, says DEKRA CEO Stefan Kölbl. “Sovereign use cases absolutely need to be included. Access to the relevant in-vehicle data is essential if police and prosecutors as well as vehicle inspection organizations and accident analysis experts are to do their important job in the future, with vehicles becoming more and more automated and connected. This is very much in the consumers’ interest.”

“European traffic police forces have – beyond their main task of traffic enforcement – the important task of investigating road accidents. More and more automated vehicles on European roads have a big impact on this task”, says ROADPOL president Volker Orben. “Automated vehicles have no drivers who can be questioned how the accident happened. Therefore, police need access to reliable vehicle data in order to secure forensic evidence, possibly with support from external experts. Investigations have the aim to reconstruct how the accident happened – which is a precondition to decide who caused it.”

“For the purpose of accident research, but also for determining the causes of crashes, data generated in vehicles must be stored in neutral trust centers and be accessible for the legitimate stakeholders – without limitations by manufacturers

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or system providers”, points out EVU president Jörg Ahlgrimm. “For example, it will not be long until we must be able to determine whether, at a specific point of time, the vehicle was controlled by the user or by an automated system. Authorities need to have easy and quick access to the relevant data in such cases. When it comes to possible malfunctions of automated systems as a cause for accidents, storing the data in a neutral place will be especially significant.”

The same goes for vehicle inspection. DEKRA is the global number one in the field, carrying out roughly 27 million inspections in 23 countries around the world. “The role of periodical-technical inspection is to make sure that vehicles are safe, secure and comply with environmental regulations throughout their lifecycle. This also needs to cover functions potentially changed through a software update”, stresses DEKRA CEO Kölbl. “To verify the correct functionality of vehicle systems which depend on software, such as advanced driver assistant systems and automated driving systems, independent and trusted access to unmodified and non-pre-filtered data is vital.”

At the same time, ROADPOL, EVU and DEKRA experts are convinced that the consumer using a connected product, e.g. a vehicle, must be made aware of who has access to data generated by the product and that any transmission of data can only happen with the user’s consent, unless the data transmission pertains to sovereign tasks. This is called the user-centric approach. Manufacturers should not have the monopoly over the data.

“For future mobility to be safe, legislators need to make sure that a clear framework for regulated data access is set up in a well-thought-out way and that such access is provided under the so-called ‘FRAND’ principles, which means fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory access”, says DEKRA CEO Stefan Kölbl.

About DEKRA

DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for almost 100 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world’s leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and manages the Group’s operating business. In 2021, DEKRA generated preliminary sales totaling almost EUR 3.5 billion. The company currently employs around 46,500 people in approximately 60 countries on all continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they work for safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, safety consultancy, testing and certification of products and systems, as well as training courses and temporary work. The vision for the company’s 100th birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe, secure and sustainable world. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.