

Joint Charter on Automated Mobility in European Cities & Regions

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The deployment of automated vehicles (AVs) is entering a decisive phase in Europe. What has until now largely been tested through pilots is increasingly moving towards large-scale deployment, supported by a growing number of European and national initiatives.

This transition is further accelerated by evolving policy priorities, including the push for sustainable mobility, the European Industrial Action Plan, and the increasing focus on competitiveness and the scaling up of Cooperative, Connected and Automated mobility (CCAM) solutions. AVs are also being addressed in the context of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework and its mid-term review, which highlights both the potential of automation to reduce crashes and the need to carefully manage new safety risks in complex urban environments. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that CCAM deployment delivers real safety improvements for all road users, particularly in mixed traffic conditions.

While these developments create new opportunities, they also raise critical questions about how automated mobility will be rolled out in practice, and whose priorities will shape its deployment. Current discussions are often driven by interests linked to technological readiness and industrial competitiveness. However, **cities and regions are ultimately responsible for delivering public value on the ground, including safe, efficient, inclusive, and sustainable mobility systems.**

European cities strive for clean, multimodal mobility systems, with strong public transport networks and a high share of active mobility. These are not constraints, but core strengths of the European urban mobility model. The deployment of AVs must therefore reinforce these strengths rather than undermine them. At the same time, the transition to automated mobility creates opportunities within the Just Transition agenda, including the potential to reinvest operational efficiencies into improved services, expand the mobility offer in underserved areas and for target groups with special needs and address transport poverty.

Cities and regions, as managers of public space and orchestrators of local mobility systems, should play a central role in shaping how CCAM technologies are introduced. Local and regional authorities, as well as the related public transport authorities, are procurers of CCAM services, and they have a major influence in setting the conditions for publicly operated services. Their responsibilities include ensuring safety, balancing competing uses of public space, integrating new services into existing systems, and maintaining public trust.

This **Joint Charter** by Eurocities and POLIS sets out a **shared vision for the deployment of automated mobility in urban and regional areas**. It builds on the policy work of both networks and reflects a common position on the conditions necessary to ensure that this technology delivers public value, adapts to the needs of cities and their inhabitants rather than requiring cities to adapt to the technology, prioritises the right use cases and does not worsen already existing transport challenges [1].

Principles

Cities and regions, being members of Eurocities and POLIS, call on the EU and national decision-makers to ensure that:

1 The deployment of automated mobility in urban areas is guided by clear and coherent public policy objectives and direction.

The deployment of automated mobility is also supported by the necessary conditions and competencies for cities and regions to manage it effectively. Local authorities must therefore be adequately involved in the development and adaptation of European and national legislation.

2 Automated vehicles contribute to improving liveability, accessibility, and safety in urban areas.

Automation in cities and regions must not be an end in itself, but a means to achieve broader sustainable mobility goals. Deployment should therefore a) improve liveability through cleaner (i.e., electric vehicles), shared and more space-efficient transport options whilst reducing reliance on private car use; b) strengthen accessibility and the resilience of urban mobility systems, through affordable connections between and within cities and regions; and c) enhance safety through effective operations in complex, mixed-use environments where public space is shared with pedestrians, cyclists, and other users. In urban areas, automated mobility must not come at the expense of active mobility. Deployment should preserve and support safe, direct, and attractive conditions for walking and cycling, while avoiding increases in through-traffic and vehicle dominance in urban spaces.

[1] Eurocities (2026), Making Automated Mobility Work for Cities and People in Europe [Policy Statement]. POLIS (2017), The Role of Cities and Regions on Road Vehicle Automation [Discussion Paper].

3 Deployment prioritises solutions that complement and strengthen public transport.

Automated mobility should not compete with public transport but reinforce and complement it. Priority should be given to shared services use cases, such as automated feeder services and pooled demand-responsive transport (roboshuttles), as well as to the automation of large regular buses. These can improve efficiency, extend service coverage, and address operational challenges such as driver shortages. Individually used automated vehicles, including privately owned vehicles and non-pooled robotaxi services, risk increasing congestion and total vehicle kilometres travelled. Promoting such use cases in urban areas would contradict public policies aimed at reducing traffic, including limited traffic zones, parking management, and modal shift strategies.

4 CCAM services deliver clear societal and operational value and are supported by sustainable, well-regulated economic models.

Priority is given to applications that reduce congestion, optimise the use of urban space, and improve the efficiency of the overall transport system, in particular public transport and urban logistics.. This recognises that market incentives differ across mobility services and that not all use cases are equally suitable for urban contexts. Deployment of AVs should avoid the emergence of speculative or poorly regulated business models that could increase vehicle-kilometres travelled, particularly through low-occupancy and empty trips, undermine existing mobility services, or create unequal access to transport systems.

5 Cities and regions play a leading role in shaping governance and regulatory frameworks in urban and peri-urban contexts.

They are responsible for managing public space, transport systems, and local mobility policies. This includes defining operational conditions, service procurement and authorisation, managing vehicle access rights and geofencing, regulating curb-side use and pick-up/drop-off activities, and ensuring alignment with Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) and existing regulations. In this context, cities and regions act as orchestrators of access and mobility rights, including Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVARs) and pick-up and drop-off rights. While these systems should be coordinated at the regional or national level to ensure interoperability and avoid fragmentation, cities and regions must play a central role in their design, implementation, and operation, reflecting local mobility needs and policy objectives.

6 AVs are fully integrated into existing physical and digital urban infrastructure.

Automated mobility must not develop as a standalone ecosystem. Urban environments should not be redesigned to accommodate automation; rather, technologies must be capable of operating safely in real-world conditions from the outset. CCAM services must be integrated into existing transport management systems (i.e., emergency responses), public transport networks, traffic operations, and digital mobility platforms. This requires sustained investment in the digitalisation of infrastructure and mobility management systems, enabling cities and regions to manage, integrate, and scale CCAM services effectively. At the same time, automation may create opportunities for cities and regions to reclaim urban space currently dedicated to motorised traffic, particularly parking infrastructure such as parking buildings, parking lots, and on-street parking, where demand may decrease over time.

7 Relevant operational data from service providers is accessible to public authorities.

Connectivity and access to operational data are essential to manage automated mobility services effectively. Public authorities must have access to relevant data to ensure safety, regulatory compliance, and efficient traffic and service management. At the same time, deployment must address data protection, cybersecurity, system integrity, and potential dependencies on external technology providers.

8 Deployment builds on Europe's strengths in integrated public transport systems, multimodal planning, and public governance.

It must reinforce these assets rather than replicate models developed for other mobility contexts, while acknowledging that, in the short term, cities and regions may need to deploy non-European technologies to gain operational experience, prepare regulatory and technical ecosystems, and enable early services. This should be accompanied by a long-term strategy to strengthen European industrial competitiveness and reduce strategic dependencies.

9 Societal impacts are placed at the centre, recognising that automation affects workers, users, and communities across multiple sectors beyond mobility.

Cities and regions, as key actors in engaging with citizens and stakeholders, play a central role in facilitating social dialogue and managing these transitions. This requires recognising and supporting that role through early and continuous involvement of workers, citizens, and relevant stakeholders, as well as through awareness-raising and transparent communication to build public trust and acceptance, and through the capacity, resources, and policy frameworks needed to anticipate skills and employment shifts, promote fair working conditions, and support a just, inclusive, and widely accepted transition.

10 European and national legislation must establish clear regulatory frameworks for privately owned automated vehicles and robotaxi services and enable cities and regions to apply measures to manage their impacts.

This should include the possibility for local and regional authorities to implement mechanisms such as taxation, pricing, access restrictions, occupancy requirements, geofencing, parking and curb-side regulations, and other measures necessary to prevent increases in congestion, empty vehicle movements, and overall vehicle-kilometres travelled, while protecting public transport and sustainable mobility objectives.

With this Charter, **POLIS** and **Eurocities** commit to supporting these principles and to working with EU institutions and Member States to ensure that automated mobility contributes to competitive public transport systems, resilient urban mobility systems, and the achievement of Europe's safety and climate objectives.

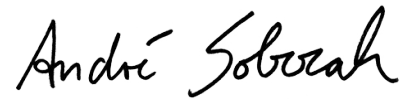
Signatures



Karen Vancluysen

Secretary General

POLIS



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By joining this Charter, **signatories** commit to ensuring that automated mobility strengthens public transport, improves urban liveability, and delivers clear public value for all.