

Autonomous cars hit French roads

For a few days last year, scientists tried a self-driving car on the roads of Rambouillet (Paris region). The goal was to analyse its behaviour in relation to other road users, and to test its entry into roundabouts. Results from a life-size experiment.

In July 2021, the future came to the present. Residents of Rambouillet passed a strange vehicle on their roads, with fairly robotic behaviour: an autonomous car that can drive itself. The experiment, which was led by the HEUDIASYC laboratory,¹ was a first in real traffic conditions with road users not being informed of the situation. « We are one of the first CNRS research laboratories to experiment with these cars on roads open to traffic, with safety drivers that can intervene in case of an emergency, » indicates Philippe Bonnifait, the director of the laboratory. « Our team had tried the car repeatedly on test tracks, but conducting this test in real conditions is different altogether. Uncertainties remain in terms of reactions to other users. » The car faced a number of vehicles with highly different profiles, such as lorries and bicycles, and even a pickup towing a broken down car.

Cooperative vehicle-infrastructure systems

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