

Client Alert

Belgium Allows Fully Autonomous Vehicles To Be Tested on the Public Highway

May 3, 2018

On May 1, 2018, Belgium became one of the first European countries to allow fully autonomous vehicles to be tested on the public highway without a driver.

Back in September 2016, the Belgian federal government issued a set of guidelines for organizations wishing to test driver assistance and partially or fully automated vehicle technologies on public roads or in other public places within Belgium. These guidelines list the minimum conditions and safety requirements which the organization responsible for the testing must comply with in order to guarantee road safety and minimize potential risks.

However, implementation of these guidelines required adaptation of the Belgian traffic code to allow for their unambiguous application. Therefore, on March 18, 2018, the Belgian federal government passed a royal decree introducing a new provision (article 59/1) which allows the federal Minister of Mobility to deviate from all provisions of the Belgian traffic code in the framework of experiments with automated vehicles. Such deviation is subject to conditions and must be for a limited time.

As a result of the adoption of this new provision, the federal Minister of Mobility can now allow the testing of fully autonomous vehicles on public roads without a driver, but the test must be supervised by an operator acting from a control room outside the car.

Any organization interested in carrying out such tests can file an application at the Ministry of Mobility.

For more information, please contact the professional(s) listed below, or your regular Crowell & Moring contact.

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