

## **Platooning in the logistics industry: world's first practical use of networked truck convoys in Germany**

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- **Research project of DB Schenker, MAN Truck & Bus, and Hochschule Fresenius starts in the test phase on the A9 highway**
- **As the world's first logistics provider, DB Schenker, together with its cooperation partners MAN Truck & Bus and Hochschule Fresenius University of Applied Sciences, today sent two digitally networked trucks into practical use.**

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In the presence of Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Andreas Scheuer, a truck "platoon" set off from the DB Schenker branch office in Neufahrn near Munich via the A9 digital test field to Nuremberg. The federal government is funding the pilot project with around EUR 2 million.

Federal Transportation Minister Andreas Scheuer said: "This is a visionary research project for our digital test site, the A9 highway. The project marks the start of the automated and networked future of road haulage. We bring tomorrow's technology onto today's roads, testing the intelligent interaction of man, machine and material. Our opportunities: logistics processes—from ramp to customer—can become safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly. And truck drivers can become modern logistics specialists in digital trucks.

### **Strategic partnerships as innovation drivers**

The regular test runs of the networked trucks begin as of today, June 25, along the 145-kilometer route. Trials are being carried out without any loads until early August. After that, the platoons will be on the road every day, making up to three routine logistics trips and laden with part loads of, for example, machine parts, drinks, or paper

The project partners are thus doing pioneering work. "This first use of truck platoons in Germany will set new standards in the logistics market, from

MAN Truck & Bus is one of Europe's leading commercial vehicle manufacturers and transport solution providers, with an annual revenue of some 10 billion euros (2017). The company's product portfolio includes vans, trucks, buses/coaches and diesel and gas engines along with services related to passenger and cargo transport. MAN Truck & Bus is a company of Volkswagen Truck & Bus GmbH and employs more than 36,000 people worldwide.



which our customers will benefit first and foremost," said Alexander Doll, DB Board Member for Freight Transport and Logistics. "With this project, DB Schenker is showing what matters for companies all over the world in the future: advancing innovations through new partnerships."

By using this technology, DB Schenker is expanding its digital business model. "Today, we at DB are once again bringing a new technology to the road. With the platooning project, we are further expanding our pioneering role in the field of autonomous and networked driving," emphasized Prof. Dr. Sabina Jeschke, DB Board Member for Digitalization and Technology.

With MAN Truck & Bus and DB Schenker, two of the world's leading companies in their sectors are cooperating to jointly promote the subject of automated driving. "It's not just about using a technology. It's about integrating it effectively into the entire logistics chain. The findings from the joint project are an important step towards series development. This will give MAN a leading role in the automation and digitization of commercial vehicles," said Joachim Drees, CEO of MAN Truck & Bus AG.

### **Unprecedented use of technology**

During the unprecedented practical tests, the platooning technology for logistics use will be further optimized, for example with regard to system safety, fuel consumption, and better use of space on freeways. The project partners also hope to gain insights into the social acceptance of the networked driving style, as well as into transport policy and infrastructural prerequisites.

### **People still top priority**

Since the collaboration began in May 2017 and the official handover of the test vehicles by MAN in February of this year, the truck drivers have been prepared for their role in the project through intensive training. The psychosocial and neurophysiological effects of the new technology on the drivers in the platoon will be examined by Hochschule Fresenius with an accompanying study. This will allow important experiences of the truck drivers to be incorporated and their job profile developed further. "It's obvious that digitization of the mobility and transport system is leading to completely new requirements for employees in the industry," said Prof. Dr. Christian Haas, Director of the Institute for Complex Health Research at Hochschule Fresenius. We hope that our findings can also contribute to a better understanding and design of other digitized human-machine interfaces."



**Functionality of platooning**

The term "platooning" refers to a system that vehicles use on the road in which at least two trucks drive in a tight convoy on a freeway, supported by technical driving assistance and control systems. All of the vehicles in the platoon are linked to each other by an electronic "drawbar" that uses vehicle-to-vehicle communication. The truck in front sets the speed and direction, and the others follow.