

Automated mobility: Europe's future is about to become reality

July 22 2024, by Axel Grehl



Automated mobility: Europe's future is about to become reality. Credit: Michaël Gounon, Navya

Even the coronavirus pandemic could not stop this ambitious project:

What began as AVENUE (Autonomous Vehicles to Evolve to a New Urban Experience) has developed into a milestone for the future of European mobility.

Guy Fournier and his team, together with numerous European partners, have presented a comprehensive report outlining the results of the AVENUE project and the transition to the follow-up project "ULTIMO" (Advancing Sustainable User-centric Mobility with Automated Vehicles) as a chapter in a new book published by Springer.

The aim of AVENUE was to analyze and promote the use of automated driving in local public transport. Automated minibus fleets were deployed for the first time worldwide in four European cities—Geneva, Lyon, Copenhagen and Luxembourg.

"The model is based on a flexible door-to-door service and the principle of 'mobility as a service' (MaaS)," explains Fournier. "This significantly improved mobility service could increase the willingness to switch to public mobility services and could indirectly make a significant contribution to a more sustainable mobility. A [representative survey](#) shows that 50% of the people in these cities would be willing to give up their car if such a service were available."

Building on the findings of AVENUE and with the aim of promoting a more sustainable mobility, the follow-up project ULTIMO aims to further improve urban and rural mobility. "Transport and vehicles will take up less space, consume less energy and conserve resources overall, which is beneficial for both people and the environment," says Fournier.

Especially in [rural areas](#) without satisfactory public transport connections, ULTIMO offers a decisive improvement in mobility with the automated vehicles that can be called via a MaaS app. "This could stop the rural exodus and significantly improve the infrastructure in

remote areas," emphasizes Fournier.

Europe's largest mobility project

The results of the AVENUE project were published in the [book](#) "Automated Vehicles as a Game Changer for Sustainable Mobility—Learnings and Solutions." Among other things, the book presents a comprehensive strategy for a mobility transformation in Europe.

"With a project budget of 55 million euros, ULTIMO continues the AVENUE project and is probably the largest European project on this topic. Our aim is to generate a real social impact by making environmental goals more compatible with the needs of citizens," explains Fournier.

The book, which is freely accessible ([open access](#)), was downloaded more than 1,000 times on the first day and is distributed worldwide. The extensive participation of almost 40 authors reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the project.

Chapter 18 forms the basis for the ULTIMO project. It describes a systemic innovation approach to integrate automated vehicles into the overall mobility ecosystem and promote a more sustainable, citizen-centric approach without coercion.

The results of the book were presented to the European Commission in March 2024 and to the Council of Europe in Ghent (Belgium) in June 2024. "We were able to present the significant progress and strategic approaches of our projects at high-level meetings and received [positive feedback](#) from leading representatives of the European Commission and European countries," explains Fournier.

Provided by Hochschule Pforzheim

Citation: Automated mobility: Europe's future is about to become reality (2024, July 22)
retrieved 22 July 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2024-07-automated-mobility-europe-future-reality.html>

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