

## Hands up all those truck drivers who would like to maintain the level of control they currently have behind the wheel?

I only ask, as I have been left slightly perplexed and a little worried after a visit to Sweden to learn more about the final results of the EU-funded HAVEit (Highly Automated Technology Intelligent Transportation) project.

As I sit here in Gothenburg Airport's departure lounge, my mind is on the comments relating to, and the notion of, one of the systems presented – Automated Queue Assistance (AQuA).

Essentially, the idea is a truck that can travel down the road by itself, relying on a series of cameras, scanners and sensors to guide it safely on its journey. The goals are to “increase safety by supporting the driver in ‘underload’ situations”, and to “offer highly automated driving in low-speed, congested traffic”. The driver is kept “in the loop by direct and indirect driver monitoring”.

I believe that this idea will probably never – or at least not for the foreseeable future – see the light of day, but the AQuA team seem to think otherwise. “I would like to have it on trucks tomorrow... the technology is not far from featuring on production vehicles”, said one spokesperson for the project.

One of the big worries for me is that the developers clearly don't have complete confidence in their own product to date. Volvo staff confirmed that trucks with the system have already been out on public highways in Sweden, but only when surrounded by company-owned vehicles “to maintain a level of safety”.

Why should this level of protection be required, if there was enough faith in the system to put it on a road-going truck? Mercifully, most trials to date have been run at the test track to make sure they played it, you guessed it, “safe”.

Either way, the developers are going to have to jump through plenty of hoops before this, or any other form of ‘safety’ technology, is allowed on commercial vehicles, without the benefit of ‘protection’.



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