

EU backs 5G highway project for connected vehicles between France and Germany

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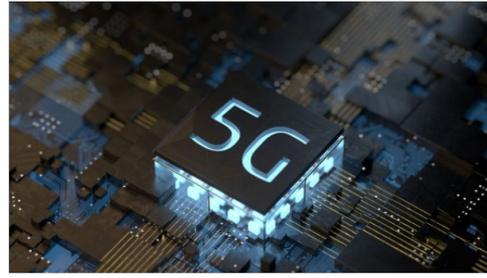
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Telecom companies join forces for a 60-km 5G corridor, boosting mobile services for connected vehicles with support from EU and France's Grand Est Region

Telecommunications companies are collaborating with Orange's Totem, Vantage Towers and the Saarland University of Applied Sciences (htw saar) to construct a 60-km 5G highway corridor between Metz, France, and Saarbrücken, Germany. This initiative is part of the EU's Connecting Europe Facility Digital program and is supported financially by France's Grand Est Region. The infrastructure aims to surpass national coverage obligations and last for 10 years, facilitating the development of mobile services for connected vehicles. These services include cooperative lane changing, collision anticipation and automatic traffic jam alerts, and support the testing of partially autonomous vehicles.



Source: Getty image/Just_Super

The majority of this corridor — 55 km — will be in France, where Orange and Totem will install nine new masts and upgrade eight for dedicated 5G coverage using the 3.5-GHz spectrum. Meanwhile, on the German side, Telefonica and Vantage Towers will install up to five masts using a DAS system at 3.6 GHz to cover the remaining 5 km. Construction is set to begin in early 2025, with completion expected by the end of 2027.

This project comes at a crucial time, as analyst predictions highlight the rapid growth of the connected car market, predicting 367 million connected cars by 2027 and over 500 million car sales from 2024 to 2030, half of which will have 5G connectivity. Despite Germany's expected decline in connectivity penetration, it remains a significant market and the largest in Europe for connected car sales.

Mallik Rao, chief technology and enterprise officer of O2 Telefónica, emphasized the importance of this 5G highway in advancing connected driving in Germany, while Thierry Marigny, director of Orange Grand Est Region, Eastern France, highlighted the project's pioneering role in enabling connected vehicle use across borders in Europe. This project marks a significant step in the development of infrastructure to support the burgeoning market for connected vehicles, promising enhanced safety and comfort for users.

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