
Stellantis secures lidar technology for robot cars

Von Guido Reinking

After electromobility, automated driving is seen as the next big thing. This is why the competition between car manufacturers for this technology is at least as intense as for the drive. Stellantis has therefore invested in the French lidar start-up "SteerLight".

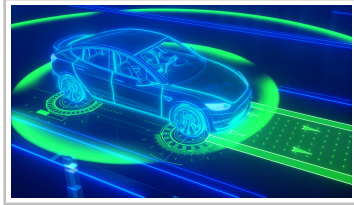
Lidar is a type of light radar that automated cars use to constantly scan their surroundings and is considered a key technology on the road to autonomous robot cars, as it is the only way to reliably detect other road users and obstacles. The problem is that most of these systems work with moving mirrors. The reflection of the light signals then allows conclusions to be drawn about the car's surroundings. However, this makes lidar expensive and prone to errors.

By using silicon photonics technology, Steerlight's system can dispense with moving parts. Such solid-state systems are cheaper to produce and smaller, which makes them easier to install in the car. "Spending 500 dollars on a lidar sensor that you need several of in a car is not an option," says François Simoens, co-founder and CEO of Steerlight. His system is housed on a chip and costs a fraction of that.

By investing in the start-up via its own investment fund Stellantis Ventures, the automotive group, which also includes Peugeot, Jeep, Opel and Fiat, has now taken a further step towards automated driving functions. "Improvements in the field of automated driving are a top priority," says Red Curie, Head of Development at the company. In two to three years, Steerlight's lidars should be ready for use in test vehicles. Then it will take another 18 months for integration, says Guillaume Point, responsible for driver assistance systems (ADAS) at Stellantis.

Initially, Stellantis will deploy level three and higher automated driving, which can cover certain distances autonomously, in the premium brands, i.e. Maserati, Alfa Romeo and Jeep. This will be followed by deployment in the volume brands. The company did not say how much Stellantis has invested in Steerlight and for what proportion. (aum)

Images for article



Lidar technology for scanning the environment for autonomous driving.

Photo: Auto-Medienportal.Net/Fraunhofer Institut

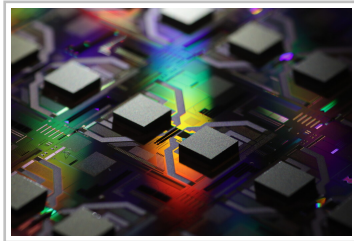


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Steerlight