

Asahi Kasei Europe GmbH  
June 18, 2020

## **On the way to full car autonomy – New study by Asahi Kasei Europe shows growing needs for driver assistance systems and improved acoustics**

**Düsseldorf, June 18, 2020 – The automotive is evolving quickly – new technologies are constantly adding to safety and comfort of the car. This development is strongly user-driven, as the results of a current study conducted by Asahi Kasei Europe and SKOPOS shows.**

The ongoing CASE (Connected – Autonomous – Shared – Electric) megatrends are currently disrupting the automotive industry. Because not only the vehicle itself, but also the driving experience is about to change. Due to the increasing autonomy of the car the passengers will have to focus less on the traffic – and will have more time to spend on work, in-car entertainment or just relaxation. As a result of this development, the focus of attention will shift from the for many decades dominating exterior towards the automotive interior. In the recent years, car manufacturers and suppliers have presented a great number of automotive interior concepts - like Asahi Kasei with its concept car AKXY™. But where are the customer's needs actually heading to? What is the car user expecting from future automotive interior?

In October 2019, Asahi Kasei Europe conducted a representative survey together with Cologne-based market research institute SKOPOS, interviewing a total of 1,200 car users in Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom regarding their preferences relative to mobility and especially to the automotive interior of the future.

The results of the survey show that the customer's decision process when deciding for a new car is growing in complexity. While traditional metrics such as fuel consumption, running costs or driving performance are still key decision factors, the interior including features like acoustic systems and overall advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) are quickly gaining in importance.

### **From improved acoustics to active noise cancellation**

Crystal-clear sound or the sound of silence: With growing autonomy of the car, the car user's perception of "sound" will change dramatically together with the overall driving experience. The creation of a perfect sound environment will become as important as the filtration and cancellation of unwanted engine or road noise. For the latter, a broad range of materials – starting from synthetic rubber for the tires up to sound-absorbing plastics and textiles – will play an important part. For the active sound experience and noise cancellation, electronic acoustic systems will add new opportunities to increase comfort and safety inside the car.

A key result of the survey shows that the car users in the four main European automotive markets are welcoming the possibilities acoustic systems offer to the comfort inside the car. Every second respondent sees a personal benefit in noise-cancelling acoustic systems – every third is willing to book them as an extra equipment. The same result can be seen with acoustic systems that optimize the input of voice commands: 49.5% of all respondents see a benefit, 31.9% would be willing to pay for them. Regarding the contribution of acoustic systems to the in-car entertainment, 39.5% see a benefit in systems that direct music and audio towards the passengers in a private sound zone. With 26.5% only every fourth car user would be willing to pay additional money for them – a sign that this technology is

just finding its way into automotive.

But also, as a part of ADAS, acoustic systems mean value-add for the car user. 59.3% of all respondents see a personal benefit in acoustic systems that highlight important signals of information, with 39.8% being willing to book them as an extra equipment.

Heiko Rother, General Manager Business Development Automotive at Asahi Kasei Europe, on the increasing importance of acoustic systems in the automotive: "Already today car users are enjoying the enhanced comfort Asahi Kasei's premium sound solutions are offering. Supported by active and passive noise cancellation technology this is significantly contributing to the driving experience. By backing this up with high performance but affordable ADAS sensors, we make sure that safety is not at all compromised through the addition of entertainment and connectivity features - as more in-car entertainment will also lead to more distraction."

### **Every second car user taking ADAS into account**

ADAS including abovementioned acoustic systems are contributing to more driving convenience in the car. But even more, they have been significantly enhancing the overall traffic safety by minimizing human errors for more than two decades now.

As traffic and the need for connectivity increases, ADAS are showing a tremendous market growth - a development driven by both, legislation and demand: With Regulation (EU) 2019/2144 announced by the European Union in November 2019, all new cars introduced to the EU market will have to be equipped with enhanced safety systems, including a wide range of advanced driving assistance systems, such as lane departure warning or braking assistance systems, beginning from mid-2022.

But the need for more assistance systems is also customer driven: 54.3% of all car users will take assistance systems into account when purchasing the next car. In comparison: When buying the current car, only 39.9% considered assistance systems to be important. Looking at the developments in the four countries, the acceptance towards assistance systems is growing. While less than every third user (29.3%) in the United Kingdom had considered ADAS as important when purchasing the current car, this share leaped by 17%-points to 46.3% when thinking about the next car. A similar trend can be observed in France (39.3% to 54.0%), Germany (40.5% to 51.9%) and Italy (49.5% to 64.2%).

"The rising number of ADAS on the street is an essential milestone on the path towards fully autonomous vehicles. Two decades ago, the key problem had been to familiarize drivers with features like adaptive cruise control (ACC) or forward alert. Today the end user is aware of the benefits of such systems. The challenge now is to offer these systems for an affordable price. Radar MMIC (monolithic microwave integrated circuit) chips from Asahi Kasei Microdevices leveraging CMOS (complementary metal oxide semiconductor) technology to support this process of making active safety feature available down to smaller car segments", explains Heiko Rother.

### ***About the SKOPOS GROUP***

The SKOPOS GROUP is a broad-based group of companies that combines all modern market research services under one roof. Digital and innovative. From national to international. From customer surveys to UX Research to Insight Community. From employee surveys and mystery shopping to customer experience and data science, the group covers all relevant topics and methods. In addition to various other industries, automotive market research has been one of the most important pillars of the SKOPOS Group for decades.

## ***About the Asahi Kasei Corporation***

Asahi Kasei Corporation is a globally active diversified technology company with operations in the Material, Homes, and Health Care business. The Material division encompasses fibers & textiles, petrochemicals, performance polymers, performance materials, consumables, battery separators, and electronic devices. The Homes division provides housing and construction materials to the Japanese market. The Health Care division includes pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and acute critical care devices and systems. With approximately 40,689 employees around the world, the Asahi Kasei Group serves customers in more than 100 countries and achieved sales of 17.6 billion euros (2,170.4 billion yen) in the fiscal year 2019 (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020).

Asahi Kasei is “Creating for Tomorrow” with all operations sharing a common mission of contributing to life and living for people around the world. For more information, visit [www.asahi-kasei.co.jp/asahi/en/](http://www.asahi-kasei.co.jp/asahi/en/) and <https://www.asahi-kasei.eu/>.

### ***Company Contact Europe:***

Asahi Kasei Europe GmbH  
Sebastian Schmidt  
Am Seestern 4, 40547 Düsseldorf  
Tel: +49 (0) 211-2806-8139  
Mail: [sebastian.schmidt@asahi-kasei.eu](mailto:sebastian.schmidt@asahi-kasei.eu)