

# Self-driving museum bus to begin serving passengers in Tartu

## Press Release

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On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2021, Auve Tech's self-driving shuttle – a self-driving eight-seat vehicle named Iseauto – is introduced in Tartu. Built in Estonia, Iseauto begins shuttling travellers to the Estonian National Museum on 2 September, along the route City Centre – Estonian National Museum – City Centre. Lasting for two months, the goal of the project is to take the next step in making autonomous vehicles a natural part of urban transport.

Iseauto connects the Tartu City Museum and the Estonian National Museum with the City Centre, offering people the opportunity to experiment with innovative, environmentally friendly and needs-based public transport. The route will operate from Wednesday through Sunday, for a period of two months from the beginning of September.

Pirko Konsa, CEO of the project's lead partner Modern Mobility OÜ, said that Tartu is one of the ten cities across Europe where self-driving buses are tested. *"The line will operate for a period of two months, in order to learn with our partners and gain valuable experience. For the first time in Estonia, we are also testing the demand-based public transport ordering and management software platform VEDAS, which will enable us to automatically organise the service of self-driving buses in the future and allow passengers to use it,"* said Konsa.

Urmas Klaas, Mayor of Tartu; Alar Karis, Director of the ENM; Riho Terras, Member of the European Parliament; Mari-Ly Klaats, Member of the Board of Auve Tech OÜ, manufacturer of Iseauto; and Pirko Konsa, CEO of software developer VEDAS, were the first to take part in the festive inaugural drive by the museum bus from the Estonian National Museum.

Mari-Ly Klaats, Member of the Board of Auve Tech, explained that the goal of autonomous last-mile solutions is to make today's traffic culture safer and more sustainable. *"We are pleased to say that interest in self-driving vehicles is on the rise. Our customers and partners have also played a major role in this, thanks to which we have already had the opportunity to prove the concept of the Self-Car in different countries and environments. We believe that by supplementing the existing transport solutions, we will be able to implement a real traffic revolution,"* added Klaats.

At the opening, Mayor Urmas Klaas said that Tartu is an innovation center, where the city favors innovative solutions and allows them to try them out. *"If we don't try new things, they will never become part of our daily lives,"* Klaas said.

Riho Terras MEP said that innovation is the key to the future. *“It takes crazy ideas and smart entrepreneurial people to implement them,”* Terras said.

According to Alar Karis, the director of the Estonian National Museum, the new self-driving bus fits in very well with the museum’s other innovative ventures. *“The environmentally friendly and autonomous museum bus is like a natural continuation of the first museum robot in Estonia tested in the spring,”* said Karis.

Tartu is one of ten cities in the European Union where the European Commission-funded project Ride2Autonomy is taking place. The automation of public transport, including the creation and implementation of self-driving bus ordering and management software, will present a major challenge to local governments in the near future. The aim of the pan-European project, Ride2Autonomy, is to gain practical experience in the introduction of self-driving buses and the adoption of a service based on those self-driving buses in the organisation of urban public transport. The experience gained will be shared with all interested municipalities across the European Union, in order to deepen cooperation in the development of public transport services involving autonomous buses.