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EUROPEAN NATIONS GRAPPLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS

How long can a continent teeter on the edge of a climate catastrophe? This is a rather pressing question for European nations, as Europe is currently the world's fastest warming continent, currently finding itself in the predicament of the potential threats of climate change. Specifically, since there hasn't been enough efforts made to combat the issue, the jeopardisation of resources such as food, ecosystems, infrastructure, water, etc. has become an important subject matter for discussion.

First, it is important to delve into the factors that are putting Europe at risk of rapid climate change. In accordance with the European Environment Agency's (EEA), Europe is facing heatwaves and droughts which damage crops and limit agricultural production, thus causing it to become less productive. These climate events also strain water resources, and as they dwindle, the growth of flora and fauna also becomes limited, as they will face difficulty in adapting to the regions with immense heat, etc. It is evident that this is caused by anthropogenic factors, which is ultimately contributing more to the rapidly-occurring climate change rate European nations have been facing in recent years. Additionally, it is imperative to note that excessive heat for prolonged periods of time can have a detrimental effect on human health. This affects people with jobs that involve manual labor or spending time outside under the scorching sun. Although heatwaves are a common extreme weather event, it is not the only one occurring in Europe. Rising sea levels are causing flooding, which wreak havoc on infrastructure and local transportation, etc. Moreover, it can pose a threat to European nations as climate extremes are dangerous and the damage it causes to buildings and infrastructure will cost a lot of money to repair or rebuild.

As the risks are exacerbating and worsening, the nations involved should start searching for appropriate strategies in order to combat the impending catastrophe, or at least mitigate it. The future of European nations, at this critical and urgent juncture, requires action immediately. Can a continent rise to the challenge, become the ideal exemplar and lead in empowering a sustainable future through innovation and cooperation? Will political will triumph over short-term interests, leading to decisive climate action? And ultimately, can Europe become the guiding light and pioneer for change, spearheading and demonstrating that together—with collective action—we can overcome even the most daunting environmental threats?

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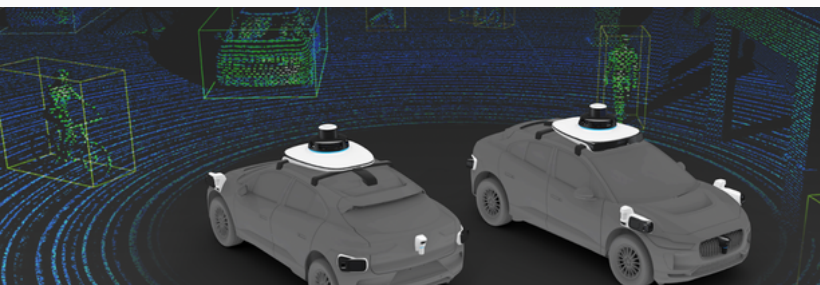
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ARE SELF DRIVING CARS A LONG WAY OFF OR ARE THEY READY NOW?

Although there currently aren't any fully autonomous or self-driving cars on the market, they have definitely been slowly gaining traction, with both public opinion and the technology development required for these vehicles to be both safe and effective. However, quite a few big questions still remain. How safe are these vehicles? At what stage of development is it ethical to start using them? And are we thinking about them in the completely wrong way?
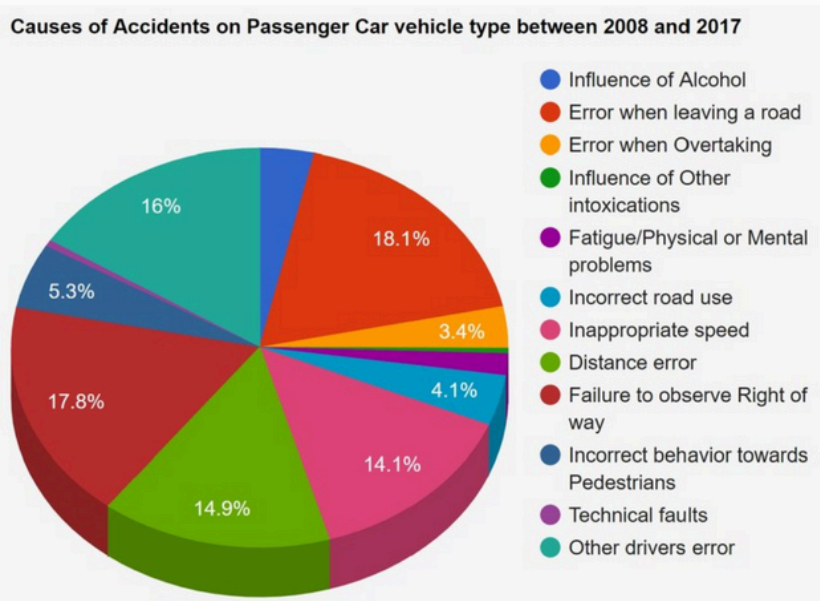
Firstly, we have to consider that whether or not you believe this technology is safe yet or not, it is something that's still in development. Most argue that it isn't ready, with a plethora of real life cases to support this, but others argue that results are promising, and that it is a safe and viable option. Data is conflicting, and there's evidence to support both sides. However, this all depends on the vehicle, and especially the types of roads it's driven on. Although many self-driving programs perform well on wide, well-paved, and well-maintained roads, many of them struggle heavily on the many roads around the world that are in worse condition.

Consumer awareness is another factor, as if drivers don't understand the level of efficacy that an autonomous vehicle is at, and they try to use it in a situation it's not prepared for, they could put themselves in serious danger. This leads many to argue that these vehicles shouldn't be released until they're fully ready, while others believe that people should pay attention to the warnings, and any mishaps are their fault.

The question is, how good do self-driving cars have to be before they can be used en masse? Some would say perfect, but is that really possible? Based on another school of thought, this is the completely wrong way to think about this, as they don't need to be perfect, they just need to be better than humans. Globally, about 3,700 people are killed in car crashes every day, and 1.35 million every year. If we can make self-driving cars that kill 1 million people a year, does that count as success?

Autonomous vehicles and their continued development is a tricky subject, and it's difficult to know if they're ready now, when they're slightly less deadly than humans, or only when they're absolutely perfect.

Causes of Accidents on Passenger Car vehicle type between 2008 and 2017

- Influence of Alcohol
- Error when leaving a road
- Error when Overtaking
- Influence of Other intoxications
- Fatigue/Physical or Mental problems
- Incorrect road use
- Inappropriate speed
- Distance error
- Failure to observe Right of way
- Incorrect behavior towards Pedestrians
- Technical faults
- Other drivers error

16%
5.3%
17.8%
14.9%
18.1%
3.4%
4.1%
14.1%

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RESOLVED: THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD ABOLISH PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP ON ITS SECURITY COUNCIL

Definition of key terms:

- United Nations: international organization founded in 1945 after World War II to promote peace, security, and cooperation among nations
- Abolish: to formally put an end to something
- Permanent Membership: status held by 5 countries, also known as P5 (US, UK, France, Russia, China) granting them veto power over resolutions
- Security Council: (UNSC) organ of the UN aimed at maintaining peace and security

Background Information

- The United Nations was founded in 1945, after the end of World War II. In the beginning, the United Nations Security Council had 5 permanent members and 6 non-permanent members. In 1963, this was increased to 10 rotating non-permanent members, with a requirement for regional diversity.
- With Russia's war in Ukraine, the permanent membership in the Security Council has become an even more controversial topic of discussion. Russia's status means that it can virtually protect itself from all UN action despite its aggression. The same can also be said about the US, which has vetoed resolutions criticizing Israel, especially recently, when it has been the only country in opposition to UN resolutions.

Potential Arguments for the Affirmative Side

1. Abuse of Veto Power

Argument: Permanent members have, in many instances, used their veto power to prevent the United Nations from taking action. Russia has used its veto the most, at 143 times, followed by the United States, at 86 times, far ahead of the UK, China, and France. This abuse of veto has led to the United Nations' inaction when chemical weapons were deployed in Syria or when Ukrainians and Palestinians needed protection against violence.

Impact: Abolishing permanent membership allows the Security Council to be able to more effectively address different crises whenever they arise and prevent gridlocks that lead to the unnecessary deaths of civilians.

2. Diversity

Argument: Permanent membership is not representative of the world we're living in. The global hegemony back in 1945, which is almost 80 years ago, does not reflect the hegemonic makeup of the world today. This is especially true in the case of Britain and France, whose geopolitical and economic influences are nowhere near what they once were. They're not even the most powerful countries in Europe. Additionally, most issues discussed within the Security Council are related to Africa. African states also make up the largest number of UN member states, yet not a single African country has permanent membership status.

Impact: The abolition of permanent membership makes the Security Council more inclusive and representative of the world today. This is also important because it paves the way for a wider range of perspectives when making decisions that affect the world as a whole as it allows different countries to play a more active role in addressing issues and finding solutions.

Potential Arguments for the Negative Side

1. Status Quo Solvency

Argument and Impact: The biggest issue that people have with permanent membership is the use of vetos. However, the abuse of veto power will become much less of a problem for different reasons. As an example, in 2022, a resolution proposed by Liechtenstein was adopted to hold permanent members accountable for their use of veto power. This resolution states that members need to justify their veto through a debate held by the General Assembly. This change will give a voice to countries that aren't part of the Security Council which will subsequently lead to P5 members vetoing less frequently. Other proposals gaining ground include giving the General Assembly the ability to override a veto.

2. Other Options

Argument and Impact: Permanent membership doesn't need to be entirely abolished to solve the UNSC's problems. Since many claim that veto is the biggest problem, countries have simply advocated for the abolition of veto power and nothing more. Others have also supported the expansion of permanent membership to countries in Africa and Latin America, making the UNSC more inclusive.