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February 9

Confidence in Brazil's rulers has dropped so low that accusations of corruption usually stick, even when there's little evidence. In such a chaotic situation, many in Brazil's media should be doing a better job,

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REINALDO JOSÉ LOPES
COLLABORATION FOR **FOLHA**

"Bon voyage!" says a female voice, sounding similar to a conventional GPS.

"Obstacle detected!" the voice announces. Diligently, the nine-ton truck starts the engine or brakes gently -without the need of any human intervention.

The experience aboard this machine, which was created in a partnership between the University of São Paulo in São Carlos and Scania - a Swedish manufacturer of commercial vehicles - is a strange, but apparently safe experience.

The goal is to create a commercially viable autonomous truck, which increases the safety and reliability of cargo transportation. The project cost R\$ 1.2 million (US\$345.000).

It's not the first time that Denis Wolf and colleagues at the ICMC (Institute of Mathematics and Computer Sciences) create robotic vehicles -the group has also designed an autonomous car.

The experiment has led to more sophisticated mathematical models to control Scania, whose size was a challenge.

"In addition, in the case of truck, commercial viability was prioritized, which led us to relatively inexpensive sensors," explains.

The truck has a radar, a high-precision GPS and cameras that give it an almost human "vision".

For now, tests take place on the university campus -at a cautious speed of 20 km/h.

Tests without drivers have been authorized to take place on public roads in the UK, France and Switzerland -not to mention in Brazil, where Wolf has put his car with robotic control out in the streets of São Carlos.

Translated by CRISTIANE COSTA LIMA

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The truck has a radar, a high-precision GPS and cameras that give it an almost human "vision"

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