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Press Release

Schaeffler and ThunderSoft agree on strategic partnership to develop central vehicle computing platforms

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- Joint development of central multi-domain computing platforms for future vehicle architectures
- Combination of Schaeffler's software, system and hardware expertise with ThunderSoft's software and platform capabilities
- Further step to strengthen Schaeffler's technology and market position in central E/E architectures

Schaeffler and ThunderSoft have entered into a strategic partnership to jointly develop and market central vehicle computing platforms for future vehicle architectures. The collaboration aims to support automotive manufacturers in their transition toward software- and AI-based vehicles. The partners focus on modular and scalable solutions that reduce development outlay and system complexity and pave the way for centralized software and data architectures.

"Central vehicle computers are developing into a key technology for software-defined vehicles," says Thomas Stierle, CEO E Mobility at Schaeffler AG. "In addition to our in-depth automotive hardware and systems expertise, we are contributing our extensive software experience. Together with ThunderSoft's software and platform expertise, we are creating scalable computing solutions, which consolidate safety-critical driving functions, driver assistance systems, and infotainment on a shared hardware basis."

From distributed ECUs to central vehicle computers

As the automotive industry transitions from traditional distributed electronic control unit (ECU) architectures to centralized vehicle computers, high performance computing platforms are gaining in importance. They enable multiple vehicle domains – such as powertrain, energy supply, driving functions, and infotainment – to be consolidated within a central processing unit. This forms the basis for flexibly scalable, data centric E/E architectures.

Complementary hardware and software expertise

Schaeffler contributes its extensive experience in the development, industrialization, and high-volume production of complex automotive electronic systems. This includes in particular safety relevant driving functions, powertrain systems, chassis solutions, as well as battery and energy management.

ThunderSoft complements these capabilities with its expertise in central vehicle software platforms, operating systems, and high performance computing architectures for infotainment and driver assistance systems. In addition, ThunderSoft provides access to a broad and well established technology ecosystem.

By working closely together, functions that were previously distributed across multiple control units can be bundled on a central vehicle computer. This reduces system complexity, shortens development times and enables flexible and cost efficient scaling across different vehicle models and markets.

“Centralized computing platforms are becoming the cornerstone of intelligent vehicles,” says Xu Dongchao, Vice President of ThunderSoft Intelligent Automotive. “Through our collaboration with Schaeffler, we aim to accelerate innovation in software-defined vehicles and provide flexible, high-performance platforms for global deployment.”

Regional focus and outlook

As part of the cooperation, the two companies plan to develop fully integrated solutions for vehicle computer platforms that map functions from driver assistance, infotainment, and driving domains on a shared, flexible hardware basis. An initial regional focus will be on the Asia-Pacific region and Europe. In the longer term, the collaboration is set to expand to China and North America. Regional regulatory requirements for connected vehicles will be taken into account from the outset.

Through this partnership, Schaeffler is strengthening its position as a systems partner for central E/E architectures and underlining its ambition to actively shape the transformation toward software-defined mobility.

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Schaeffler Group – We pioneer motion: The Schaeffler Group has been driving forward groundbreaking inventions and developments in the field of motion technology for 80 years. With innovative technologies, products, and services for electric mobility, chassis solutions, and renewable energies, the company is a reliable partner for making motion more efficient, intelligent, and sustainable – over the entire life cycle. Schaeffler describes its comprehensive range of products and services by means of eight product families: from bearing solutions and all types of linear guidance systems through to repair and monitoring services. With around 110,000 employees and more than 250 locations in 55 countries, Schaeffler is one of the world’s largest family-owned companies and ranks among Germany’s most innovative organizations.

(From left) Gerd Winkler, Head of Strategy Software Defined Vehicles, Business Unit Vehicle & Battery Controls, Schaeffler AG, and Xu Dongchao, Vice President of Thunder-Soft Intelligent Automotive, sealed the strategic partnership at the Beijing Auto Show. (Photo: ThunderSoft)

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