

Description

Method and device for mutual monitoring and/or control of autonomous technical systems

The invention relates to a method and a device for mutual monitoring and/or control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network.

Autonomous technical systems can, for example, be understood to mean autonomous vehicles, devices or robots, which can move autonomously or operate automatically, for instance. Autonomous technical systems can increasingly be used in various domains. System faults, such as software or hardware faults or malfunctions due to tampering may, in this case, have serious consequences for the security of the autonomous technical systems themselves and/or people and technical systems in their vicinity. It is known to implement security mechanisms on an autonomous device or in an autonomous vehicle. Examples here include physical security measures, such as disconnection of a radio link to a controller, digital security measures, such as authentication for functional access, intrinsic detection of a fault, separate security circuits or monitoring systems, such as by external sensors. However, a full control can often not be guaranteed, in particular if there is just one security mechanism for an autonomous technical system which could itself be faulty or can easily be tampered with.

It is an object of the invention to provide a possibility to improve the security of an autonomous technical system and/or of a plurality of autonomous technical systems.

The object is achieved by means of a method having the features of patent claim 1, by means of a device according to patent claim 11 and a computer program product according to patent

claim 17. Advantageous embodiments and developments of the invention are given in the dependent claims.

A first aspect of the invention relates to a method for mutual monitoring and/or control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network, wherein:

- at least one of the autonomous technical systems is designed as a monitoring autonomous technical system and monitors the operating behavior of other autonomous technical systems,
 - abnormal operating behavior of a first autonomous technical system is detected by the monitoring autonomous technical system based on a specified first rule and a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system is generated therefrom,
 - the status message is transmitted from the monitoring autonomous technical system to some of the other autonomous technical systems,
 - the status message is received by some of the other autonomous technical systems and jointly evaluated by them and, depending on the evaluation, a control rule is derived for the first autonomous technical system,
- and
- the control rule is sent to a control module, which is assigned to the first autonomous technical system, and the operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system is controlled by the control module according to the control rule.

One advantage of the invention is, for example, that in particular different autonomous technical systems can monitor each other, and when one of the autonomous technical systems exhibits abnormal behavior, this can be controlled. A joint evaluation of the operating behavior means that an autonomous technical system can be put into a safe state in the case of abnormal operating behavior. In particular, a control of an autonomous technical system can be carried out by other

autonomous technical systems externally and only after joint examination and evaluation of a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior.

An evaluation can preferably be made based on collected or received data, such as status information or a measurement result. The evaluation can in particular be dependent on a specified first rule, such as a speed limit. An autonomous technical system can, for example, use the first rule and the received status message to evaluate or decide whether abnormal operating behavior, which was detected by a monitoring autonomous technical system dependent on the first rule, should be controlled.

The plurality of autonomous technical systems is interconnected via a communication network. They can communicate with each other, for example, via an existing data and/or communication network. The autonomous technical systems can also establish an adhoc communication network amongst themselves. In particular, a joint evaluation of participating autonomous technical systems can be established via the communication network. For example, as soon as the joint evaluation indicates a value that, for example, exceeds a predetermined value, a control rule for controlling a technical system behaving abnormally can be determined and sent to its control module. In particular, the joint evaluation and/or coordination can be designed as a decentralized method. A decentralized method is also advantageous as it can be flexibly adapted to the technical systems involved in the evaluation method.

For example, an autonomous vehicle can be stopped if a speed limit is exceeded following joint evaluation of the status message of the abnormal operating behavior by at least some of the other autonomous technical systems. For this purpose, a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of the autonomous vehicle can be shared with other autonomous

technical systems via the communication network and evaluated by them. The method according to the invention can in particular make it possible to put one of the autonomous technical systems into a safe state after an abnormal operating mode has been detected by at least one other autonomous technical system and the status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior has been evaluated by at least one other autonomous technical system.

The plurality of autonomous technical systems can in particular monitor each other, evaluate each other's operating behavior and, on this basis, jointly arrange a control if one of the autonomous technical systems is behaving abnormally. Moreover, only some of the autonomous technical systems may be equipped with a control module or a control module may be assigned to each of them, for instance. It is also conceivable that a control module is arranged externally and is assigned to at least one autonomous technical system, such as a retractable bollard.

A control mechanism according to the invention can preferably be implemented in addition to security systems already in place. A control module can preferably be integrated in an autonomous technical system and configured such that an externally transmitted control rule can be directly implemented and/or valid control commands can be overwritten, modified or overridden. A control rule may, for example, comprise a command to switch off and/or restrict a function. In particular, the control module can only implement one control rule according to the predefined rules, such as just reducing but not increasing a speed.

A further advantage of the invention can, for example, be seen in the controlled monitoring and control, as false reports about operating behavior can be detected by joint evaluation of a status message, for instance. This can, for example, also

prevent the monitoring autonomous technical system from being able to enforce the control of the autonomous technical system behaving abnormally on its own, e.g. if this monitoring autonomous technical system is itself defective or has been tampered with.

In one advantageous embodiment of the method, a monitoring autonomous technical system can comprise at least one sensor, the sensor can record sensor data, and abnormal operating behavior of one of the other autonomous technical systems can be detected using the sensor data.

A sensor may, for example, be a camera in different spectral wavelength ranges, a temperature sensor, a speedometer or accelerometer, a distance measuring apparatus, a laser scanner, a radar or ultrasonic sensor or a microphone. A monitoring autonomous technical system preferably comprises sensors with different spatial resolutions and at different positions, so that, for example, when the monitoring autonomous system moves, the operating behavior of another autonomous system can be monitored without interruption.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, the status message can be transmitted and/or the status message can be jointly evaluated and/or the control rule can be sent by means of encrypted data transmission via the communication network and/or after mutual identification of the autonomous technical systems.

In particular, a status message can be transmitted to at least some of the other autonomous technical systems and/or the status message can be jointly evaluated via a secure data connection and/or after mutual identification of the communication partners. By way of example, a status message can be sent cryptographically protected. Similarly, a control rule can preferably be sent cryptographically encrypted to a control

module via the communication network and only decrypted there. A cryptographically encrypted data transmission can in particular prevent tampering. For secure communication, the participating autonomous technical systems can in particular identify and, if necessary, authenticate each other.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, several autonomous technical systems can be designed as monitoring autonomous technical systems and each of these monitoring autonomous systems can transmit a status message to other autonomous technical systems and the status messages can be jointly evaluated.

In particular, monitoring and/or evaluation can only be carried out by some of the autonomous technical systems. The autonomous technical systems can in particular monitor and control each other. Some of the monitoring systems can also comprise a control module. Each of the monitoring autonomous technical systems can in particular generate its own status message and share this with the other autonomous technical systems via the communication network. In order to be able to derive a control rule for an abnormally behaving system, an evaluation of all of the status messages on its operating behavior shared among each other via the communication network can be jointly evaluated. There can, for example, be a majority decision on the status messages.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, the monitoring and/or the evaluation of a status message and/or the control according to a control rule of at least one autonomous technical system can be carried out continuously and/or at predetermined times.

It can be advantageous that, for example, the monitoring is carried out by at least one monitoring autonomous technical system continuously and/or at predetermined times. By way of

example, one of the autonomous technical systems can be monitored by means of several alternating other autonomous technical systems alternately observing its operating behavior. A check of an operating status and/or operating behavior of an autonomous technical system that is uninterrupted and/or required at predetermined times can thus be achieved, for example. As soon as abnormal operating behavior is detected, a status message regarding this can be generated and jointly evaluated. In particular, continuous monitoring by different autonomous technical systems can facilitate the evaluation of a status message if a large amount of data from sensors is available for the evaluation.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, a weighting can be assigned to each autonomous technical system that evaluates a status message and thus the joint evaluation of a status message can be determined from weighted evaluations.

A single weighting may in particular indicate a proportion of a majority decision on one or several status messages. By way of example, an autonomous technical system can have a predetermined weighting, e.g. a value numeral, which can be specified by an official body. A weighting can also be determined based on a number, quality and/or position of sensors of a monitoring autonomous technical system. By way of example, a status message regarding abnormal operating behavior of an autonomous technical system, which has a higher weighting owing to a plurality of sensors, can be checked.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, the weighting can be dynamically adjusted depending on a monitoring quality and/or on a rank of an autonomous technical system.

Autonomous technical systems may preferably be assigned a similar weighting, wherein, for example, following a change of status, such as due to movement, the weighting can be

dynamically adjusted for one of these systems. By way of example, a monitoring quality may depend on the positioning, viewpoint or field of view of the respective sensors, wherein the monitoring quality can change when the system moves. The weighting may depend on the rank, such as a status, class, function, hierarchical level or a predetermined significance of the technical system. A dynamic adjustment of the weighting may, for example, make an evaluation more reliable. The dynamic adjustment of the weighting can preferably be carried out by an autonomous technical system itself.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, a computer-aided simulation of the operating behavior of another autonomous technical system can be carried out by a monitoring autonomous technical system based on sensor data of the monitoring autonomous technical system and/or on sensor data of other monitoring autonomous technical systems and, based on the simulation, a prediction of future operating behavior can be derived and transmitted as a status message to at least some of the autonomous technical systems.

A prediction of the operating behavior of a monitored autonomous technical system can be generated based on the sensor data and by means of a computer-aided simulation. For this purpose, a simulation model of the environment of the monitoring autonomous technical system can be provided, for instance. An operating mode and/or situation can be simulated by means of current sensor data of the environment and a simulation model of the monitored autonomous system. This preferably facilitates monitoring of the operating behavior. By way of example, speed and acceleration data can be used to extrapolate a driving manner and direction of an autonomous technical system.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, future, abnormal operating behavior can be detected using the computer-

aided simulation and a specified second rule, a status message can be generated therefrom and this status message can be transmitted to at least some of the autonomous technical systems.

In particular, a prediction of operating behavior can be generated from a computer-aided simulation and a warning can be issued therefrom as a status message if abnormal future operating behavior is predicted. The abnormal operating behavior can be determined by means of a second rule, which in particular may be the same as the first rule. Following the joint evaluation of the status message, a control rule can be derived, which, for example, causes an early shut-down, in order to prevent an accident. For the simulation, a probability statement for a prediction can, for example, be generated and output. Furthermore, an alternative operating mode can be determined, for example, by means of a simulation and a status message generated depending thereon.

In a further advantageous embodiment of the method, in a non-autonomous technical system which is connected to the communication network,

- the operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system can be monitored by at least one monitoring autonomous technical system and, according to a specified third rule, abnormal operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system can be detected,

- a status message can be evaluated by at least some of the other autonomous technical systems and a control rule can be derived therefrom for the non-autonomous technical system,

and

- the operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system can be controlled by a control module, assigned to the non-autonomous technical system, by means of a control rule.

In particular, the communication network, via which the autonomous technical systems are interconnected, can be expanded by non-autonomous technical systems. A non-autonomous technical system may, for example, be equipped with a control module, which enables external control by means of a control rule evaluated by the plurality of autonomous technical systems. The plurality of monitoring autonomous technical systems can thus, for example, have external and jointly controlled access to a non-autonomous technical system if the latter is controlled abnormally. A specified third rule may in particular be similar to a specified first and/or specified second rule.

A further aspect of the invention relates to a device for mutual monitoring and control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network, which is configured in such a manner as to carry out the steps of a method according to the invention, comprising at least one monitoring module of an autonomous, technical system and at least one control module, which is assigned to another autonomous technical system.

It is an advantage of the invention that autonomous technical systems are interconnected in such a manner that they can monitor each other and put each other into a safe state when a rule is breached. In particular, the device according to the invention comprises at least one monitoring module, which is assigned to an autonomous technical system and is configured in such a manner as to monitor at least one other autonomous technical system, for example, by means of at least one sensor. A control module of an autonomous technical system can in particular be configured such that it receives a control rule and can control the operating behavior of the autonomous technical system according to the control rule.

In one advantageous embodiment of the device, at least some of the autonomous technical systems can be designed as monitoring autonomous technical systems, comprising respectively one monitoring module and at least one sensor, and at least some of the autonomous technical systems can respectively comprise a control module, wherein at least some of the monitoring modules and at least some of the control modules are interconnected via the communication network.

Autonomous technical systems can preferably be equipped with a monitoring module and a control module to enable, for example, mutual monitoring and control. In particular, infrastructure sensors, such as traffic lights or barriers, can be understood as purely monitoring autonomous systems. The monitoring modules and control modules can be connected to one another via a wireless or wired communication network for joint and mutual control. A status message can thus be jointly evaluated.

In one advantageous embodiment of the device, a control module can comprise a first communication interface to the communication network for receiving and decrypting encrypted data transfer.

In particular, a control module can be designed in such a way that an encrypted control rule can only be decrypted by the control module. This can, for example, prevent a manipulation of the control rule during sending.

In one advantageous embodiment of the invention, a monitoring module can comprise an evaluation unit for evaluating a status message generated and/or received by the evaluation unit.

An evaluation unit can in particular be configured such that it can receive and evaluate a status message sent by another autonomous technical system. By way of example, the evaluation unit can evaluate a status message based on predefined

evaluation criteria, such as quality of detection of an abnormal operating mode, and/or the specified first rule. The evaluation unit can in particular decide whether a control rule for controlling another autonomous system should be derived and sent to the latter. A weighting assigned to the monitoring autonomous technical system can preferably be stored and/or dynamically adjusted in the evaluation unit. The evaluation of an evaluation unit can be provided to the other autonomous technical systems via the communication network and a joint evaluation can be derived therefrom.

In one advantageous embodiment of the device, a monitoring module can comprise a second communication interface to the communication network for encrypted data transmission and decryption of encrypted data.

In particular, a monitoring module can cryptographically encrypt a status message and transmit it to other autonomous technical systems for evaluation.

In one advantageous embodiment of the device, a monitoring module can comprise a simulation unit for simulating operating behavior of another autonomous technical system, based on sensor data of the monitoring autonomous technical system and/or on sensor data of other monitoring autonomous technical systems.

The simulation unit can in particular comprise a simulation model of the environment of the monitoring autonomous technical system, which can be adjusted by means of current sensor data.

Furthermore, the invention comprises a computer program product, which can be directly loaded into a programmable computer, comprising program code parts, which are suitable for carrying out the steps of a method according to the invention.

Exemplary embodiments of the method and device according to the invention are illustrated by way of example in the drawings and explained in more detail based on the following description. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 shows a flow chart of a method according to the invention;

Fig. 2 shows a schematic illustration of a method according to the invention;

Fig. 3 shows a further schematic illustration of a method according to the invention;

Fig. 4 shows a further schematic illustration of a method according to the invention;

Fig. 5 shows a further schematic illustration of a method according to the invention; and

Fig. 6 shows a schematic illustration of a device according to the invention.

Objects corresponding to one another are given the same reference numbers in all figures.

Figure 1 shows a flow chart of a method according to the invention for mutual monitoring and/or control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network. At least one of the autonomous technical systems is designed as a monitoring autonomous technical system, i.e. it comprises at least one sensor and one monitoring module for monitoring at least one of the other autonomous technical systems. The monitored autonomous technical system is preferably equipped with a control module or a control module is assigned thereto. In

particular, mutual monitoring and/or control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems can be understood as monitoring and/or control of at least one of the systems, wherein at least another of the autonomous technical systems is controlled, but, for example, can also monitor other autonomous technical systems itself.

In step S1 of the method, the monitoring autonomous technical system monitors the operating behavior of another autonomous technical system. By way of example, the monitoring autonomous technical system comprises a camera as sensor and thus records a time profile of the operating behavior, such as a speed profile, of the other autonomous technical system.

Based on a specified first rule, the monitoring autonomous technical system can check in step S2 whether the other autonomous technical system exhibits abnormal behavior, e.g. exceeds a speed limit. When the monitoring autonomous technical system detects abnormal operating behavior of the other autonomous technical system, it can generate a status message about this abnormal operating behavior. The status message can in particular be generated by the monitoring module based on the detection of the abnormal operating behavior by the sensor. The sensor preferably transmits monitoring information to the monitoring module of the monitoring autonomous technical system. The status message may, for example, comprise identification information of the monitored autonomous technical system and details of the operating behavior.

In step S3, the status message can be transmitted by the monitoring autonomous technical system to at least some of the plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are interconnected via the communication network. In particular, only some of the autonomous technical systems can be selected as recipients of the status message. Each of the autonomous technical systems can preferably comprise a monitoring module,

wherein the monitoring module does not have to be actively switched on for monitoring, but rather can just receive status messages of other systems.

In step S4, some of the autonomous technical systems can receive and evaluate the status message. Evaluation is preferably carried out respectively in an evaluation unit of a monitoring module. In particular, a joint evaluation of the status message based on the individual evaluations is carried out. The evaluation may, for example, be a majority decision or a weighted evaluation. A weighting is respectively assigned to an autonomous technical system. Depending on the evaluation of the status message, a control rule is derived for the first autonomous technical system. For example, a status message regarding an autonomous technical system speeding can be checked or evaluated by some of the autonomous technical systems. Depending on the check or evaluation, a control rule, such as a speed limit, can be derived therefrom.

By way of example, the control rule can be created in a monitoring module. By way of example, the control rule can be derived depending on a government agency's or manufacturer's specifications or in accordance with safety regulations.

In step S5, the control rule is transmitted via the communication network to the abnormally behaving autonomous technical system. In particular, the control rule is transmitted to a control module, which is assigned to the abnormally behaving autonomous technical system. The control rule is preferably transmitted via the communication network of the autonomous technical systems and can, for example, be cryptographically encrypted and only decrypted in the control module. The control rule can be sent by any autonomous technical system involved in the evaluation. There is preferably a mutual identification and/or authentication of the two autonomous technical systems prior to transmission of the

control rule. The operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system can be monitored or controlled by the control module based on the control rule. The control rule can, for example, comprise a command for a braking operation, which should be carried out directly, i.e. a current control command for the autonomous technical system can, for example, be overwritten or modified by the control rule.

Figure 2 shows a schematic illustration of an exemplary embodiment of the method according to the invention and a device according to the invention. A communication network NW is shown, which can be designed to be wireless and/or wired. A plurality of autonomous technical systems, AS1 to AS9, is interconnected via the communication network NW, wherein at least one autonomous technical system ASobs1 is designed as a monitoring autonomous technical system. In particular, the monitoring autonomous technical system ASobs1 comprises at least one sensor, which actively monitors the operating behavior of at least one of the other autonomous technical systems, AS1 to AS9, and sends sensor data to a monitoring module.

The communication network NW is intended in particular to allow the autonomous and non-autonomous technical systems to communicate with one another, such as for sending status messages for joint evaluation. The monitoring of a technical system by a monitoring autonomous technical system ASobs1 is in particular independent of a direct connection via the communication network, i.e. another technical system can in particular be monitored even if there is no direct communication connection between the monitoring and the monitored autonomous technical system.

The monitoring autonomous technical system ASobs1 can, for example, monitor the operating behavior of a first autonomous technical system AS1 and detect abnormal operating behavior

based on a first rule. By way of example, a first rule comprises a speed limit, a lane limit or a limited operating radius. In particular, the first rule can be specified by an official body, such as an authority or a central control unit. The monitoring autonomous technical system ASobs1 issues a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system AS1 and sends the status message to at least some of the other autonomous technical systems AS2 to AS9. The status message can also be provided to all or some of the other autonomous technical systems AS2 to AS9 via the communication network NW, such as via a server.

The status message can, for example, comprise information about abnormal operating behavior, information on the position and, possibly, information about future operating behavior, which was determined by means of a computer-aided simulation.

The status message is jointly evaluated by the other autonomous technical systems. In particular, only some of the other technical systems, which have received the status message, can carry out an evaluation. According to the invention, a control rule is derived from the status message if, for example, the joint evaluation by at least some of the other autonomous technical systems shows that the status message is valid. Depending on the joint evaluation of the status message, a control rule is issued and sent to the first autonomous technical system AS1. The first autonomous technical system AS1 preferably comprises a control module, to which the control rule can be sent and which, depending on commands of the control rule, controls the first autonomous technical system AS1. The first autonomous technical system AS1 can thus be externally controlled by a control rule, which was approved by a plurality of autonomous technical systems.

The monitoring by the monitoring autonomous technical system ASobs1 can, for example, be carried out continuously or at

predetermined times. By way of example, the monitoring autonomous technical system can comprise at least one sensor, such as a camera, which continuously records the environment of the autonomous technical system. Furthermore, a status message can be evaluated by at least some of the other autonomous technical systems AS2 to AS9 continuously or at predetermined times. An abnormally behaving autonomous technical system can thus likewise be monitored or controlled continuously or at predetermined times. By way of example, a predetermined time may be the detection of abnormal operating behavior.

Figure 3 shows a communication network NW, via which several autonomous technical systems, AS1 to AS5, and several monitoring autonomous technical systems, ASobs1 to ASobs4, and a non-autonomous technical system NAS are interconnected. Each of the monitoring autonomous technical systems comprises at least one sensor and one monitoring module. Each of the autonomous technical systems can likewise comprise sensors and a monitoring module, wherein an autonomous technical system may be non-monitoring, i.e. the monitoring module and/or a sensor may be inactive. In particular, each of the autonomous technical systems can comprise a control module, such that external control in accordance with the invention is possible in the event of abnormal operating behavior.

Each of the monitoring autonomous technical systems ASobs1 to ASobs4 can, independent of the others, monitor each of the other autonomous technical systems ASobs1 to ASobs4, AS1 to AS5 and can check, based on a first specified rule, whether one of them exhibits abnormal behavior. Each of the monitoring autonomous technical systems can generate a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of another autonomous technical system and send it to the respective other autonomous technical systems for evaluation. In particular, the status messages can be jointly evaluated if these, for example, concern the same autonomous technical system. By way of

example, a weighting can be assigned to each of the monitoring autonomous technical systems, which weighting is, for example, dependent on the position of a monitoring sensor. One or several status messages can be jointly evaluated depending on the weighting. The weighting can in particular be predetermined, such as depending on a rank, e.g. road safety organization, or by an official body, or can be dynamically adjusted, if the monitoring quality changes owing to environmental conditions, for instance. A rank can, for example, describe a hierarchical level, such as a police car, a fire engine or ambulance, in the case of vehicles.

The non-autonomous technical system NAS can in particular comprise a control module according to the invention, or a control module can be assigned thereto, and thus be connected to the communication network NW. The monitoring autonomous technical systems can assume the monitoring and control of the non-autonomous technical system NAS, wherein only the control module of the non-autonomous technical system NAS has to be designed in such a manner that control rules can be externally sent and implemented.

Figure 4 shows one scenario of the method according to the invention by way of example. It shows a first autonomous technical system ASobs1 as a traffic regulation system, which comprises a first monitoring module OM1. By way of example, the first monitoring module OM1 is a camera or a speed sensor.

Autonomous vehicles AS1, ASobs2, ASobs3 and AS4 are also shown. The first autonomous vehicle AS1 only comprises a first control module CTLM1. The second autonomous vehicle ASobs2 is designed as a monitoring autonomous vehicle and comprises a second monitoring module CTLM2 and at least one sensor. The second autonomous vehicle ASobs2 also comprises a second control module CTLM2. The third autonomous vehicle ASobs3 is likewise designed as a monitoring autonomous vehicle and comprises a

third monitoring module OM3. The fourth autonomous vehicle AS4 comprises a fourth monitoring module OM4, which may, for example, be inactive, i.e. the fourth autonomous vehicle cannot actively monitor other autonomous technical systems, but can, for example, participate in an evaluation of a status message. The autonomous vehicles are connected to each other via a communication network NW. In particular, the monitoring modules OM1 to OM4 each comprise an evaluation unit for evaluating a status message shared via the communication network NW.

In the exemplary embodiment shown, the first autonomous vehicle AS1 can be monitored by at least one of the other autonomous vehicles and/or the traffic regulation system. By way of example, the traffic regulation system ASobs1 can check, based on a speed measurement and a first rule, whether the first autonomous vehicle AS4 exhibits compliant behavior. By way of example, the traffic regulation system ASobs1 can determine, based on a speed measurement for the first autonomous vehicle AS1, that the latter exceeds a speed limit.

In particular, the first monitoring module OM1 can comprise a simulation unit SIM and determine a prediction about the operating behavior of the first autonomous vehicle AS1 by means of a computer-aided simulation. The traffic regulation system ASobs1 can, for example, extrapolate whether the first autonomous vehicle AS1 can come to a stop at a predetermined time based on the simulation.

The traffic regulation system ASobs1 can generate a status message regarding the operating behavior of the first autonomous vehicle AS1 based on these monitoring results and send it to the other autonomous vehicles ASobs2, ASobs3, AS4 via the communication network.

The other autonomous vehicles ASobs2, ASobs3, AS4 can receive the status message and evaluate it in the respective evaluation

unit of the respective monitoring module OM2, OM3, OM4. By way of example, the second monitoring autonomous vehicle ASobs2 can check the status message of the traffic regulation system ASobs1 based on its own monitoring data and then evaluate it. An evaluation can also be made based on information from the status message itself, such as information on measurement uncertainties.

A control rule can be derived dependent on the joint evaluation by at least some of the other autonomous vehicles ASobs2, ASobs3, AS4. By way of example, the status message can be declared valid by means of a majority decision. A command to brake can, for example, be determined at a certain time based on the speed prediction by the simulation.

The derived control rule is sent to the control module CTLM1 of the first autonomous vehicle AS1. The first autonomous vehicle AS1 is monitored or controlled externally, depending on the control commands of the control rule. The first autonomous vehicle AS1 can, for example, be stopped, switched off or braked.

Figure 5 shows a further exemplary embodiment of a method according to the invention. It shows autonomous robots, such as mobile industrial robots as autonomous technical systems ASobs1 to ASobs4. The robots ASobs1 to ASobs4 are respectively designed as monitoring autonomous technical systems. They are interconnected via the communication network NW. By means of the monitoring modules OM1 to OM4, the monitoring autonomous technical systems ASobs1 to ASobs4 can monitor each other's respective operating behavior. By way of example, abnormal operating behavior of one of the autonomous technical systems ASobs1 to ASobs4 can be detected by at least one of the other autonomous technical systems. By way of example, a robot ASobs4 may perform an abnormal action, such as not observing a predefined operating radius during a human-robot interaction,

as a result of tampering or due to a malfunction. According to the invention, a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of the robot ASobs4 can be sent via the communication network NW to other interconnected robots ASobs1 to ASobs3 and jointly evaluated by them. Depending on the evaluation, a control rule can be sent to the control module CTLM4 and implemented there according to the invention. By way of example, the robot ASobs4 can be switched off or its operating radius limited. The method shown can in particular also be used for a human-robot interaction in order, for example, to reduce a danger posed to the human if one of the autonomous robots ASobs1 to ASobs4 malfunctions.

Figure 6 shows, by way of example, an embodiment of a device 100 according to the invention, comprising at least one monitoring module OM of an autonomous technical system and one control module CTLM of another autonomous technical system. The monitoring module OM and the control module CTLM are connected to one another via the communication network NW.

The control module and the monitoring module respectively comprise a first and second communication interface IF1 and IF2, which enables cryptographically encrypted data transmission. By way of example, the monitoring module OM can send an encrypted status message to other monitoring modules. In addition, a monitoring module OM can send an encrypted control rule to the control module CTLM, which can only be decrypted there.

The monitoring module OM is in particular coupled with at least one sensor S, e.g. permanently connected or interconnected via radio link. The sensor S can record sensor data and send it to the monitoring module OM. Based on the sensor data and a specified first rule, the monitoring module OM can determine whether, for example, another autonomous technical system exhibits abnormal operating behavior.

The monitoring module OM also comprises an evaluation unit AM, preferably a simulation unit SIM and a processor P for carrying out at least one of the steps of a method according to the invention. The evaluation unit AM is in particular assigned to the autonomous technical system and can, for example, comprise information on the weighting of an evaluation.

All features described and/or drawn can be advantageously combined with one another within the scope of the invention. The invention is not limited to the exemplary embodiments described.

Claims

1. A method for mutual monitoring and/or control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network (NW), wherein:

- at least one of the autonomous technical systems (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) is designed as a monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) and monitors the operating behavior of other autonomous technical systems (S1),
- abnormal operating behavior of a first autonomous technical system (AS1) is detected by the monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) based on a specified first rule and a status message regarding the abnormal operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system (AS1) is generated therefrom (S2),
- the status message is transmitted from the monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) to some of the other autonomous technical systems (S3),
- the status message is received by some of the other autonomous technical systems and jointly evaluated by them and, depending on the evaluation, a control rule is derived for the first autonomous technical system (AS1) (S4),

and

- the control rule is sent to a control module (CTLM), which is assigned to the first autonomous technical system (AS1), and the operating behavior of the first autonomous technical system (AS1) is controlled by the control module (CTLM) according to the control rule (S5),

wherein a weighting is assigned to each autonomous technical system that evaluates a status message and thus the joint evaluation of a status message is determined from weighted evaluations.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) comprises at least one sensor (S), the sensor (S) records sensor data, and abnormal

operating behavior of one of the other autonomous technical systems (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) is detected using the sensor data.

3. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the status message is transmitted and/or the status message is jointly evaluated and/or the control rule is sent by means of encrypted data transmission via the communication network (NW) and/or after mutual identification of the autonomous technical systems.

4. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein several autonomous technical systems are designed as monitoring autonomous technical systems (ASobs1, ASobs2, ASobs3, ...) and each of these monitoring autonomous systems transmits a status message to other autonomous technical systems (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) and the status messages are jointly evaluated.

5. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the monitoring and/or the evaluation of a status message and/or the control according to a control rule of at least one autonomous technical system are carried out continuously and/or at predetermined times.

6. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the weighting is dynamically adjusted depending on a monitoring quality and/or on a rank of an autonomous technical system.

7. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein a computer-aided simulation of the operating behavior of another autonomous technical system (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) is carried out by a monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) based on sensor data of the monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) and/or on sensor data of other monitoring autonomous technical systems (ASobs2, ASobs3,

ASobs4, ...) and, based on the simulation, a prediction of future operating behavior is derived and transmitted as a status message to at least some of the autonomous technical systems.

8. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein future, abnormal operating behavior is detected using the computer-aided simulation and a specified second rule, a status message is generated therefrom and this status message is transmitted to at least some of the autonomous technical systems.

9. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein, in a non-autonomous technical system (NAS) which is connected to the communication network,

- the operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system is monitored by at least one monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) and, according to a specified third rule, abnormal operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system (NAS) is detected,

- a status message is evaluated by at least some of the other autonomous technical systems and a control rule is derived therefrom for the non-autonomous technical system

and

- the operating behavior of the non-autonomous technical system is controlled by a control module, assigned to the non-autonomous technical system, by means of a control rule.

10. A device for mutual monitoring and control of a plurality of autonomous technical systems, which are at least partly interconnected via a communication network,

which is configured in such a manner as to carry out the steps of a method as claimed in one of claims 1 to 9, comprising at least one monitoring module (OM) of an autonomous, technical system and at least one control module (CTLM), which is assigned to another autonomous technical system.

11. The device as claimed in claim 10, wherein at least some of the autonomous technical systems (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) are designed as monitoring autonomous technical systems (ASobs1, ASobs2, ASobs3), comprising respectively one monitoring module (OM1, OM2, OM3, ...) and at least one sensor (S), and at least some of the autonomous technical systems (AS1, AS2, AS3, ...) respectively comprise a control module (CTLM1, CTLM2, CTLM3, ...), wherein at least some of the monitoring modules (OM1, OM2, OM3, ...) and at least some of the control modules (CTLM1, CTLM2, CTLM3, ...) are interconnected via the communication network.

12. The device (100) as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein a control module (CTLM) comprises a first communication interface (IF1) to the communication network (NW) for receiving and decrypting encrypted data transfer.

13. The device (100) as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein a monitoring module (OM) comprises an evaluation unit (AM) for evaluating a status message generated and/or received by the evaluation unit (AM).

14. The device (100) as claimed in claim 13, wherein a monitoring module comprises a second communication interface (IF2) to the communication network (NW) for encrypted data transmission and decryption of encrypted data.

15. The device (100) as claimed in claim 13 or 14, wherein a monitoring module (OM) comprises a simulation unit (SIM) for simulating operating behavior of another autonomous technical system, based on sensor data of the monitoring autonomous technical system (ASobs1) and/or on sensor data of other monitoring autonomous technical systems (ASobs2, ASobs3, ASobs4, ...).

16. A computer program product, which can be directly loaded into a programmable computer, comprising program code parts, which are suitable for carrying out the steps of the method as claimed in one of claims 1 to 9.