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**By George Giannopoulos**

**Director of HIT  
Chairman of ECTRI**

**The first three years!**

By the time this Newsletter reaches its recipients, ECTRI will be completing the first three years of its legal existence. Three years in which ECTRI worked consistently towards the creation of ERA (the European Research Area) and made its presence felt across the Transport research field in Europe and beyond. Three years of intense work by all its members that laid the basis for achieving ECTRI's Vision and objectives for the future of European Transport Research.

It is worth remembering at this point, the basic elements of ECTRI's Vision for the future as they are described in its Long – Term Strategy and Vision document (report ECTRI 2003-01, October 2003). These have been defined as to:

- Achieve **Integration of European Transport Research** primarily by effecting *common priorities* and programme of work, *mobility of researchers*, and working towards developing of *Joint European Infrastructures (JEl)* in some key areas of Transport research and / or research related activities.
- Provide an **independent – “intellectual” dimension of advice** towards the research funding bodies of the EU or member states.
- Create practical and usable **“links” between the**

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**results of applied research and their industrial transformation** into “products” or services.

- Work (together with other relevant European Organizations and bodies like for example FEHRL, FERSI, EARPA, and others) against European fragmentation of Transport research and provide a **uniform European representation** towards Transport research in the US, Japan, and Asia.

- Promote coordinated and high quality **European - wide training options** for Transport executives.

- Expand the European transport related experience and know-how to other countries and environments and vice versa.

I believe that it is this common Vision that is the single most binding force that made the most powerful and prestigious Transport Research Organisations in Europe to join forces and work together, under the aegis of one single Organisation, incorporating the strengths and potential of all members and utilizing their expertise and / or infrastructure in the different domains.

A few highlights of the work done so far are quite indicative of the progress made in this relatively short period of time:

- ECTRI has created and maintained 5 Working Groups and 3 Task Forces.
- A regular Young Researchers Seminar has been organised twice already with more than 50 Young Researchers attending the last one.
- ECTRI has mobilized its members around the various

calls of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme calls or the COST Transport Activities in a open way, with extremely successful results (participation in more than 19 Integrated Projects, 3 Networks of Excellence, 17 STREPs, 11 Coordination Actions, and 9 Specific Support Actions (SSA). One of these SSAs is executed directly by the ECTRI Secretariat with the aim to strengthening the integration into the Surface Transport European Research Area of new member states researchers.

- A most notable written contribution to the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Research and Development Programme preparation has been made by ECTRI and this was very positively received by the EU.

ECTRI's contacts and cooperation with the Commission services is strong at all levels and is continuously being strengthened further.

However, perhaps the most appropriate single event that epitomizes the progress made in these last three years is the signing on January 22, 2006 in Washington DC, of a Memorandum of Understanding between ECTRI and the US / TRB establishing the basis for future cooperation between the two Organisations. As it is recognized in the preamble of this MoU the objectives of both sides can be summarized as:

- Establishing an institutional arrangement with respect to coordinating exchanges on research and development projects,
- Facilitating regular contacts between European and American researchers in the field of Transport,

- Cooperation in the preparation of the next generation of transport researchers in the US and Europe,

Exchanging experiences concerning the management of transport research.

As the President of ECTRI since its creation, I feel the honour and the privilege to be first among equals in such a select group of Organisations, and the individuals representing them. I

also feel the need to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have brought ECTRI to such level of accomplishment in such a short period of time. First, our appreciation is due to the French Transport Research Institute, INRETS, for taking the initiative that eventually created the ECTRI Association. Secondly, recognition must be made of the fact that most of ECTRI's success is the result of the work and full time commitment

of the elected Secretary General and the Secretariat who have supported ECTRI in the best possible way so far. Last but not least full recognition must go to all our members, especially the founding ones, for taking up the challenge, and committing the necessary resources towards achieving the common Vision and goals of ECTRI all these years.

Happy birthday ECTRI and many many happy returns ...

## Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with the US TRB

The TRB Annual Meeting 2006 was organized from 22 to 26 January in Washington DC, USA.

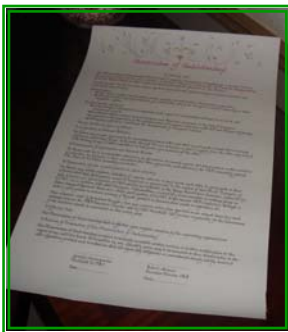
During this meeting was held the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between ECTRI and TRB. This signature took

place on Sunday 22 January, during the International Reception. The document was signed by ECTRI Chairman, Pr George Giannopoulos from HIT and Robert Skinner, Executive Director of US TRB, in presence of Pr Mike Meyer, Vice President of the Executive Committee of TRB and future President for 2006.

The Ceremony was organized by the TRB and was attended by about 350 people. An official ECTRI delegation of representatives as well as official

from the European Union travelled to Washington for this occasion.

Following this signature, an action plan for 2006-2007 was proposed and accepted during the International Activities Committee of the TRB. It will enter into force in the coming weeks.



The official MOU



A commemorative cake!



TRB, ECTRI and EC delegation



George Giannopoulos & Bob Skinner



Mike Meyer & Bob Skinner



## ECTRI booth on the TRB Exhibition

ECTRI was present at the TRB exhibition that was held in the Marriott Wardmann Hotel from 23 to 25 January. The main theme of this exhibition was on the launching of the 50th anniversary of the Eisenhower Act creating the National Highway Systems in the USA.

The ECTRI booth was well located on the row of many US DOT or USACE administrations dealing with research. The ECTRI booth had a lot of success during the three days and over 700 presentation leaflets of ECTRI were distributed, as well as individual presentations of the members.



George Giannopoulos & Jean-Pierre Médevielle



## Polytechnics of Turin—POLITO

The Regio Politecnico di Torino (Royal Turin Polytechnic) was founded in 1906.

Politecnico di Torino is one of the largest Italian educational and research facilities in technical and engineering fields. It hosts four schools of engineering and two schools of architecture. There are about 890 professors and researchers, 1000 research staff with temporary appointments, 800 technical and administrative staff and 25000 students, of which 610 are Ph.D. candidates.

Historical headquarters in the Valentino Castle on the river Po are still the main teaching campus for architecture schools. The corso Duca degli Abruzzi main campus, hosting three engineering schools and most of central services, was opened in November 1958. In the last ten years new teaching campuses have opened in some middle-sized towns near Turin. Ambitious expansion plans have not yet come to an end, since the main campus is to be dubbed in its extension, increasing it by an area of 170,000 square metres.

Concerning teaching activities, the educational offer encompasses 120 different courses, that are

taught in more than 170000 annual hours of lectures and practical activities.

Beyond European mobility programs such as Socrates, there are agreements with more than 40 foreign universities for double degrees achievements, encompassing most of European nations.

Research activities are carried out in 18 Departments and in several consortia. Transport research is mainly carried out by the Department of Hydraulics, Transports and Civil Infrastructures (DITIC) where there are 31 professors and researchers, 16 technicians and administrative members and 3 laboratories. The didactic activity consists of high-level education in hydraulics, transport and mechanical disciplines. A broad spectrum of subjects, research projects (both theoretical and experimental) are promoted by the DITIC and are organised into 5 main areas: hydraulics, hydraulic constructions and hydrology, Transport, Roads, economics and management. Teaching staff and researchers can rely on the services of four laboratories. The Department undertakes many collaborative projects, and coordinates and advises on many others, all of special interest. Other

national and international partnerships in research have not only led to useful results but also to many exchanges among institutions for teaching staff, researchers and post-graduate students. The main arguments of research concern the environmental impacts of transport, the sustainable mobility, the policies to manage the transport demand, the transport planning, the telematics for transport, the safety, the traffic management, the innovative systems for transport. In addition, strong collaboration with other departments are active.

At Politecnico, about 700 new research contracts are signed each year with a wide range of public institutions, local organisations and industries. Within the Fifth Framework Programme, the Politecnico di Torino had 84 different projects funded, with a success rate of 31%, whereas 30 other projects concerning international cooperation and training have been financed since 1998.

Total incomes in the 2003 forecast balance are 230 million Euros (it was 52 million in 1990). Total incomes from research projects, works and consultancies in the Transport sector are approximately 4 millions Euros.

## French national Institute for transport and safety research—INRETS



The French National Institute for Transport and Safety Research (INRETS) was created in 1985. It is a state-financed scientific and technological body (Établissement Public à caractère Scientifique et Technologique) under the administrative supervision both of the Ministry in charge of Research and the Ministry in charge of Transport. INRETS is mainly involved with surface transportation systems (freight and passengers) and at a lower degree with maritime and air transport. INRETS has 4 sites : Ile de France Region, Lyon-Bron, Lille-Villeneuve d'Ascq and Marseille-Salon de Provence.

INRETS missions include: to organize, execute and assess technological research and development in order to improve traffic, transport means and transport

systems from a technical, technological, economic and social viewpoint, to carry out evaluative and advisory studies within these domains, to promote the results of research thus achieved, to contribute to the dissemination of scientific knowledge and to participate to training in the research field both in France and abroad.

INRETS activities involve such diverse disciplines as economy, sociology, psychology, physiology, ergonomics, biomechanics, acoustics, medicine, mechanics, mathematics, physics, cybernetics, computer sciences, electronics, electro-technical issues... The multidisciplinary approaches used to carry out the various research programmes is one of INRETS main characteristic.

INRETS priorities follow 3 key issues: people safety, optimiza-

tion of transport networks: from mobility to land use planning, sustainability and reliability of transport systems, with special focus on energy waste.

INRETS has developed an important network of cooperation specifically in Europe and the OECD zone, through a high involvement on the European framework programmes and the COST actions. INRETS is also involved in many bilateral cooperation with countries such as Australia, Japan, India, China...

INRETS, through its subsidiary company ERT, coordinate the network of excellence HUMANIST since March 2004.

Total staff is about 500. INRETS also welcomes about 150 PhD students.

**European Conference of  
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## TRB Chairman's Luncheon

The TRB Chairman's Luncheon was held on Wednesday 25 January at the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

During this Luncheon, two tables were reserved to ECTRI and the EC delegation.

The 2005 Chairman of the TRB Executive Committee welcomed many people including the ECTRI delegation and nominatively, the ECTRI Chairman, Pr George Giannopoulos from HIT, ECTRI Vice President, Dr Josef Mikulik from CDV and ECTRI Secretary, Jean-Pierre Médevielle from INRETS.

The key-note speaker was Pr Ralph Cicerone President of the National Academy of Sciences and specialist of atmosphere chemistry and of the climate change. He pointed out the "transportation and climate change issues" in a very diplomatic way with a scientific background. He explained certainties and uncertainties, including on the rhythm of the climate change and insisted for transportation on the challenge of energy efficiency and alternative fuels from both the prosperity and sustainable win-win sides.



Two ECTRI and European Commission tables during the Chairman's Luncheon

## NET-TRACK News

A first workshop on Research Management will take place on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 in Budapest, Hungary.

The inventory of the relevant institutions in New Member States, Acceding

and Western Balkan Countries has been done during the three first months of the project. These institutions are about to be contacted. A survey will also be sent to them for exploring their needs.

For further information, a leaflet is available at the Secretariat.



## Working Group 4' Activities

The 6th meeting of the ECTRI Working Group on 'soft research infrastructures' took place at DLR's Offices in Berlin on 31st of January.

In the frame of its activity on 'soft infrastructures', ECTRI has developed a web-based database containing basic information about all ECTRI institutions, in particu-

lar their main research activity areas (including related policy advising) as well as available soft research infrastructures such as libraries or datasets. As integral part of each item some information about contact persons is also provided. At the moment the database is in a testing phase and not public. It is

only accessible by the WG in charge via the ECTRI Extranet. It should be soon opened to the whole ECTRI community research staff. A workshop will take place in May at ECTRI's offices in Lyon to present the database to the persons in charge of the content maintenance in each ECTRI members.



The WG4 team

## Next Events / News

- Next international events where ECTRI will be represented in the sessions and through a booth
  - > **Transport Research Arena**, Göteborg, Sweden, 12 to 16 June 2006
  - > **European Transport Conference 2006**, Strasbourg, 18 to 20 September 2006
  - > **ITS World Congress 2006**, London, 8 to 12 October 2006
- Next Assembly meetings
  - > Torino, Italy, 6 & 7 April 2006
  - > Helsinki, Finland, 20 & 21 November 2006
- Next Board meetings
  - > Lyon-Bron, France, 22 February 2006
  - > Torino, Italy, 6 & 7 April 2006