



The Young Researchers Seminar 2009 3-5 June – Torino, Italy



YRS09

The 5th Young Researchers Seminar (YRS) was a real success. After Copenhagen (Denmark) in 2001; Lyon (France) in 2003; The Hague (The Netherlands) in 2005 and Brno (Czech Republic) in 2007, the **YRS09**, jointly organised by the European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI), the Forum of European Highways Research Laboratories (FEHRL) and the Forum of European Road Safety Institutes (FERSI), was hosted by ECTRI member Politecnico di Torino (POLITO), in Turin, Italy. The Seminar was wonderfully located in the XVIII century "Valentino Castle" at the Po River, where the faculties of Architecture are.

Who participated and how?

YRS 2009 was meant for young researchers who work at organisations that belong to ECTRI, FEHRL and FERSI. They were preferably post doctorates (less than 5 years working experience) and their work field covered one of these research areas:

- Transport economics and transport behaviour
- Transport sustainability and environment
- Transport safety
- Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)
- Transport Road Engineering
- Rail
- Traffic

To participate to the Seminar, young researchers submitted an abstract in September 2008. In December, the Steering Committee composed of 2 members from the 3 organisations, selected 52 abstracts through set criteria.

In total, 48 young researchers from 19 countries and 24 institutes participated in the YRS09, mostly from EU countries and EFTA, but also from United States (2 participants from Texas University of Austin), from Russia (1) and Serbia (1).

This seminar also offered the opportunity to extend the network of the young transport researchers belonging to ECTRI, FEHRL and FERSI members through social activities. The Seminar was opened by a welcome cocktail near the Po River, and the official dinner took place in one of the oldest and best-known restaurants of Turin, the "*Ristorante del Cambio*".

Tutorship

Each young researcher was supervised by a tutor. 14 tutors (including one from the US) participated to YRS09. The role of the tutors is central before, and during the Seminar. Each tutor chaired a session composed of 2 to 4 young researchers. The young scientists prepared a paper that was read and revised by the tutors. The format of the 3 days seminar was content oriented through technical sessions with oral presentations of 20 minutes and 10 minutes Q&A. At the end of the session, the tutor had to organise a "cross cutting session" where he/she moderated a sort of lesson-learned debriefing. These debriefings are a way to identify, analyse, and capture experiences, what worked well and what needs improvement, so that the young researchers can learn from those experiences. The analysis of the presentations was done in order to make comments, not only on the scientific quality but also on the form of the presentation. The aim was to advise the young researchers on the way to

improve their written and oral presentations. For maximum impact, lesson learned debriefings were done immediately after the sessions, with results quickly shared among those who should benefit from the gained knowledge. The above approach has become a consolidated tradition in the life of ECTRI.

Keynote sessions

At the end of the first and the second Seminar day a keynote sessions took place, which aimed to give new horizons and useful advices to the young researchers. In the frame of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ECTRI and the US-Transportation Research Board (TRB), the first keynote session was given by Mr. Jorge Prozzi, Chairman of the TRB International Activities Committee. He presented TRB and indicated how young researchers could participate to US research groups. He encouraged them to come to the next TRB Annual meeting, which will take place in Washington D.C., next January 2010.

The second keynote session was given by Mr. Alan Stevens, from TRL, United Kingdom. As Editor in Chief of the Intelligent Transport Systems (IET) Journal, he presented his advices on how to prepare an article for a scientific publication and which methodology to use in order to succeed in being published in a scientific journal. As all the participants prepared a paper for the Seminar, he encouraged them to try to submit their paper to the newly created free-access online Journal: the European Transport Research Review (ETRR).

Best papers of YRS09

During the Seminar, the tutors and the members of the Steering Committee met to identify the 3 best papers of the Seminar. They remarked that the general level of the papers and presentations was very high and that the quality level was every time increasing from Seminar to Seminar. For this reason, the choice of the winners was hard to make. Finally Johan Olstam from VTI, Sweden, whose paper was entitled "*Combining Autonomous Vehicles And Controlled Events In Driving Simulator Experiments*" was nominated for the Best written paper and oral presentation of YRS09; Agathe Baker-Grøndahl from TØI, Norway "*Healthy Driving: A Study Of Drivers' Health Condition And Relative Crash Risk*" was first runner-up, and Aurélien Duret from INRETS, France "*Measurement Of Variability Involved In The Car-Following Rules*" was nominated second runner-up of YRS09. During the closing ceremony, ECTRI, FEHRL and FERSI were presented and the winners received their YRS09 diploma.

Prizes

A money prize was offered to the 3 winners of YRS09 and they were invited to participate to a special session about safe driving during the European Transport Conference, to be held in Leeuwenhorst, The Netherlands, in October 2009. They will also be automatic finalist of the YEAR2010 project, which will take place in June 2010 during TRA 2010 in Brussels. Finally, they were strongly encouraged to submit their paper to participate to the TRB Annual Meeting.



Johan Olstam, from VTI, Sweden, Best paper and oral presentation



Agathe Baker-Grøndahl from TØI, Norway, First Runner-up



Aurélien Duret, from INRETS, France, Second Runner-up



Agathe Baker- Grøndahl - Cristina Pronello, YRS09
Chairwoman - Johan Olstam - Aurélien Duret



The 3 YRS09 winners with the tutors



Opening Ceremony in the Valentino Castle