

France-UNECE ITS workshop

ITS for sustainable transport and the mitigation of climate change

Associated event to the 2015 ITS world congress in Bordeaux, France

7 October 2015, Palais des Congres, Bordeaux

Speaking points for the Executive Secretary for the Opening Session

- Salutations
- In the past decade, we have seen technologies developing by leaps and bounds. We have seen the introduction of connected devices, first computer networks and now smart phones keeping us connected.
- These inventions have impacted our lives and influenced our behaviour. We share our lives, our opinions and our thoughts with others in ways and at speeds that not so long ago were impossible. We are now more connected than ever before.
- And this development isn't showing signs of slowing down. On the contrary, each day more and more engineers are finding new applications and usage of technology, programmers and software developers are coming up with new applications, and together they are making ground-breaking innovations.
- Often, the technological development occurred at cost of the environment and we know that transport contributes to around 20% of the overall CO2 emissions.
- A major event of the year 2015 is the COP21, which is dedicated on a negotiation regarding CO2 and Green House Gas emissions. States will probably commit on CO2 emission reductions and maybe a binding agreement will be signed. But in addition, initiatives developed by local authorities, civil society, organisations and businesses will supplement the States' contribution.
- So this year, the Ministry of Ecology of France and UNECE join their forces to organize this workshop on the contribution of ITS to the mitigation of Climate Change.
- The connectivity changed several aspects of our lives. This year, let's explore how the connectivity and ICTs can contribute to make transport more efficient and therefore reducing their impact on the environment.
- ITS have huge potential to further reduction of GHG/CO2 emissions from road transport, providing a pathway to the reduction of congestion and improvement in the flow of traffic. ITS technologies can support the shift of transport to the least harmful modes in environmental terms.
- Projects such as multi-modal journey planners are developing state-of-the-art integrated international journey planning services that strive towards increasing the efficiency and decreasing the environmental impact of travel. They allow individual travellers and freight shipping enterprises to make better informed choices, enable better modal integration and promote more inclusive mobility. They enable flexibility in the event of congestion and resilience in the event of major transport disruptions, in turn cutting costs and enhancing transport sustainability.

- Rapid development is also taking place in the area of automated vehicles and connected vehicles. The connected cars will provide communications between vehicles themselves, between vehicles and infrastructure or eventually even between vehicles and vulnerable road users that can yield enormous safety benefits as well as environmental benefits. Connected vehicles can provide drivers with relevant information about other vehicles or about driving conditions that can help avoid accidents and thus reduce the number of injuries or fatalities, while also providing drivers with information that allows them to drive more economically, thus reducing fuel consumption and particle and CO2 emissions.
 - This week in Bordeaux we can see many success stories about ITS projects. These successes don't hide the fact that the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems still faces some relevant challenges. Let's take the example of automated and connected vehicles: they are very promising in terms of benefits for traffic management and optimization of infrastructure usage, but also in terms of safety and environmental benefits. These vehicles raise many questions in terms of safety, cyber security but also interoperability, which are related to the technical and regulatory harmonization.
 - Our role, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee role, as a regulator is to respond to these developments and ensure that the benefits of the new technology are spread and accrue to as many people as possible, while at the same time we contain or mitigate the risks involved.
 - The UNECE sustainable transport division provides a global forum for discussions and establishing international regulations in the field, in particular relevant to ITS applications under the auspices of the World Forum on Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) and the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1).
 - The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations have already responded to innovation development for five decades and are now addressing the latest technological advances in particular. Our regulations are often based on widely accepted standards and the consensus developed among experts worldwide.
 - We should avoid local, national or regional solutions, rather striving for harmonization of regulation on a worldwide/global basis, through existing UNECE infrastructure. The ITS community can benefit from the know-how, infrastructure and the UNECE historical track record in consensus building among policy makers in development of road safety and vehicle regulations.
 - The UN instruments set strong norms and requirements for safety and environmental protection. Existing regulations may be at odds with new developments and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and their application in transport systems and vehicles. In order to avoid potential nonconformity ITS technology with existing standards and regulations, the ITS community and UNECE need to work together in developing regulations.
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