



## **ECTRI POSITION ON THE HORIZON 2020 SPECIFIC PROGRAMME**

***Commission's proposal for the Specific Programme  
COM (2011) 811 Final***

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The European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI) is an international non-profit association that was officially founded in April 2003. It is the first attempt to unite the forces of the foremost multimodal transport research centres across Europe and to thereby promote the excellence of European transport research. Today, it includes 28 major transport research institutes or universities from 20 European countries. Together, they account for more than 4,000 European scientific and research staff in the field of transport. ECTRI as the leading European research association for sustainable and multimodal mobility is committed to provide the scientifically based competence, knowledge and advice to move towards a green, safe, efficient, and inclusive transport for people and goods.

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The Commission's activities to propose for decision, by the relevant EU bodies in the immediate future, of the new Strategic Common Framework for Research and Innovation – the CSFRI – are in full development now. ECTRI has contributed to the relevant Consultations in the past<sup>1</sup> and participated in the meetings of the stakeholders. This present note intends to present some additional considerations that can be useful in the ongoing discussions and at the same time summarize and consolidate its position vis-à-vis the "Transport" societal challenge.

The proposed formulation of the "*Smart, Green, and Integrated Transport*" societal challenge within the Horizon 2020 document is a well balanced and comprehensive text that covers in a satisfactory way the current priorities and concerns of ECTRI. It is also coherent with the expressed EU Transport Policy in the 2011 White Paper. This view is expressed on account of the intended activities to meet this "Transport" challenge (as expressed by the headings of: Resource efficient transport that respects the environment / better mobility, less congestion, more safety and security / Global leadership for the European transport industry / Socio-economic research and forward looking activities for policy making), as well as on account of the specific mention made (and the commitment) for more international co-operation and cross-cutting actions.

As the ideas on the content of the transport challenge unfold, there seems to be quite evident that transport RDI serves 3 major challenges: the environmental challenge (the transport sector being a major generator of GHG and a major consumer of non-renewable energy), the economic recovery challenge (transport industry is a main engine of the European economy) and the challenge of a efficient and performing transport system itself, as it has to accommodate an ever growing and diversified mobility demand of people and enterprises. It seems therefore natural that these major challenges would form the main structuring criteria of the transport programme. However, ECTRI would like to stress the importance of an overarching theme stressing a system approach to transport, where issues as foresights, understanding user needs, policy analysis, systemic approach between infrastructure and vehicles, non-technological innovation, user acceptance of new technologies and multimodality are incorporated. This would clearly have an added value for the other pillars as well as it would support the implementation and market uptake of new technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> See ECTRI's following position papers:

- ECTRI Position on the EC Transport White Paper 2011 "*Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system*" – July 2011
- ECTRI Answer to the EC Green Paper Consultation: "*From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework*" – May 2011
- ECTRI Contribution to the "*Strategic Transport Technology Plan*" – March 2011
- ECTRI Position on FP8 – February 2011
- ECTRI Position on the EC Communication on "*The Future of Transport*" – September 2009

ECTRI has expressed in February 2011 (in its “position paper on FP8”), the **following five priorities for transport research** in this decade:

1. system operation,
2. vehicles and energy sources,
3. Transport networks – maintenance and resilience,
4. Demand management and traveler information,
5. Environmental and societal impacts and challenges of the Transport system.

All these priorities seem to form a logical part of the transport programme as outlined above, but there are a number of points and issues we would like to draw the attention to, and these are presented in the following:

- There is need for a more pronounced “systemic approach” in dealing with all the activities. The ultimate goal of the Transport Policy White Paper (or of any transport policy for that matter) is to achieve an integrated mobility system for people and enterprises utilizing the best out of all modes (“co-modal”) and providing timely services and information to all users. This cross-modal and systemic approach must be pronounced and evident to the maximum possible degree.
- Reliability and resilience of the transport networks is another area that needs to be more evident. As transport infrastructures approach the end of their lifecycle, and as climate change, extreme weather and other disruptions are likely to be more frequent and impacting, the question of “maintenance” and “resilience” of our transport networks should be more pronounced and evident in transport research in the future. The aspects of maintenance and resilience should also be integrated in the cross-cutting part, since they have quite important implications with other challenges such as climate change and the environment.
- As stated above, ECTRI would welcome a dedicated overarching multimodal pillar in the Transport programme. Alongside the generic aspects of that pillar a key issue would be to better understand the inter-relationships between land-use and transport, since this is fundamental in shaping our urban areas and their livability.

For the whole of the new programme and its various challenges and priorities, ECTRI states its willingness to cooperate and support, through its members, all the relevant (to its scope and vision) scientific and research requirements of the new programme. In particular it offers its specialized members’ expertise on “key” activities across the programme, such as the “foresight and prospective studies” needed for the evidence-based transport policy, the “environmental impact” assessment, and the “socio-economic” research<sup>2</sup>, as well as the “user and behavioral aspects” which correctly are given prominence in the proposed Communication.

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<sup>2</sup> Which is correctly considered by the Commission as an “integral part of the activities under all the specific objectives in the (“Transport”) challenge”.

On the **processes part of Horizon 2020**, in the context of the ERA completion, the EC objectives remain to coordinate national and European R&D&I policy and to outsource programme management.

Whereas ECTRI understands the need for a better coordination of R&D programmes in Europe (at national, regional and European levels) Horizon 2020 should also continue to support directly research teams via its usual call for proposal. This way of funding (EC grants to beneficiary) should still represent 2/3 of its budget and the outsourcing should not exceed the current 1/3 for the following reasons:

- Experience of executive agencies, Joint technology Initiatives and Knowledge Innovation communities shows that outsourcing the majority of the programme to external funding bodies would lead to a European research landscape very complex by multiplying funding desks and thus related rules for procedure, in terms of evaluation, funding rules, administrative, IP etc.
- The creation of funding body under European or national law is really heavy and the transaction costs are too important for the majority of the research stakeholders in Europe
- The question of interest conflicts would be more and more important as stakeholders involved in programming would also be beneficiaries.

ECTRI is also in favor of Public-Private Partnership like the Green Car initiatives as it allows industry to be involved in the drafting of SRA by guarantying the corresponding co-funding through usual direct EC call for proposals without creating external funding bodies and multiplying rules for participation and dissemination.

To complete this disposal, the application of new instruments such as the Joint Focused Research Initiatives (JRIs) is considered as a good example of a research Public Public Partnership, and it is estimated that the research community will participate and support such processes not only in the “Transport” challenge but in other relevant ones such as for example the “Inclusive, innovative and secure societies” challenge. Therefore ECTRI believes that there is a need to financially support at EU level the creation of JRIs which will:

- enhance the excellence, the relevance and the governance of the European Research Area by reinforcing the supply side of research organisations by internal interactions and external stakeholders interactions;
- attract and keeps the world class industry research centers, or to support the whole innovation cycle by adequate research capabilities and competencies;
- look forward scientific activities as well education and training activities for professionalization of scientists;

- and tackle with independent scientific evidence for rule making, policy making and/or societal dimension at individual and collective level as well harmonization of scientific evidence for standardization.

The JRI idea is very relevant for transport related research and ICT and/or energy for transport related research when more and more nonlinear combinatorial schemes of innovation are happening. This instrument, which was cited in the ERAC opinion on ERA related-instrument as filling in the gap for durable institutional cooperation between research organizations, is supported by ECTRI and other key research stakeholders, which are currently further defining its concept (and notably the articulation between the JRI joint programmes activities, the governance of this instrument, and its daily management).

Finally, ECTRI stresses the importance of a cost model that is enough attractive for the academic research community. The cost model that is under discussion namely 100% for direct costs and a flat rate of 20% for overheads would be attractive if: (i) average personal costs or real personal costs (permanent and no permanent staff depending also on the accounting system of the participant) are eligible direct costs and (ii) no further control will be implemented on the real overheads.

ECTRI considers the implementation of the above points essential in order to maintain the attractiveness and efficiency of the future EU research and innovation programmes to the transport research Community.