



INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM
2012 ANNUAL SUMMIT
“Seamless transport: making connections”

ECTRI INPUT

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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 26 major transport research institutes or universities from 19 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.

European Conference of Transport Research Institutes | ECTRI aisbl

Rue du Trône 98 | 1050 BRUSSELS | Belgium

Tel: + 32 (0)2 500 56 87/88 | Fax: + 32 (0)2 500 56 89

Number: 831 370 370

Website: www.ectri.org

Seamless Transport (ST) is not a scientifically defined concept and therefore open to interpretation. According to ECTRI, the *European Conference of Transport Research Institutes*, it entails the purpose of an uninterrupted, undisturbed journey or in fact the undisturbed access to an activity. In this respect we distinguish three dimensions:

- temporal: no waiting time
- spatial: no change/stop over
- functional: no limitation to deploy other activities

The ST-approach is also applicable to freight transport. There it leads to an undisturbed flow of materials and products according to the *just-in-time* principle.

Real time travel/transport information systems are essential to achieve ST. The present technologies are able to capture and distribute enough information to serve the needs of the users. However, generally they fail to provide adequate information in cases of major disruptions to the transport system. Therefore there is no quest for more information needed, but for reliability and punctuality of the transport services. In fact, a transparent and reliable transport system can lead to a major reduction of information needed.

The ST-concept should clearly include the planning of the journey. There, attention should not only go to the pre-journey phase, but information should enable the user to adapt the parameters of their journey during the trip. This aspect is especially relevant for long-distance trips; for routine short distance trips, other parameters such as punctuality are more important.

Major improvements have been achieved, but there are developments that will continue challenging the achievement of seamlessness in transport such as:

- Growth and diversification of demand: in a globalized world with rising welfare there will be, in the foreseeable future, a growth of the number of trips, and a diversification in destinations, motives, multi-purpose journeys etc.
- On the other hand the growth in the provision of infrastructure is limited by spatial and environmental considerations
- An increasingly complex transport system is susceptible to exogenous (climate change, terrorism) and endogenous (congestion, accidents) disturbances. Ensuring seamlessness in the long term by enhancing reliability, efficiency and security can be in conflict with efficiency and seamlessness in the short term (security checks, maintenance, limited cooperation in competitive markets)

These challenges call for a continuous effort in understanding new developments and needs and adapting transport services to match them. ECTRI is committed to these efforts by promoting integrated multimodal research in Europe through the cooperation of its 27 leading European Institutes and Universities. And to tackle seamlessness in transport and achieve a more efficient and sustainable transport system for people and goods, ECTRI believes it to be important that the following issues in particular are addressed: understanding the diversified needs of an increasingly affluent and ageing society; determining the relation between freight transport and the underlying production of goods of a globalized economy; and analyzing economic, environmental, and land-use aspects of transport.