

"The story of ECTRI: a researcher perspective"

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Dear Guests and dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for inviting me to illustrate what ECTRI – the European Conference of Transport Research Institutes – may represent for a researcher and what is the added value for a researcher to be part of this European Community of Transport Experts and Institutes. I take the opportunity of this celebration to thank you all for having welcomed me in 2006, thus helping me find my way into the Transport Community and enjoy the pleasure to practice Transport Economics and Policies.

3 dimensions

1/ The International Dimension of the Research Work = EUROPE

2/ Added Value of Networking = Scientific exchanges / exchanges of national experiences and Large Network for setting up consortium to answer National and European Calls and

3/ Learning Scientific Management

Indeed when I decided to switch from the History of Econometrics to an applied scientific field i.e. the Transportation. Why Transportation? For the complexity of the concept of transport demand and of the equilibrium between supply and demand, complexity of understanding mobility patterns, complexity that drives to an interdisciplinary approach. After this move, it appeared to me quickly and more clearly than in any other scientific fields that the International dimension of our research was very important: the dimension in terms of research issues (comparisons highlight the national patterns and help to get perspective) but also the dimension of our working team on a daily basis.

This International dimension was striking at Inrets and it has been fully revealed when Inrets (now Ifsttar) sent me for my first trip to the Annual Meeting of the TRB in DC in January 2007. I was impressed by such a huge conference gathering (more than 10 000 researchers), transport experts, local transport authorities, private stakeholders (up to this date the largest conference I had attended in Econometrics gathered 150 people !!!) and I then experienced the need for overseas collaboration. But above all I discovered, there in DC, that the core of our international cooperation was in Europe. The second evening, at the table where Jean-Pierre Médevielle had seated me for dinner, I learned all about ECTRI and the European Research Arena. As usual, happiness is at our door and not so far. Indeed all Europe was here in DC and we spent a lot of time in networking, mainly with our European colleagues. Of course overseas cooperation matters and Jean-Pierre, Bob Skinner and Martine Micozzi are working hard on this friendship. But as US are our friend, Europe is brotherhood and sisterhood. But what brings ECTRI to us when we know that so many of us (I mean our

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respective Institutes) are already involved in various networks? Two things 1/ the opening of the doors of our (so often) closed and tiny network by bridging North and South, bridging West and East and 2/ coherences with boundaries, not national ones but scientific ones with a focus on the social sciences and a matrix in terms of both topics and the intermodal approach.

2/ The European Dimension of my research agenda became more concrete when Guy Bourgeois decided to send me along with other colleagues to Oslo in September 2007. I didn't see the trap but I was attracted by Norway and the discovery of TOI managed by Lasse (I am great admirer of his econometric on road safety). Guy Bourgeois, my director at that time and very involved in ECTRI development, explained that we have to develop Networking from a bottom up approach?! Indeed what did he mean? The Board had the idea to set up thematic working groups in order to root the network at the bottom. These thematic working groups were defined as QUOTE incubators of new ideas and FP7 projects UNQUOTE. It was explained that to moderate such a group needed only QUOTE one week of work UNQUOTE per year (Thank you Guy but it was a little bit more than that !). I naturally joined the Economics and Transport Policies with Francis Cheung, Harald Minken, and José Manuel Vassalo. The guys had the idea that they should designate a woman as a moderator not because we work more (in terms of quantity and quality) but because it was obvious (I hope that it became an evidence...thus at ECTRI we are far ahead of the European concern on GENDER!).

Our first action was to define a research agenda in order to find a common ground and the Agenda is still a corner stone for the ECOPOL group (1/ Economic Evaluation; 2/ Regulation and financing and 3/Transport Policies). We all see the opportunities we can enjoy by sharing our on-going work: not like at a conference when you present the results of your research in order to see if you can publish it, but as a platform for scientific exchanges, and get advices and perspectives on the development of our research agenda. It was very important also to share experience and to see how each country defines a concept and its priorities (investment in a coherent road network before reducing GHG emissions). This is why we set up a matrix of competences and decided to meet once or twice per year. We had the opportunity to merge in November 2008 with the Community of Practice on Economic Evaluation: we reached an optimal size for being an incubator and we got the idea that we need 2 rapporteurs and a triumvira (not a troika, do not worry !!!). We then started to meet once or twice a year from Madrid to Vilnius via Stockholm, Vilnius, Lisboa.

On this basis of scientific exchanges it appears that we need a strategy in order to get funding and be able to size any opportunities of funding at the European and National levels. Thus each meeting was articulated both on the scientific and the strategic agendas. ECTRI has opened our consortium, especially to Eastern Europe. Eventually the group was part of various consortiums for FP7, answered to EIB request and participate to the ERTRAC paper, we initiated the COST TEA (Transport Equity and Accessibility) on Equity and has applied to

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COST for a proposal named CIRILI on DELTA area. What was very very fruitful was the promotion of PhD students' mobility in the Young Researcher Seminar but also within ECOPOL. Sharing the supervision is a concrete share of experience and of ideas. It also help to settle the European Research Arena.

Last but not least the Secretariat with Caroline Almeras and Willy Diddens taught me how to manage a group (agenda and visibility, balance between directive management and let the Athanor boil, the moderate use of emails and the need of personal connections... a phone call is always better than a email for strategic talk, how to react and how to manage researchers...) and management skills are what any researcher needs now. This is very useful especially for the conference WIIIT Women's issues in Transportation (a project that TRB (the Committee ABE 70) has us asked to organise the 5th International conference on Women's Issues in Transportation and the Planning Committee is gathering members of ECTRI +TRB+TRA+ITF+Vinnova and others) and I've got 2 mentors Jean-Pierre and Neil Paulley from ECTRI and two from TRB as to say Sandi Rosenbloom and Marsha Anderson.

I've got very good and friendly colleagues who make research and working a pleasure.
