



REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF ETRA IN THE FOUR YEAR PERIOD 2013 - 2016

The *European Transport Research Alliance (ETRA)* was created in Brussels, in September 2012, as a non-legal entity in the form of a partnership between the following five European Transport research Associations: ECTRI, EURNEX, FEHRL, FERSI, and HUMANIST¹.

During the inauguration ceremony, the chairs of the five constituting partners signed the *ETRA Terms of Reference* document in the presence of the Commission (the Director of Transport Research of DG RTD&I and functionaries of DG RTD&I and MOVE) as well as many other representatives of the Transport Research community.

The activities of the Alliance started in 2013 after its first Assembly - on December 2012 - during which, the partners elected the chair and the secretary of the Alliance.

¹ List in alphabetic order.

1st year activities

During the first year of the Alliance, two major documents were elaborated and approved:

1. The ***ETRA Statement on purpose and Vision***. This document further elaborated the ToRs of the Alliance and set out its detailed objectives, its vision, and the main priorities. The strategic objective of the Alliance is stated as, to: *“work towards promoting further cooperation, coordination of activities, and common focus in European transport research provision, as part of the process and in full alignment with the objectives of creating the European Research Area in the field of Transport”*. Furthermore, the document states that the ETRA will *“... provide value added that can only be achieved through joint and coordinated actions involving all or most of the partners”*.
2. The ***“4-year activity plan 2013-2016”***. This was a detailed account of the planned activities for the Alliance in the 4-year period 2013-2016. This document was updated in each consequent Plenary meeting of ETRA in order to adapt to the changing circumstances. All ETRA activities are on a voluntary basis and are made possible through the “in-kind” contributions of its partners.

Furthermore, an ETRA web site was set up, on January 2013, in the address www.etralliance.eu, c/o the chair and his organisation, the Hellenic Institute of Transport.

In addition, an information pamphlet called ***“ETRA: The European Transport Research Alliance”*** was published with the care of the chair and his organisation and it was used in order to make the Alliance known on various occasions (Conferences, relevant meetings, the TRB annual meeting, etc). In addition, the ETRA profile was published in some European and international publications most notably the *TR News magazine* (volume no.283, November – December 2012), the WCTRS, etc.

A major activity during the first year of ETRA was to develop the ETRA position paper entitled: ***“ETRA inputs for the 1st plurennial work Programme of the transport challenge of the societal challenges research in the h2020 Programme”***. This paper was prepared during the first half of the year and submitted to the Commission services by June 2013.

On July 4, 2013, ETRA arranged a meeting between its partners and the Commission representatives of DG RTD&I and MOVE. During this meeting, several items of common interest were discussed including the above ETRA position paper.

A second major activity during this first year was the organisation of the one-day Conference, on October 10, 2013, entitled: ***Towards a more efficient use of transport***

research infrastructures. This event was co-organized with ECTRI, FEHRL, ERTICO within the frame of EU funded FP7 project EUTRAIN. The event drew some 150 participants, had a Programme of 20 speakers including a round Table discussion at the end, and was attended by several Commission officers as well as high ranking representatives of other Organisations including the US/TRB (by its Executive Director Mr. Bob Skinner). Overall, the event was a great success.

The first year ended with the second ETRA Plenary meeting (on December 2013) which – among other decisions - adopted the following two *rules and guidelines for key ETRA internal operation* activities:

1. Procedures for developing Position Papers:

ETRA will develop position papers on horizontal issues as spelt out in the Terms of Reference of ETRA that were signed on September 20th 2012. Position papers on content issues remain the prime domain of the partner Organisations to issue.

In cases where ETRA is asked to develop, support or comment on a position paper that is traditionally in the domain of one or more of its partners, a unanimous agreement will be needed from all partners on the relevant text (which will be put forward by the chair of secretary).

In all other cases i.e. horizontal issues a two-thirds majority will be required.

Where comments or feedbacks from partner Organisations are required, partners will have 14 days to provide the relevant inputs. No response within 14 days will constitute implicit acceptance, by the corresponding partner, of the proposed text. In case of delays due to the need to consult their associations, the partners may propose (within the 14 days) a new deadline for providing input.

2. Procedures for representing ETRA and its partners towards the outside world:

The ETRA Chair or any other person (from the partners associations) authorized by the Chair, represents the alliance towards the outside world and can act on the basis of the approved ETRA documents (e.g. ETRA Statement of Purpose and Vision, ETRA 4-year Activity Plan 2013-2016, ETRA Terms of Reference, etc).

The ETRA Chair or Secretary informs the partner organizations about the representation arrangements and planned attendance to external activities before such events or, in extreme cases, immediately after.

Where comments or feedbacks from partner Organisations are required, partners will have 14 days to provide input. No response within 14 days will constitute concurrence by the partners to the initial texts provided. In case of delays due to the need to consult their associations, the partners may propose (within the 14 days) a new deadline for providing input.

2nd year activities

In the second year (2014), the main activity was the organisation of ETRA's participation and contribution to the TRA2014 Conference. ETRA organized, on Thursday 17 April 2014, a TRA2014 "invited Session" titled: "***Education and training issues for the transport researchers of the future ERA***". This Session included a number of interesting papers as well as discussion among the participants. The ETRA chair and secretariat compiled all this material in a special ETRA report entitled: ***Education and training issues for the transport researchers of the future European research area (ERA/T)***.

This ETRA report was disseminated to a large number of recipients and has created considerable interest in the transport education community.

At the same TRA2014 Conference, the chair of the Alliance was the general rapporteur of the Conference.

In the summer of 2014, the Alliance joined the *Yearbook of International Organizations* (www.uia.org).

3rd year activities

The year 2015 was a year full of successful activities and of several preparatory actions for better internal organisation.

At the beginning of the year, a report on the ETRA activities and progress was given in the 2015 Annual Meeting of the US/TRB that took place in January 11 2015.

Later on during that year four main activities took place:

1. The co-organisation of a very successful workshop on Climate Change issues.
2. The application – representation of ETRA to the Management Committee of the TRA2016 Conference.
3. The meeting of ETRA with Commission officials on July 9th, and
4. An extra plenary meeting of ETRA in Brussels.

The workshop on Climate Change, which had the title: "***Transport & Climate Change: European researchers act***", was co-organized with IFSTTAR in conjunction to the CFCC-2015 Conference ("*Our common future under climate change*") and was officially accepted as a "side event" and as a preparatory meeting to the COP21 meeting in Paris (December 2015). It appeared in all publicity of the CFCC-2015 Conference.

The aims of the workshop were to:

1. Highlight some key results of current transport research, related to climate change.
2. Advise on the practical steps towards adaptation and mitigation actions in the short to medium term in the field of Transport.
3. Recommend the necessary policy actions at European level.
4. Provide a concise overview of the research that is performed throughout Europe in the field of transport with respect to climate change issues.
5. Identify needs for future research on transport and climate change adaptation or mitigation issues.

After this event, ETRA prepared a follow-up report with the discussions and recommendations of the workshop. The title of the report was “***Concise summary of presentations, interventions and discussions of the Workshop: TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE CHANGE: European Researchers Act***”. This report was circulated – in pdf form – to all participants to the workshop and many other stakeholders.

During this year, the ETRA chair presented to the Management Committee of the TRA2016 Conference the application of the Alliance to join the TRA Management Committee. The decision of the Committee was to accept ETRA as an observer and to reconsider this status for the 2018 Conference in Austria. The application of ETRA was supported by several members of the TRA Management Committee most notably so by the representatives of the European Commission.

On July 9th, the ETRA management and all the partners had a second working meeting with Commission officials. This was a joint meeting with officials from both DG RTD&I (Mrs. M. Soares and her colleagues) and DG Transport (Mrs. M. Kopczynska and her colleagues). In this meeting, many issues of common interest were discussed and common tasks set. The Commission officials stated their support for ETRA and expressed their interest in receiving a position paper by ETRA on future Strategic Transport research issues and challenges. This position paper is currently under preparation.

In the same year, the ETRA partners held an extra mid-year plenary meeting to discuss various internal organizational issues. As a result, a number of actions were decided and an action list prepared.

In September, the first ***ETRA Task Force on Knowledge Sharing and Information exchange*** met for the first time in Brussels in the presence of the chair of the Alliance and the general secretaries’ of ECTRI and FEHRL. The meeting discussed the Terms of Reference of the TF and defined the methodologies to be followed. **The final report of this Task Force was submitted in February 2016.**

Finally, a number of other activities took place in 2015, namely:

- ✓ Registration of ETRA in the Joint Transparency Register (ETRA ID number in the register: 721129719214-13 - Log in user code: Europ0514453981).
- ✓ Two formal letters sent requesting a meeting with the two Transport related Commissioners, for RTD&I and Transport.
- ✓ A limited upgrading of the ETRA site took place, but it is evident that a novel design upgrading the total versatility and user friendliness of the site is needed.

4th year activities

The fourth year is the current year 2016. During this year the following list of activities is gradually being executed:

A. During the first semester:

1. Completion of the ETRA position paper on Strategic Transport Research Needs.
2. Further dissemination of the report on Transport and Climate change that resulted from the workshop in Paris (July 2015).
3. Fixing dates for the meeting with the Commissioners for RTD and Transport.
4. Holding a mid-year plenary meeting of the ETRA partners – if possible in connection with the meeting with the Commissioners.
5. Internal discussion of the report of the ETRA Task Force on Knowledge sharing and info dissemination.
6. Organisation and execution of a special double Session in TRA2016, in Warsaw, which ETRA and the EU Commission are co-organising on Education and Training issues in the field of Transport (see ANNEX for more details).
7. Participation (and chairing by the ETRA chair) to a special Session in TRA2016, organized by the Commission services (DG RTD) on International Cooperation.

B. During the second semester:

8. Continuation of the work on education and training issues after the TRA2016 Session to produce an ETRA report and promote follow up actions.
9. Implementation and follow-up actions of the report of the ETRA Task Force on Knowledge sharing and info dissemination mainly towards internal ETRA info communication enhancement.
10. Execution of the ETRA evaluation survey among members of the ETRA partners.
11. Preparation of a “self-assessment” report based on the first 4-year experience of ETRA.
12. Preparation of the ETRA Plenary in December 2016.

ANNEX

FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TRA2016 EVENT, CO-ORGANISED BY THE ETRA AND THE EU COMMISSION

This was a special double Session – workshop entitled: ***Academia and Job Market: How to Match? Building European transport academic excellence: which offer to students? Which contribution to innovation?***

It took place between 3.45 – 6.15 pm on Wednesday, April 20th, 2016.

Aims and objectives:

This workshop focused on issues and actions for better educational and research opportunities in the transport field in Europe in order to match the future professional needs in the job market. It aimed to highlight the opportunities offered by higher-level studies in transport disciplines and to stimulate an in-depth analysis of the need for new academic curricula to respond to the emerging sectoral needs. It focused on the experiences of young as well as more experienced academics and professionals and on exposing the current gaps and difficulties and make suggestions for the way ahead. With its “participatory” structure the workshop provided an arena in which all the participants, especially the students and young professionals in the transport field, were able to express their concerns, experiences, and proposals.

The workshop further addressed Europe’s need to create strong networks of academic excellence centers in the field of transport by building on the head start of existing such networks. In doing so, the workshop addressed the creation of scientific connections between Universities and Research Centres at European scale in order to cover an important gap in the landscape of transport education and science in Europe.

The overall aim was to address future needs and current weaknesses in offering the necessary skills to embrace a career in the transport field and to provide state-of-art advice to young professionals and students by blending the views of the academic education providers with the needs and requirements of the “users” of academic excellence.

Structure and basic contents

The structure of the workshop was a rather innovatory one including:

1. Two keynote speeches at the beginning (one from an academician and one from an industrialist). These, presented the 'hot issues' from the point of the background of the two speakers and stimulated the conversations that followed.
2. Three “conversation circles” between the participants. These conversations were organized to follow the so-called “*walking galleries*” type (i.e. changing the participating persons every 20 minutes or so) and consisted of three groups or “Circles” as follows:
 - (a) *Transport education circle*
This hosted conversation on curricula / methods / degrees /gaps and trends in trans-disciplinary education provision, current challenges and recommendations for the future.
 - (b) *Professional profiles of the future circle*
This hosted conversation on potential new profiles for the transport professional of the future, needs and demands of the market for transport professionals.
 - (c) *Networking in transport research and education*
This hosted conversation on transport education networks and how they can improve transport education in Europe (personnel networks, academia networks, partnerships between Academia and Industry). What are the gaps and bottlenecks, what transport education complementarity exists between European and other international educational establishments, liaison between networks and education subjects, etc.
3. At the end a conclusions plenary was held.