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Current Practices in Transports: appraisal methods, policies, and models

42st European Transport Conference Selected Proceedings

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Editorial

This issue of Transportation Research Procedia includes a selection of papers presented at the 42nd European Transport Conference (ETC) organised by the Association for European Transport (AET), from September 29th to October 1st 2014, at the Campus Westend of Goethe-University in Frankfurt, Germany.

The ETC is a major annual event where European transport practitioners and researchers come together to keep abreast of policy issues, research findings and best practices across a broad spectrum of topics: from advanced modelling for passenger and freight transport to appraisal methods; from sustainable planning to public transport and rail case studies. Uniquely in Europe, the Conference provides a forum for those engaged in research, policy and business in transport, bridging the gap that often arises between theory and practice.

In 2014, out of 239 papers presented at the Conference, 94 papers were initially short-listed by respected members of the transport profession to be published in this issue. Each of these papers was then peer-reviewed by experts in the relevant fields. At the end of the review process, a total of 24 papers were accepted for publication based on their quality and on their relevance to topics of interest to all working in transport planning, as identified by the Conference Programme Committee's.

These papers, on the one hand, propose innovative techniques for project appraisal and for long-term strategic planning, such as the “back-casting” method to develop policies to achieve desired performance targets [1], or the simulation framework for asset management including the uncertainty surrounding climate impacts [2]. They also provide new insights in approaching publicly funded infrastructure decisions, based on experiences from US and several European countries ([3] [4]). Other papers focus on methods to improve cost-benefits analysis by means of more accurate estimates of value of travel time savings ([5] [6]), of travellers' resistance to interchanges in public transport [7], greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions [8] and travellers' safety following elimination of highway-railway grade crossings [9].

A second set of papers deals with transport policy issues: one presenting an economic analysis of the recent European regulation related to airlines' carbon emissions, which included in 2012 the aviation sector in the Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) [10]; others giving empirical evidence of the impacts of open access on the passenger market for rail travel in the UK [11], and analysing, using different modelling exercises, the effects on sea freight transport of the International Maritime Organisation's more stringent sulphur requirements [12]. In the context of European transport, two further papers discuss the performance and efficiency of High-speed Rail systems in European countries using Data Envelopment Analysis [13] and the determinant characteristics of inland ports for freight transport [14].

Applied modelling has always had a prime role at the ETC. This is confirmed by the number of papers presenting models for freight [15] and passenger demand ([16], [17]) and, on the supply side, a methodology to estimate capacity of cycling lanes [18]. Furthermore, this topical collection also includes papers proposing advanced network design algorithms to investigate the use of traffic lights as metering devices [19], optimising

road pricing strategies on large scale networks [20] and testing several strategies implementing in-car dynamic speed limits in order to prevent “phantom jams” from occurring [21].

Finally, several papers contribute to the debate amongst researchers and policy makers when formulating policies coping with distributional effects of transport policies [22] and subsidies [23], and with the trade-off's between environmental performance and safety of road transport [24].

As the guest editor of this issue, I am pleased to see such a variety of papers contributed by scholars and professionals from all over the world. Special thanks go to all reviewers, members of the International Advisory Committee, to the publisher, and to those involved in the technical processes. I would like to thank all those who contributed to making this issue a reality.

Guest Editor: Pierluigi Coppola (Prof.)
Tor Vergata University of Rome, Italy
E-mail address: coppola@ing.uniroma2.it

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