

## **EU on the fast track to a greener, safer, smarter road transport system**

***Today in Ljubljana, EU Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik opened the Transport Research Arena 2008 Conference and Expo, together with Radovan Žerjav, Slovenian Minister for Transport. This four-day flagship event brings together over 1000 CEOs and senior executives from EU road transport industries, national and EU administrations, infrastructures operators, public and private R&D organisations, as well as users' associations. It showcases the latest policy developments and technology breakthroughs which contribute to make road transport greener, safer, smarter and more user-friendly, while strengthening EU industries' leadership in that key economic sector.***

Stressing the need for coherent strategies and strengthened cooperation between all concerned actors, Commissioner Potočnik declared: *"Europe's goals for smarter, safer, greener and more competitive road transport are among the most ambitious in the world. To succeed, we need a systemic approach, linking vehicles, infrastructures and users, and a resolute joint commitment from all concerned stakeholders. I believe this 'system' approach is best undertaken through collaborative research across national borders and a coherent implementation of policies and resources. We will succeed only if investment and coordination go hand by hand. This is the road towards a real 'integrated transport system' - a system we will be proud of."*

Road transport industries represent a major source of economic revenue, employment and technological development in Europe. Efficient road transport systems are also crucial to ensure the competitiveness of many sectors of the European economy, strengthen the Internal Market, and answer EU citizens' increased needs for mobility. At the same time, innovative transport solutions must respond to climate change and pollution concerns, rein in energy consumption and decrease dependence on fossil fuels, alleviate road congestion, and cut traffic fatalities. To respond to these challenges, both private and public sectors are joining forces and increasing investments in research. The automotive industry already spends more in R&D than any other European industrial sector. At the same time, the European Commission allocates over EUR 4 billion to road transport research in the current EU Framework Research Programme (FP7).

Jointly organised by the European Commission, the European Road Transport Research Advisory Council (ERTRAC) and the Confederation of European Directors of Roads (CEDR), TRA 2008 provides a unique platform for all partners to drive forth cooperation, focus strategic agendas, and better coordinate research activities, programmes and policies across Europe. Among key issues addressed at this year's conference are urban mobility, new engines and power trains, alternative fuels, hydrogen technologies, future vehicle concepts, "smart" cars, intelligent logistics, active and passive safety, improving infrastructures in new Member States, noise abatement, emissions reductions, and the low carbon transport economy.

Looking to the future, TRA aims to stimulate interest in transport research by spotlighting the most exciting scientific promises in that area. The 2008 YEAR Awards, an FP7 project coordinated by University College Dublin, recognize outstanding R&D projects submitted by engineering graduates from across Europe. Presented by Commissioner Potočnik in a special ceremony, these Awards will reward outstanding and creative research being carried out by students from all over Europe in 6 categories.

For Transport research see [http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/index_en.cfm)

For the TRA Conference see <http://www.tra2008.si/>

For the YEAR Awards see <http://year.fehrl.org/>