

## NEWSLETTER 1

APRIL 2011

### EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of this newsletter, which gives you an update on the Developing the European Transport Research Alliance (DETRA) project, which was officially launched on 1st June 2010 by the Lyon Declaration Signatories FEHRL, ECTRI, EURNEX, Humanist, FERSI, ISN and NEARCTIS. The Transport European Research Area (ERA) combines a European «internal market» for research, where researchers, technology and knowledge freely circulate with the effective pan-European coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies together with initiatives implemented and funded at European level. In the spirit of this objective, the consortium partners are working along and leading the following ERA themes in seven Work Packages (WPs):

- » WP1: Mobility for researchers
- » WP2: World-class transport research infrastructures
- » WP3: Strengthening research institutions
- » WP4: Sharing knowledge
- » WP5: Optimising research programmes and identifying priorities
- » WP6: International cooperation
- » WP7: Coordination and communication

These are then integrated transversally into five major DETRA outputs covering the main strategic issues to be addressed in shaping a coherent Transport ERA programme to 2020:

- » Rules of participation, instruments & specific programmes, governance administrative and financial recommendations
- » Cooperation agenda
- » People and ideas agenda
- » Research infrastructures agenda
- » Overall Transport programme recommendations

This newsletter and the specially designed DETRA website at <http://detra.fehrl.org> aim to provide you with progress on each of the WPs and key milestones of the project. Please do not hesitate to contact myself for any further information on the project.

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### LATEST NEWS

» Latest DETRA workshop was held in Brussels on 18 March on «World-class transport research infrastructures» and «Strengthening research institutions» in the frame of WPs 2 and 3. Please see our article on page 2.

» International Cooperation Opportunities within the ERA: Focus on Research Governance Issues workshop, in the frame of WP6 will be held in Athens, Greece, on 21 June 2011.

### WHAT IS THE DETRA PROJECT?

The concept of DETRA derives from the Lyon Declaration signed in December 2008, in which project partners organisations committed themselves to work together on the deepening of the European Research Area objectives in transport in order to address the Grand Challenges. From this commitment grew the objective to create a European Transport Research Alliance (ETRA) that could strengthen the transport domain.

The key priorities of ETRA are to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the domain and develop common understanding and approaches to reducing fragmentation and overcoming barriers. The approach of the DETRA project is to build on an understanding of the transport ERA to develop recommendations for the European Commission, member states and other stakeholders as well as for the DETRA partners organisations themselves.

The expected results of the project can be described as follows:

- » Evaluate progress towards the realisation of the ERA in the transport sector.
- » Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for research in this domain.
- » Evaluate the specific barriers impeding the realisation of ERA in the fields of WPs themes as cited in the editorial
- » Reduce fragmentation of effort between the different transport research organisations involved in the project.
- » Provide a sound basis for the strengthening of the ETRA which will in turn strengthen ERA progress.
- » Strengthen a cohesive influence of the DETRA partners on the various stakeholder bodies with the Transport ERA such as ERTRAC, ERRAC and others.
- » Work towards the creation of a structure based on the principles of the METAFORON architecture
- » Establish Transport Research Arena (TRA) as THE Transport research conference for European and the ERA.

The DETRA project started in June 2010 for a 28 month period.

## US SCANNING TOUR IN THE FRAME OF WP2

WP2 within the DETRA project focuses on world-class transport research infrastructures (RI) with the aim of giving an overview of European and international RI, identifying future demands, missing gaps and opportunities. DETRA considers both the technical requirements for facilities required to address the still-emerging issues related to, for example, climate change adaptation, and the issues of improving the coordination of RI management to reduce fragmentation.

WP2 builds on previous work undertaken in the TREE, Transforum, ALT-COST and other projects. The WP will consider hard (physical) RIs and soft RIs consisting of databases, libraries etc. Its main focus will be on RIs for surface transport modes (with links where appropriate to aviation and water). Both industry and public sector research requirements will be considered.

As one part of the work, a US scanning tour was undertaken during September 2010. The aim was mainly to study the management and financing of different facilities, as well as identify some of the world-class facilities within the USA. The scanning tour included visits to three different research centres.

- » The federal institution at Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center (TFHRC) (McLean, Virginia)
- » Centre of Transportation Studies (CTS) – University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, Minnesota)
- » The National Centre for Asphalt Technology (NCAT) at Auburn University (Auburn, Alabama)

This choice gave a possibility to visit facilities with different funding and different areas of main research.

The Minnesota Road Research Project (MnRoad) and NCAT facilities can be highlighted as world class full-scale test facilities. The MAST (earthquake test facility) at the University of Minnesota highlighted the possibilities with an interactive internet connection to other universities. The researchers do not need to be located at the same location as the test facility.

The outcome of the scanning tour cannot be summarised in a few bullet points, since it also involves the exchange of knowledge between individuals, networking, and ideas for further cooperation with the USA and from within Europe. However, some points can be highlighted; there is a need for RI from the perspective of all the different actors (stakeholders, researchers, industry). Cost and globalisation focus on the need for cooperation and the effective common use of the research facilities. We cannot afford to have too many complementary RIs. *Gunilla Franzén, VTI, leader of WP2*

## WP 2 WORKSHOP



**DETRA organised a workshop in Brussels on 18th March** to discuss the priorities for road research and the future challenges that need to be addressed to develop the surface transport ERA. During the morning sessions, Two speakers from DG RTD at the European Commission (EC) – Frank Smit and Hervé Péro – outlined the challenges from the EC's point of view. In addition, each of the WP leaders gave an overview of their programmes. All the presentations can be found on the DETRA website. The afternoon sessions focused more in detail on WPs 2 and 3 (world-class research infrastructures and strengthening research institutions) with discussions to determine the needs and gaps to be handled in each one. The afternoon discussion on WP2 focused on the following questions:

» Which are the main challenges?  
 » Identification of the new RI needed  
 » Prioritising the needs

Globalisation, climate change, sustainability and transport efficiency were some of the challenges that were identified. A number of different RIs were suggested, even though some of the suggestions related more closely to networking than RIs. Amongst the prioritised RIs, a common European full-scale test facility can be highlighted. The workshop will be summarised and be the base for a research infrastructure agenda.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**The WP 4 «Sharing Knowledge» will organise a Stakeholders Forum in Brussels, on 1 and 2 September 2011.**

This WP aims at evaluating how knowledge is currently shared in the ERA within the transport related knowledge triangle and mainly between public research organisations and industry in the transport sector as well as with the general public authorities and civil society organisations. The processes for sharing and the institutional bottlenecks linked to the transfer of knowledge and the acceleration of innovation pace will be examined.

The DETRA project members will try to determine the role of standardisation and interoperability as both barrier and enabler, the role of transfer of knowledge by mobility of scientists of education of young scientists, the role of transfer of knowledge through partnerships and the role of transfer of knowledge within an open innovation model.

The Stakeholders forum will be organised as a focus-oriented surface transport forum. The aim will be to discuss the first draft recommendations for sharing knowledge in the future, including intellectual property rules, in order to produce final recommendations at the end of the DETRA project.

Results of this Stakeholders forum will be presented during the TRA conference to be held on 23 to 26 April 2012 in Athens, Greece.

For more information about workshop, please contact annie.pauzie@ifsttar.fr.

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