

Press Release

TRA 2018: Digitalisation will revolutionise mobility

Sub-title: Digitalisation, automation and networking also need user collaboration with the systems and harmonisation of the transport modes

(Vienna, 18th April 2018): Digitalisation in the transport sector will massively change or even revolutionise mobility in the coming years. In addition to increasing road safety, it will lead to many new mobility offerings and services, as well as greater efficiency in intermodal transport and take a decisive step forward towards a more sustainable use of scarce resources. In addition to the digital infrastructures, the networking of vehicles with each other and with the infrastructure will play an essential role. The experts at the Transport Research Arena (TRA) 2018, the largest transport research conference in Europe currently taking place in Vienna, agree that in many areas the early involvement of users will influence how well and efficiently new transport systems will work: only then will those who set out their needs and reveal their user behaviour be able to reap the benefits they need.

Many technical and legal issues for automated driving still unanswered

Self-driving vehicles and automation were just one of the many topics covered on the second day of TRA 2018. The automation of transport affects rail, freight and private transport alike. Nynke Else Vellinga from the University of Groningen has investigated this central aspect of automation in her research: “Before handing over control to an automated vehicle, there are technical but also legal challenges to overcome. Who is liable for accidents caused by automated vehicles? Who has to pay for the resulting damage? The user or the manufacturer? That is what my research and presentation at TRA 2018 revolve around: the legal challenges concerning automated driving especially regarding technical regulations, traffic laws and liability.”

How safe is safe enough?

Traffic safety is also relative. Automated systems have many possibilities to make traffic more and more safe. Laws and regulations have to define the specifications of what a modern transport system of the future can look. Many experts at TRA 2018 warn against too strict rules because they inhibit innovation. Prof. Dr. Peter Sweatman from the

University of Michigan and director of CAVita emphasises that road safety needs control, but it is equally important to leave room to drive developments. At the same time, he asks: "how safe is safe enough?" and points out the differences in cultures, because every person and country see the need for degrees of traffic safety differently - and these cultures must be harmonised so that the transport systems function optimally. One of the questions that need to be answered is: "What is more valuable to us? Safety or the protection of our personal information?"

Digitalisation needs preparation

Herald Ruijters, Director of DG Mobility and Transport of the EU Commission, emphasises in his presentation that one of the great challenges of the future will be the sharing of the infrastructure of networked and non-networked vehicles. Here a longer preparation phase will be needed. In the same vein, Professor Adriano Allesandrini of the University of Florence points out that people need to be attuned to digitalisation and automation. Test phases in smaller areas such as neighborhoods should be organised by cities. They should also support and monitor people over several years as the different services and offerings are being introduced, so that the systems can be optimised and then rolled out on a large scale.

Further information: www.traconference.eu or in the electronic press corner at: <https://tra2018.rtcnow.com/>.

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