



Network welcomes three new members

It was a busy meeting for the Network of National ITS Associations at the end of February. There was a new CEO of ERTICO to meet, a new chairman of the Network to elect, a retiring chairman to thank, and three new member countries to welcome.

Vincent Blervaque, Acting Director of Development and Deployment with ERTICO, updates the meeting on new project developments – see page 17 for details.
The photographs were taken by Dorin Dumitrescu, General Director of ITS Romania.



The Network of ITS National Associations met in Brussels, February 29th, with a busy agenda. There was a new Chief Executive Officer of ERTICO – ITS Europe to meet, a new Chairman of the Network to elect, and time to say thank you to Christer Karlsson who has led the Network for the past three years.

There were also three new members to welcome. In the case of ITS Network Germany it was a case of familiar names and faces but a new entity.

Heinz Sodeikat, who is the familiar face of ITS Munich, explained that several attempts had been made over the last ten years to establish a nation-wide German organisation. They had all failed and in the meantime a number of regional and local ITS associations had developed.

The solution, said Heinz, was to found a German organisation based on the network principle within which the existing local and thematic organisations could continue to work. The good news, reported in the January issue of *ITS Solutions*, was that seven independent organisations finally agreed to set up and fund an umbrella organisation and in December 2007 in Munich the new ITS Network Germany was founded. The formal signing took place in March at Cebit, witnessed by the German Minister of Transport.

Heinz Sodeikat was elected Chairman of the new group and Norbert Handke of ITS Niedersachsen Chief Executive Officer. Heinz said that he had a very simple message. 'In future there will be one German face, and one German voice to the outside world.'

Norbert Handke said that the new organisation would be responsible for co-ordinating the local, regional, and thematically focussed Germany ITS associations. 'These organisations will retain their specific responsibilities and themes while the network will ensure that when it comes to the ITS Nationals Network, ERTICO, and the European and World ITS Congresses, Germany presents a homogenous appearance to the rest of the world. We have already had interest from other related groups within Germany so we expect our network to grow quite considerably over the next year.'

Both ITS Munich and ITS Niedersachsen

stood down as members of the network to be replaced by ITS Network Germany.

The second new member to join the Network was PSTT, the Polish Association of Transport Telematics. Professor Jerzy Mikulski, President of the Association, was in Brussels to tell members about PSTT.

The organisation was founded two years ago and became a legal entity in March 2007. Members come from technical colleges, research institutes and companies from the transport and communications business. The organisation aims to promote telematics science, raise awareness of ITS and build a forum for information exchange. PSTT already has a formal relationship with ITS&S Czech Republic and ITS Slovakia and has strong connections with the Silesian University of Technology and University in Prague and also with the University in Zilina in Slovakia.

Within Poland, PSTT works closely with ITS Poland and the telematics team in the traffic control section of the Polish Academy of Science.

Jerzy Mikulski explained that PSTT has a strong bias towards rail while ITS Poland, which has also registered an interest in joining the Network, has a more road-based focus. 'We work together very closely and our areas of interest complement each other.'

Looking ahead, Jerzy said that PSTT is looking for closer co-operation with foreign ITS players and hoped that membership of the Network would provide opportunities for greater involvement by Poland in European projects.

PSTT is also hoping to improve recognition of telematics solutions by organising seminars and conferences to add to their established event Transport Systems Telematics. The 8th annual event takes place this year November 5-8 at Katowice-Ustron. Details can be found at www.tst-conference.org.

Also making their debut in Brussels was ITS Portugal. Rui Camolino, chairman of ITS Portugal, explained that the organisation had an important role to play in Portugal where, he said, there was little institutional interest in ITS. 'We have a lot of work to do to stimulate ITS within Government and to try to promote ITS to politicians. We feel that compa-



nies are pushing ITS but without an umbrella organisation.'

It was this need that led to the setting up of ITS Portugal which, said Rui, will provide a place where Portuguese companies can come to meet with colleagues and discuss issues. ITS Portugal also plans to provide a platform for the development of ITS and is looking to involve as wide a spread of disciplines as possible ranging from road operators through air infrastructure to rail freight as well as industry and academia. At present, he said, the automotive industry is missing from the mix. 'Our long term aim is to strengthen our association in this sector and to enlarge the membership.'

Short term objectives include participation in the dissemination of information from the project Safe Drive from FP6, events in Lisbon and Oporto on the Green Book on Urban Transport and participation at the Geneva ITS European Congress. Rui said that they were also in the process of setting up technical committees, both by mode of transport and co-modal, and working groups to support national technological development. 'We are very excited about becoming members of the Network and we are looking forward to increasing our participation within Europe. We are very interested in participating in the promotion of safety and sustainability procedures and, in particular, ones that concern the clean and efficient use of energy.'

With three new members joining, and two, ITS Munich and ITS Niedersachsen resigning, this brings the total number of members of the Network to 28. This number is likely to increase again at the next meeting in Athens in October with applications in the pipeline from Turkey and Bulgaria.

ITS World Directory

The idea is not new. ITS Spain came up with the concept three years ago and initially hoped to have a World ITS Directory fully populated by the end of 2006. However, despite receiving a very warm reception from the ITS community, and the full support of the Network of ITS National Associations, the reality has been that people have been slow to sign up. Now ITS Spain is making another concerted effort to ensure the directory fulfils its potential to become the place to search if you are looking for ITS professionals in your own country, or the wider world.

Volkert Samplonius, chief international officer with ITS Spain, explained that the concept is to create a networking platform which will provide information on individuals, organisations and companies from the ITS community. 'For the directory to be useful, it needs to have data and we are inviting ITS professionals to come online and register their details. There is no cost involved and it is quick and simple to do.'

Understandably, as things stand the largest



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Rui Camolino, ITS Portugal



Top, Rui Camolino (ITS Portugal) with Lina Konstantinopoulou (ITS Hellas) and Olga Landolfi (ITS Italy). Above, Hermann Meyer introduces himself to the Network.

body of professionals on the database come from Spain but there has also been an encouraging response from the UK, the US, Germany and France.

Volkert told the meeting that there are already 140 organisations registered on the database from 34 countries. 'This is a chicken and egg situation. We need to have a very good representation of the industry for the database to be genuinely useful. It is a win/win situation for everyone. By being on the database, people can ensure that they are visible in the market – there are lots of situations where people need to contact professionals in other countries. The database provides easy access to this data completely free of charge.'

www.worlditsdirectory.com

News round up

Congratulations go to Croatia where the Brinje Tunnel picked up the award for the safest tunnel in Europe from the European Tunnel Assessment Programme – EuroTAP – in January in Brussels. The assessment, which is carried out by ADAC, the German automobile association, II partner associations and FIA, the international automobile association, tested 51 tunnels in 13 countries. The Brinje tunnel came out on top and was an important boost for members of ITS Croatia who have been involved in the design, construction and maintenance protocols.

Three thousand trucks, equipped with safety accident avoidance systems, are currently trialing the effectiveness of this technology on the roads in The Netherlands. The results are expected at the end of this year.

In Italy, the Italian Ministry for Economic Development has set a total budget of €180m for an initiative to promote sustainable mobility called 'Industry 2015'. The objective is to develop innovative transport systems and services that can contribute to increasing competitiveness, reducing environmental impacts and improving transport safety and efficiency. The call for tenders opened in mid March.

ITS Norway reported that it had been successful in attracting funding from the national government – everyone agreed this was a success story. In Denmark a new white paper from the Danish Infrastructure Commission, published in January, recommends extensive use of ITS and at the end of 2007 the Danish Road Safety and Transport Agency published their recommendations for technical specifications for black boxes and equipment for ISA. One possibility under review is the possibility of establishing an ISA system which only works on A Roads and motorways.

ITS Hellas, which was launched in October 2007, completed the full legalisation procedure in March and is planning to set up inner working groups which cover the entire spectrum of ITS in Greece.



Building the bridge

Nico Anten says his aim, for his three-year tenure as Chairman of the Network of National ITS Associations, is to encourage co-operation and try to extend the exchange of information.

Nico Anten, the new Chairman of the Network of National ITS Associations, came to ITS via the freight transport world. From a background in public administration and then a professional career in both IT and general consultancy, he discovered the fascinating world of freight transport and logistics. 'When I saw what was happening with all the different transport modes, and the speed at which this sector was growing – I found it all so interesting.'

It was an interest that led him to the Dutch Centre for Transport Telematics, an organisation that at the time was working with both government and the private sector to improve the quality of all things related to freight transport in Holland.

And after more than ten years, he says he still finds it fascinating. 'I like being involved in problems which are not owned by one sector or organisation but are spread across a range of different stakeholders. This means that no organisation has the power to resolve the problem and that you can only get a solution by convincing people to work together. I like doing that.'

Over the years, the Centre merged with ITS Netherlands and developed into Connekt, linking the freight and logistics world with ITS and public transport. In its early days Connekt was an agency for distributing funds to clients who had good ideas to improve mobility. The funds ran out but the service that Connekt offered, putting public, private organisations and knowledge institutes in contact with each other and exchanging information, was sufficiently valued for Connekt to continue as a membership funded body. A couple of years ago, it began to undertake project work, strictly on a not for profit basis and without competing with members' interests. 'Sometimes there are projects and people that feel that, because of our independence, only Connekt can do the work.'

Nico is the MD of Connekt and he says that what makes it special is that it offers a trusted environment where people can feel at ease and talk in a non-competitive atmosphere about what they want to achieve. 'The model is working. We get a lot of questions referred to us.' He cites the introduction of road user charging as an example. 'We are trying to help the government to succeed with this implementation. The stakes are very high for a lot of our members.'

Nico's interest in working with groups of



Nico Anten, MD of Connekt and new Network Chairman

stakeholders, helping them to have a constructive dialogue and find ways of working together, will stand him in good stead as the Chair of the Network and he is very excited by the prospect. 'I strongly believe in international co-operation. That is very important in the ITS and logistics markets. They both cross borders and that is why it is so important to have a network of nationally-based organisations trying to co-operate.'

He says his aim, for his three-year tenure as Chairman, is to encourage co-operation and try to extend the exchange of information. 'There is so much that we can learn from each other. The knowledge that has been learned in London about the introduction of road user charging can be used in Holland or the Czech Republic.'

'We have an outreach community of over 1,500, very experienced, very talented ITS participants'

We need to exchange our national experiences and to link back to ERTICO because there is a lot of knowledge there about the European development of ITS issues, a lot of competence in creating projects.'

These are interesting times in the ITS world. The mobility that has fuelled economic prosperity over the last half century is now threatening our well being. The big challenge, says Nico, is to find ways to create and sustain the mobility that is demanded for the 21st century and which will support our economic activities, and yet at the same time address the issues which threaten personal safety and security and the environment. 'There is a tension between these two priorities and finding solutions is quite a challenge. But ITS is a wonderful opportunity to form a bridge between these two topics and I think it is possible if we do it together.'

Indeed, 'doing it together', is Nico's priority. He hopes that over the coming months the Network can encourage its members to become more involved in its activities. He believes it might be possible to set up working groups to look at particular topics and thinks it would strengthen people's commitment and help bringing the Nationals' members together.

He's excited by the big membership that sits behind the national associations. In Holland, he says that any company with an involvement in ITS will be a member of Connekt. It is the same in many other countries. 'When we look at the membership behind the national associations, we have an outreach community of over 1500 very experienced, very talented ITS participants including people from national, regional and local government, industry, administrators, users, traffic experts, knowledge institutes and consultants. I would like to see them get more involved in the Network. For instance when we hold meetings in a member country, we could open up part of the meeting to the national association's members – organise a workshop and invite them to come along.'

What this outreach offers, he says, is a wonderful opportunity to connect not just the public sector with the private sector but, within the private sector, to connect the multinational companies with SMEs. 'It is a very interesting situation. If we can tap into the strength of this membership, and then connect that to the competence that is sitting within ERTICO, then I think we will be doing a beautiful job for everyone in the industry.'