



## Press Release

Rotterdam, 2 December 2016

### 2016 POLIS CONFERENCE CALLS FOR ROAD AUTOMATION TO SERVE CITY AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT POLICIES

**450 mobility professionals from across Europe and beyond have come together to debate on urban and regional mobility at this year's Annual Polis Conference held in Rotterdam. Local and regional authorities call for greater understanding of where automated road transport can benefit cities.**

"The future will be here much faster than many think. The first thing to think about is not automated driving. It is about the places where this should take place in our cities. Second, let's think about what we want from automated driving in our cities", said keynote speaker **Philippe Christ of the International Transport Forum, OECD** in the closing plenary titled "Automation in Cities: Opportunity or Threat? Hype or Holy Grail?"

The Polis Conference plenary brought together local governments, the automobile industry, research and the European and international institutions to explore where automated vehicles can deliver benefit for cities and what needs to be done to make this happen. The panellists acknowledged that automated vehicles are not an end in itself.

"Having automated services, even shared services, take passengers away from public transport would be a nightmare for cities! Automated shuttles that close the gap between services however can make a real difference. We need to invest in infrastructure and especially in policies", said **Professor Adriano Alessandrini, University of Florence**. Alessandrini coordinated the EU co-funded CityMobil2 project that piloted automated mini buses in seven European cities.

Using an online live voting tool, conference delegates put forward public transport as the most adapted mode for full automation ahead of public transport feeders for the first/last mile, shared mobility and urban delivery services.

"While planning for transport and automation, we still first need to allocate space to people. What we want an automated city to look like is that it is made for and by humans. Automation has a role to play to improve services for people", said **Philippe Christ, ITF/OECD**.

"We first need more large-scale trials on public roads before deciding which measures to take to address possible negative effects" said **Liam Breslin from DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission**. "We need to understand what could go wrong first before deciding which regulations are needed."

"As a government we are responsible for making regulations around transport services that our inhabitants benefit from. It isn't, however, happening yet for automation. We have to scale up our



activities”, said **Connie Bieze, Minister for Infrastructure, Economy and Environment, Province of Gelderland, NL.**

Automation will be a priority item on the Polis agenda for 2017. We will draw on information from Polis members involved in automated vehicle projects and the knowledge gained through our involvement in several European projects dealing with automation, including CityMobil2 which demonstrated fully automated first/last mile transport services, and MAVEN which is investigating the implications of fully automated vehicles on traffic management. <end>

### More information:

- For twitter users: the hashtag is #polis16.
- More information incl. the conference programme: <http://www.polisnetwork.eu/2016conference>

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### Notes to editors:

Polis is a network of European cities and regions working together to develop innovative technologies and policies for local transport.

The Annual Polis Conference represents an important annual highlight for urban mobility professionals and provides an opportunity for cities and regions to showcase their transport achievements to an international audience, and for the wider transport community to engage with representatives of local and regional authorities on innovative transport solutions.

Our aim is to improve local transport through integrated strategies that address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of transport. To this end, Polis supports the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge between European local and regional authorities.

In Polis, decision makers are provided with the necessary information and tools for making sustainable mobility a reality. Within the Political Group of Polis, they formulate recommendations to the European institutions.

Polis members meet regularly in working groups organised around four thematic pillars:

- Environment and Health in Transport
- Mobility and Traffic Efficiency
- Transport Safety and Security
- Social and Economic Aspects of Transport

Polis has a permanent secretariat located in Brussels.

[www.polisnetwork.eu](http://www.polisnetwork.eu)