

“Roads and traffic are there to support the city, not the other way round”

Thinking Cities’ **Dagmar Köhler** spoke with **Jean-Luc di Paola Galloni**, who works for Valeo group and is EGVI and ERTRAC acting chairman, and London Councils’ **Nick Lester-Davis**, ERTRAC Vice-Chairman representing cities and regions

Dagmar Köhler (DK): Beyond moving people and goods, Europe’s transport systems should also become more sustainable and drive European competitiveness and innovation. Can transport achieve all these goals in one go?

Nick Lester-Davis (NLD): Transport is ever only a means to an end and those ends include sustainability, safety and competitiveness. It would be wrong to promote either sustainability or competitiveness at the expense of the other. Transport initiatives will usually address both these objectives (and safety, too) but often the impacts against these primary objectives will need to be balanced off. It is rare to find a single initiative that will give both the best outcomes for competitiveness and for sustainability. The best results will usually come from a combination of initiatives in different sectors. Cities and regions are usually well placed – and certainly experienced – to understand these complex interactions and to identify the best combination of measures that will work together.

Jean-Luc di Paola Galloni (JLPG): I wouldn’t make a competition in pre-eminence out of either of those two aspects of the objectives. Both are absolutely necessary. The industry is certainly the stakeholder who would always combine both objectives – there is simply no choice in a competitive world, beyond Europe. Remember the power of innovation in our sector’s research activities: the automotive sector alone, and even more when seen in conjunction with infrastructure related research, is by far the most important research sector for Europe’s economy. It is because a lot of industrial members and research related partners have not downsized their research expenditures during the crisis that this sector is able to deploy technology solutions that can bring clear environmental progress, more safety, more reliability in transport. During these last years a PPP like EGVI has been absolutely necessary to bring a fresh financial tool, along the EIB, to the main research players. The deficit on public infrastructure has created a negative impact; this is why this new Commission supports as we do at ERTRAC, a new effort in investment in that field.



Nick Lester-Davis,
ERTRAC vice-
chairman

DK: Cities and regions should offer their citizens integrated mobility options that are both sustainable and meet people’s mobility needs. Where do they stand?

JLPG: Cities and region will have to play a major role in transport regulation in a more and more connected, democratically accessible and customized demand of mobility. Local and pragmatic approaches are important, growing in power and representation; on the other side member states and European decision-making bodies are making progress on procurement. There will be more complexity between local thinking and needs on one side and the dialogue with global players solution providers on the other side. This dialogue will evolve – there will be new players among which mobility providers either coming from the industry or from new start-ups.

NLD: All provision of transport services will be by multiple providers, both public and private sector, and all will have external impacts and consequences, both directly (such as with land take and noise or visual intrusion) and indirectly (such as with the longer term impact on city development). Cities and regions play the most important role within this by:

- Setting their own objectives for their region

- Assessing the overall impact of transport services and identifying areas of poor supply or unacceptable impact, looking for the best outcome for the city and region
- Regulating transport services to improve standards to meet the requirements of the city and region
- Coordinating transport services so as to provide an integrated approach to the traveler
- Establishing the public interest in investing public money into transport services in an accountable way
- Enabling transport initiatives that are in the public's interest to proceed
- In some cases, providing the most cost effective service provision

In no other way can this overview of a coordinated level of service and accountability to the people of the city or region be provided.

DK: ERTRAC brings together a unique range of stakeholders to align on research priorities. To what extent are ERTRAC's recommendations taken up by the European Commission?

NLD: ERTRAC should be particularly important in providing input to the Commission in identifying shared goals and issues. While it is inevitable that there will also be other factors, such as the availability of resources, which will impact on any research programme's shape, the ability of ERTRAC to provide a strategic overview of the sector is something that it is almost impossible to replicate.

JLPG: It is indeed the multi-stakeholder approach with pertinent technology solutions and orientations that brings the unique credibility to this platform and in particular for society, communities' representatives or non-industry members. This is why the integration of Polis within ERTRAC is essential. Not only the contribution to the definition of research programmes is taken into account by the European Commission, but clearly this process helps to define the research content of the future calls, namely within the H2020 framework.

DK: What is your vision of Europe's transport system of the future that makes you invest time, effort and energy in ERTRAC?

NLD: In the past it might have been seen that the development of cities and regions was dominated by the impact of roads and traffic. Indeed, some cities were consciously built around the needs of cars and traffic. That has been changing and it is critical that this continues to change so that the development of cars and traffic systems is built around the needs of cities and regions. Roads and traffic are there to



Jean-Luc di Paola-Galloni, acting
Chairman of ERTRAC

support the city, not the other way round. This will help us all develop cities and regions that are strong, economically successful and sustainable over the long term. All of these will make them places where people will want to live and work. By looking at the development of roads and traffic systems, ERTRAC can identify where public investment and intervention can have the best impact.

At the same time, the speed of innovation is accelerating and the ability of cities and regions to assess these developments individually is diminishing. Through ERTRAC there can be a distillation of understanding at the start of the process both identifying and encouraging cities and regions to adapt their approach to oncoming technological innovations and establishing where developments may be technically achievable but have reduced practical value.

JLPG: I think that the complexity of the evolution of transport in our continent is unique: matching high density, growing diversification of transport demands particularly in overall aging society. I am confident on the matching connections between the level of innovation availability and consequently the services provided and their management by whatever authority or even the single citizen in charge. As far as road transport is concerned: the automation and connectivity will really revolutionize the future of transport, more than in any other transport mode. This is why we need to grow stronger together and push collaborative research, work along together in a pre-competitive and compliant way. This is our strong belief in ERTRAC. All stakeholders are putting their field's contribution to achieve a better road surface mobility for tomorrow, by all means. It is ERTRAC's duty to support this common collaborative goal. This is why ERTRAC is the right common body where collaborative research is lived, experienced at each step and by each member.