

## **MIND SETS & MOBILITY4EU Joint Conference**

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### **Opening Remarks - Ioana Adamescu, Policy Officer - DG Research and Innovation**

The European Union defends universal values of freedom (including the freedom to move without restrictions), peace, democracy, equality, rule of law, respect of fundamental human rights, solidarity, human dignity, social justice, tolerance, all developed from the cultural and humanist inheritance of Europe. These values are the corner stone of the common European project and they support a balanced European socio-economic model of democracy and cooperation.

The fundamental need to move people and things became the core of the preoccupations of a globalised world and a freedom we cannot restraint. But beyond the central role of transport in the economy as a driver for a new industrial revolution, transport is also a catalyst for alterations in values and culture - e.g. cost of distance and value-time; sustainability over efficiency; competition over collaboration; inclusiveness versus isolation; openness over security; control versus accountability; connectivity over privacy.

It is therefore important to ask ourselves some essential questions:

- How is transport, and more particularly transport research, contributing to the type of Europe we want to build for future generations and the future of our society? What precisely is the role of transport research in the transformation of the society and of the economy?
- What is the role and impact of new technologies, mega-trends and new business models emerging in the transport sector in changing the values, in enabling a more participatory decision-making process and ultimately, on issues as important as our democracy, as our security (both in real life and on-line)?

Research on the socio-economic dimension of transport enables not only the understanding of the role and contribution of transport to the European values, but is also necessary to substantiate the arguments for renewing with the trust in the European project, and for supporting the nexus between Knowledge and Democracy.

If transport has an inherent accelerator character for technology innovation, at the heart of the system are individual users - be it drivers of any type of vehicle, be it passengers, freight operators, be it users of logistics and infrastructure systems - the human exercising its fundamental right to move is at stake.

Transport is in a period of paradigm shift due in equal shares to the increased introduction of disruptive technologies but also to changes in the social fabric: individual needs, preferences, behaviours, consumption habits, lifestyles are all changing dramatically. Some of these changes are already present, as for example, the rising vehicle sharing practices in many European cities, while others may still be at their very early stages, as for example, changing value of travel time with the emergence of connected and automated driving.

Think about large cities where the transport system accommodates the evolving needs of young millennials turning away from ownership more and more towards public and these shared mobility schemes, the needs of the aging population that has less digital literacy, urban populations that expect good air quality and less congestion, impact on transport of new lifestyles that are more mobile for a variety of reasons like sprawling - new territorial and housing conditions leading to longer commuting distance to work, separate families with shared childcare, etc...

Within this engaging context, there is a legitimate expectation of citizens for the authorities at national and at European level to anticipate changes and solve problems. The EU goal is to tackle the transport challenges in an integrated and systemic way by supporting technological development together with the engagement of users throughout the process, be it to develop innovative technologies or to build the normative framework. Social innovation is growing deeper roots and with its co-creation component is likely to impact the future transport models and management, and is already shaping the current transport policies and the global economic trends.

The European Commission supports users' engagement and aims to equip European transport system users with the means of their action. The users need to collectively emerge as a community that facilitates this co-design process. Research and Innovation Commissioner Moedas is committed to support inclusive and open innovation and he believes that, in order to achieve that "*more actors should be involved in the innovative process – scientists, entrepreneurs, users, governments and the civil society*". EU research is contributing to the creation of a conducive eco-system and a community by bringing together, transport industry across transport modes, social innovators, researchers, citizens, policy makers, and covering in the same time research activities, along with their results' implementation and deployment, and design of new policy initiatives.

Co-design is the key issue for building sustainable technical and normative solutions that are responsive to the users' needs. Social innovation can lead to improved accessibility, social inclusiveness and equity, by responding better to the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of our societies, and it can also bring major benefits for our economies. Greater inclusiveness can support building societal resilience in the face of the collective challenges of our time. Europe is a central player in addressing these challenges and supports the development of effective, efficient and affordable mobility solutions which meet end-users expectations in terms of cost, convenience, wellbeing and comfort, sustainability and health. These mobility solutions are also expected to respond to the specific needs of populations groups such as citizens vulnerable to exclusion - elderly, children, disabled, people in poverty, migrants, and take into consideration important aspects such as gender.

Involving more actors throughout Europe in the innovative process increases the relevance of EU policies and actions, and contributes to the development of a common understanding. A user-centred approach taking into account the evolving needs of transport users in all their diversity is necessary in order to assess the impact of transport solutions on society and economy, while it also adds value to the competitiveness of European transport industry.

The issue gets more complex when we think about new technologies and about the readiness of the societies to fully embrace and accept them. In certain cases, science and

technology advancement can have paradoxical consequences. Take automated vehicles that are expected to increase safety on our roads and energy efficiency but may generate mixed impacts in terms of labour - structural unemployment due to automation versus new employment opportunities generated new "mobility-on-demand" and digital services. The evaluation of the environmental and land-use impact of connected and automated driving, especially at higher levels of automation, remains crucial. Data generated by automated vehicles represents, on the one hand, a huge opportunity for big data exploitation and, on the other hand, raises concerns related to personal data protection and the danger of hacking, linked often to security threats.

The primary goal of the socio-economic research is to go deeper in this analysis of socio-economic implications, along with the necessary framework conditions for the social innovation legislation translating the societal demand.

Many other major questions emerge – for instance training and education: supply chains have gone global and a big proportion of workers in the transport manufacturing industry as well as the end users will need further training and education within the next decades to cope with the technological advancements and the changes they will bring in in our work environments and in our daily lives.

Also the socio-economic effects of sharing economy – the emergence of new business models driven by connectivity and digitalisation that accelerate disruption and impact the way transport sector is structured and on its sustainability. The new business models are key for the deployment of innovative technologies and therefore they deserve further scrutiny regarding their intrinsic connection with travel behaviour patterns.

Mr Pascal Lamy said that "*we need more socio-economic analysis to investigate how these new technologies can lead to sustainability and to prosperity*". We need to ask the right questions – are benefits of innovation and technological swifts accessible to all, do they generate equal opportunities and rights in different parts of the world and of Europe? I refer you back to the values that Europe is striving to protect.

The European Commission objectives include fostering more Open Science through intensified user engagement and societal uptake, and more Open Innovation allowing for dynamic knowledge circulation enabling socio-economic added value.