

The strategic mission of the RECREATE project is to improve the capacity and capability of regional transport SMEs to further develop and grow by providing support for research and development, rapid development and implementation of products and services, access to finance schemes and internationalisation opportunities.

The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and by National Resources and implemented under the INTERREG EUROPE Programme.

COVID-19 impact on the transport sector

On 11th March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. In an effort to contain the spread of the virus, millions of people around the world have been put under lockdown and many countries have closed their borders. As a result, transport demand has reduced sharply and the sector has seen significant changes.

The aviation sector is one of the most affected with airlines and airports facing future serious financial problems because of travel bans and cancellations. According to Eurocontrol (*"Eurocontrol. COVID19 Impact on European Air Traffic EUROCONTROL Comprehensive Assessment. Air Traffic situation: Tue 14 April & Week 15, 6-12 April, compared with equivalent day in 2019"*), while all-cargo flights remained close to the 2019 level until recently, scheduled and low-cost traffic reduced massively during the crisis, respectively by 94% and 98%:

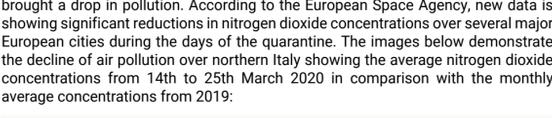


On 14th April 2020, the largest Air Operator Groups had massive reductions compared to the same operational day in 2019: easyJet -99%, IAG Airlines -97%, Air-France-KLM -96%, Ryanair Group -96% and Lufthansa Group -95%. Air Nostrum and Brussels Airlines had no operations at all, while easyJet and Austrian Airlines were -99% with just a few flights:

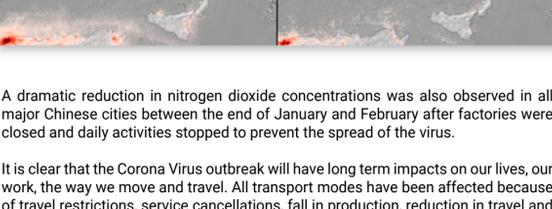


On the same day, all of Europe's largest airports managed 90% fewer flights compared to last year: Paris Orly -100%, London Gatwick -99%, Munich -95%, Madrid -92%, Amsterdam -92%, Istanbul -91%, London Heathrow -90%, Milan Malpensa -88%, Frankfurt -88% and Athens -85%. The traffic between Europe and USA reduced massively, reaching a level of over 80% since 29th March.

As regards the maritime transport sector, for the first three months of 2020, the [Baltic Dry Index](#) that measures the cost of shipping goods around the world, fell 43% as the rapid spread of the virus caused shipping restrictions and exhausted the demand for dry bulk vessels. However, in April the index strengthened above 700 points (a level not seen since January) as a slow restart of industrial activity in China improved the demand for shipping vessels:



The impact is visible on road transport as well. According to TomTom data, the effects of the lockdown are observable in various cities with a substantial decrease in traffic. For example, looking at the congestion level in Rome from 14th to 29th April 2020, this is a lot less than the average on the same dates in 2019:



On a positive note, however, the lockdown due to the Coronavirus seems to have brought a drop in pollution. According to the European Space Agency, new data is showing significant reductions in nitrogen dioxide concentrations over several major European cities during the days of the quarantine. The images below demonstrate the decline of air pollution over northern Italy showing the average nitrogen dioxide concentrations from 14th to 25th March 2020 in comparison with the monthly average concentrations from 2019:



A dramatic reduction in nitrogen dioxide concentrations was also observed in all major Chinese cities between the end of January and February after factories were closed and daily activities stopped to prevent the spread of the virus.

It is clear that the Corona Virus outbreak will have long term impacts on our lives, our work, the way we move and travel. All transport modes have been affected because of travel restrictions, service cancellations, fall in production, reduction in travel and transport demand. The long-term implications on transport and mobility behaviour cannot be fully assessed at the moment. However, all possible efforts have to be made to ensure safety of staff and passengers and all measures should take into account social, environmental as well as economic impacts.

Innovative transport and future prospects for Lithuanian transport sector

This was the theme of the RECREATE Stakeholder Meeting organised by the Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LIC) on 26th February 2020 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

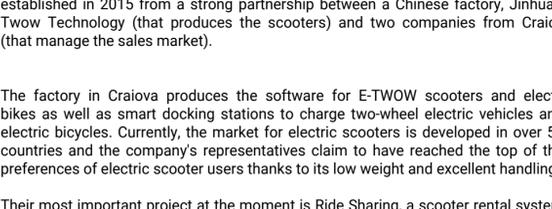
The meeting was attended by representatives of the transport sector, the government, business support agencies, transport business associations and universities and was divided in three parts. First of all, the presentation "Tendencies of the transport sector: challenges and new possibilities" delivered by a representative of the LIC (P. Bacevicius), provided some information on how the transport sector is contributing to the economy of Lithuania; how new technologies are shaping this sector; on the status quo of innovation development and application.

After that, tendencies of the transport sector were presented. Environmental issues, growing volumes of passengers and freight, traffic jams, Industry 4.0 and Logistics 4.0, political decisions, changes in transport services were introduced with examples of how they shape this sector.

Later on, key enabling technologies disrupting transportation were introduced. These are artificial intelligence, big data, 5G, internet of things, cloud computing, alternative fuels. Additionally, practical application of these technologies was presented, with examples of autonomous cars, V2I/V2V communication, monitoring of supply chain, electrification, etc.

The second presentation was delivered by Vaidotas Gervė, CEO of the transport company "Semitrans Ltd". He talked about "Innovative Transport in Lithuania: plans and reality". His main objective was to show the reality of an average transport sector (cargo transportation) company, its goals and capabilities.

After the presentations and before the closure of the meeting, there were some discussions between the attendees and several interesting ideas were exchanged.



INNOTRANS project dissemination event "Innovation in Transport: main trends and merging opportunities"

Dr. Eleni Anoyrkati, a representative of the RECREATE project team attended and delivered a presentation at the INNOTRANS Interreg Europe project dissemination event "Innovation in Transportation: main trends and merging opportunities" on 12th December 2019 at the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce in Greece.

The [INNOTRANS project](#) – Enhancing transport innovation capacity of regions – aims at identifying transport innovation potential in the participating regions and developing guidelines for policy interventions and Actions Plans. At the end of phase 1, a dissemination event was organised around the theme of Innovation in Transport focusing on the potential of the sector and the main future trends.

Dr. Anoyrkati delivered a presentation about the most important global trends that affect the achievement of sustainable mobility which included some of the findings generated by the RECREATE project. The rest of the event focused on Big Data in transport, optimisation of scale transport networks, technological development of autonomous vehicles. The case study of Thessaloniki Port showing a "track" of tests for innovation was also presented.

The event was an interesting opportunity for the RECREATE Team to explore future opportunities in transport and discuss policies in the sector.



The development of E-TWOW scooter companies in Craiova

On 16th and 17th October 2019 a RECREATE Thematic Workshop and Study Visit were organised in Craiova (Romania) by the Regional Development Agency South-West Oltenia. One of the local Good Practices visited was Nextrom Industries SRL, a SME specialised in the production of light electric vehicles that has benefited from financing instruments and support schemes from the South-West Oltenia Region and is now a launching ramp for the E-TWOW electric scooters.

The company was founded by the Romanian engineer, Sorin Sirbu, who also invented the E-TWOW (Electric Two Wheels) scooter. E-TWOW is an international concept established in 2015 from a strong partnership between a Chinese factory, Jinhua E-Twow Technology (that produces the scooters) and two companies from Craiova (that manage the sales market).

The factory in Craiova produces the software for E-TWOW scooters and electric bikes as well as smart docking stations to charge two-wheel electric vehicles and electric bicycles. Currently, the market for electric scooters is developed in over 50 countries and the company's representatives claim to have reached the top of the preferences of electric scooter users thanks to its low weight and excellent handling.

Their most important project at the moment is Ride Sharing, a scooter rental system that offers as many people as possible the opportunity to use a green and efficient transport system, perfectly adapted to the challenges of the urban environment. This could be potentially incorporated in any community.

The company has understood the challenges of urban transportation and the customer needs and wants to help develop sustainable transport solutions for urban mobility.

Source: "Gazeta de Sud"

R&D Transport Tech Developments in Coventry and Warwickshire

A property audit of developments for R&D with a focus on transport technology has been carried out in Coventry and Warwickshire. This has revealed that schemes totalling £1 billion have been delivered in the last few months or are in the pipeline in the area.

The figures have been put together to help promote Coventry and Warwickshire as an international destination for inward investment at [MIPIM](#), the world's largest real estate annual event gathering all the key players of the property market.

Investment specialists will use the area's growing international reputation in the engineering technology R&D and manufacturing to attract foreign companies to consider Coventry and Warwickshire as destination.

The area has built its reputation on years of experience in automotive and engineering. To mention a few, Jaguar Land Rover recently opened a new [battery assembly centre](#) in Hams Hall (Warwickshire) to manufacture battery units that will power Jaguar Land Rover's next generation of electric vehicles; the [UK Battery Industrialisation Centre](#) that develops the next generation of battery systems is almost completed; [MIRA Technology Park](#) hosts over 30 companies involved in advanced technology and future mobility and is planning to expand.

All this combined with the very high level of academic and advanced design and engineering expertise from our two universities and the clear focus of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council has contributed to the achievement of strong results.

These investments place the region in a prime position to attract more investments and highlight the importance of research and development to the regional economy.

Source: *Business Innovation magazine*

Investments in the West Midlands on 5G enabled road and rail transport trials

West Midlands 5G, a new organisation set up to accelerate the benefits of 5G throughout the region and wholly owned by the West Midlands Combined Authority, is going to invest up to £2.5 millions in projects that develop a new service or product to support the development of 5G enabled transport innovations in the West Midlands.

The initiatives that will be funded are feasibility projects, industrial research projects and experimental development projects that must improve road and rail operational efficiency, provide better-connected transport or improve travellers experience.

The competition process is managed by Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation. The projects can last up to 18 months: projects of 12 months duration can claim up to £500,000 in grant funding, while projects that last between 13 and 18 months can have up to £1 million. The projects must start by 1st August 2020 and end by 31st March 2022.

The proposals must demonstrate that 5G is essential to develop the new service or product or that it offers a significant enhancement compared to current mobile communications. They also need to show improvements in one of the following areas: operation of roads to reduce congestion and improve safety; air quality; train, tram or bus services to enhance business operational efficiency; better joined up public transport services to provide more cohesive travel solutions and transport information.

It is expected to fund up to 5 projects and at least one of them must focus on travellers' experience.

Two-day conference on Intelligent Transport Systems and developments in Greece

The works of the 5th Annual Two-Day Conference of the "Hellenic Organization of Intelligent Transport Systems – ITS Hellas" on "Intelligent Transport Systems and developments in Greece" took place with great success on 17th and 18th December 2019 at the premises of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport in Athens, Greece. The conference was attended by senior government officials, representatives of public bodies, presidents and executives of Greek companies that are pillars for the development, promotion and modernisation of Intelligent Transport Systems in Greece.

This year, the two-day event set a record for more than 250 delegates, and hosted more than 50 distinguished Greek and foreign speakers, with a strong representation from the Ministries of Infrastructure and Transport, Development and Investment and Digital Governance.

During the conference, seven sessions were held, covering key topics related to international developments and good practices in the field of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), new ITS technologies in Greece, the needs and challenges of the industry, the strategy and development policies of ITS for sustainable urban mobility, as well as the role of ITS in freight transport. In addition, another session was held, dedicated to the European Programme Crocodile 2.

The presentations and discussions between speakers and attendees led to important conclusions and fruitful considerations regarding the establishment of environmental goals, the provision of incentives to consumers to turn to sustainable transport solutions, the need for all stakeholders to participate to the review of the National Strategy on ITS in order to include new areas of application (such as smart cities, smart urban mobility, intelligent freight transport, etc.). Also the need to develop collaborations between the public and private sectors to achieve the widespread use of ITS and the interoperability of systems through the standardisation of technologies and processes was highlighted. Special mention was made of the importance of strengthening the ITS sector with new financial instruments that will frame the existing private investments, while the implementation of tax relief as well as reducing bureaucracy through the necessary digitisation of procedures are crucial to facilitate the Greek economy and the small and medium-sized Greek companies.

Source: *epixeiro.gr*

Redesign Proposal of the Transport Network in the Greek Islands

The Deputy Minister of Tourism and Member of Parliament from the Dodecanese Prefecture (South Aegean Region), Mr. Manos Konsolas, has submitted a comprehensive proposal of 6 points at the event organised in Kos on 18th January by the Ministry of Shipping and Insular Policy, in collaboration with the South Aegean Region, for the planning of the new National Strategic Reference Framework for island and maritime policy.

It was highlighted that GDP shouldn't be considered the most reliable indicator for the distribution of resources when it comes to island regions: the South Aegean is ranked 136th among 271 Europeans Regions based on the GDP criterion, while based on the competitiveness index it is positioned as 257th. This distortion leads to uneven financing of the Greek island regions that, in the case of the South Aegean, could claim more resources.

The issue of the application of the principle of Double Insularity was also raised, especially intra-island communication, a key problem for the small islands and their inhabitants who are forced to move to larger islands for health issues and other matters. The Deputy Minister of Tourism asked for Double Insularity to be integrated in the state aid policy so that the residents of these islands could travel among the islands by ferry for free.

He also proposed to redesign the Transport Network in the islands on 4 axes:

1. A system of combined transport by ferry, seaplane and plane. The combined transport network from the islands to the mainland must be interconnected with trans-European transport networks and other means of transport.
2. The redesign of the coastal map with the application of radial itineraries.
3. The integration of coastal policy into insular policy.
4. The energy upgrade of ferry ships as LNG reduces their functional and energy costs.

Source: *bizness.gr*

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