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Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and National Road Administrations (NRAs)

Introduction

ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) is the integration of information technology with transport infrastructure, vehicles and users. The interest of ITS for National Road Administrations comes from the congestion and safety problems on Europe's transport networks, combined with continued growth of mobility and environmental issues. By sharing vital information, ITS enables people to have a more efficient transport network, in greater safety and with less impact on the environment. The interest in ITS is also the result of a changing society, as the information society has turned the road user into a much more demanding customer.

National Road Administrations

National Road Administrations (NRAs) in Europe are public bodies with the core task of taking care of the provision and operation of a safe and efficient national strategic road network. For this purpose, an NRA has overall responsibility for the planning, design and supervision of construction and maintenance works on these roads. In general, NRAs are executive administrators and are acting using a public budget, with budgetary constraints forcing administrations to look for innovative, more efficient, sustainable and affordable solutions.

CEDR

At a pan-European level the individual NRAs are members of the Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR). The purpose of the association is to facilitate the exchange of experience and information, including research, to analyse and discuss all road-related issues and to safeguard the interest of NRAs towards mutually beneficial developments. For more information, please see: www.cedr.fr

The interest of NRAs in ITS

NRAs are increasingly challenged by the problems of transport. The implementation of ITS brings benefits to NRAs thus helping to deliver safer, more efficient and more sustainable transport. ITS is of growing importance for NRAs in several areas and improves:

- The availability and accessibility of traffic data
- The development of information services, securing a minimum service for all road users
- Traffic Management
- The improvement of Incident Management and the introduction of eCall
- The introduction of Cooperative Systems with the use of Intelligent Infrastructure
- Multimodality support
- Efficient maintenance of the strategic network

Through the mutual interest in ITS, CEDR is working closely together with the EasyWay-project (a pan-European program between NRAs and various other partners) with the goal to support future deployment of ITS on the TERN.

Why ITS will help NRAs

NRAs have many challenges in the coming years: mobility is still growing, public budgets are being reduced, the end user is becoming more demanding, and the potential role of private service providers on the roads is gradually expanding. The importance of coordinated Traffic Management is increasing and managing the network will depend more and more on using ITS as a tool. The core business of NRAs, Network Operation, will remain the same. However, these developments have resulted in a shift in focus towards traffic management, more efficient use of the existing infrastructure and increasingly on maintenance and operation. The application of ITS will enable NRAs to achieve these goals.

Priorities for NRAs

The use and implementation of ITS takes place at a different pace across Europe, however cooperating NRAs in CEDR do recognise important common pan-European interests in applying ITS, in line with the ITS Directive. Priorities for the coming few years include:

1. Availability and exchange of traffic data
 - Data is the fuel for ITS. The use of ITS will mean that NRAs will generate more data; however the **acquisition of data** is no longer the sole territory of NRAs. In several European countries the private sector is increasingly becoming an important provider of data which is likely to change the ITS-market, and influence the role of the NRA.
 - NRAs want to be involved in the specification of **data quality criteria** especially for the use of traffic management services.
2. The Provision of ITS Services
 - The issue of providing **safety related information** free-of-charge to the end users is one of the core interests of NRAs. The challenging issue arises when serving political goals without impairing the market. A common view is needed to safeguard NRA interests in their core business of network operation and maintaining road safety.
 - NRAs will also benefit from agreeing on **key services for their own interest** which should at minimum be included in the list of services to be promoted via the ITS Directive during the next years. Information quality is key to this item.
3. Cooperative systems
 - The upcoming **cooperative systems** will have an influence on the behaviour of the road users and can change the investments in ITS application. So, to safeguard the role of the NRAs as 'main traffic managers', cooperation with the private sector will become more important in future.
 - To improve the reliability of ITS Services it is necessary to enhance the **consistency** between dynamic roadside and in-vehicle messages as well as traffic management strategies on national, regional and local networks.
 - The implementation of ITS should not conflict and should **co-exist** with existing infrastructure at a legal, operational and technical level, such as electronic tolling
4. Relationship NRA – private sector
 - With the increasing emergence of ITS service providers the ITS market will become more mature. The upcoming **co-operation of NRAs with other stakeholders** remains a point of discussion. For example, the expanding growth of the use of navigation systems will affect the operation of Traffic Management. NRAs have to find ways to cope with that situation.

What can be expected of NRAs/CEDR

The current developments in the European ITS Arena create a strong momentum for NRAs and CEDR to act. With the ITS Action Plan of the European Commission and with the introduction of the ITS Directive, the deployment of ITS will continue to increase as a priority over the coming years.

Of course, each NRA develops further its individual priority in its national context. CEDR members are the key players when implementing directives, standards or recommendations. As such, they are in a unique position to address the full range of road transport and infrastructure issues at a pan-European level. In the coming years there is a commitment to:

1. Support setting up specifications for implementing the EU ITS Action Plan and the Priority Services and support by having them implemented at a national level ;
2. Support setting up a framework for the cooperation between public and private parties;
3. Use the momentum to support further development of Cooperative Systems by supporting the Intelligent Infrastructure.

Through a collaborative approach, CEDR aims to support delivery of these measures by:

- Bringing and exchanging expertise and best practices of NRAs;
- Coordinating information and adding value to ongoing pilots and Field Operational Tests;
- Facilitating the implementation of guidelines, standards and recommendations at national level.

CEDR and EasyWay

For the efficient implementation of these measures, CEDR and EasyWay are cooperating closely. The EasyWay-project (supported by the European Commission) is implemented by a consortium of European Road Authorities, Road Operators and various other partners. One of the key elements in its working plan is the development of the EasyWay Deployment Guidelines. These guidelines constitute an instrument to ensure harmonized deployment of European Core ITS Services defined by the project partners. CEDR wants to support EasyWay by testing the feasibility of these guidelines and encourages their use by National Road Authorities.