



**TRA 2014  
Opening Ceremony  
Monday, 14th April 2014**

**Welcome Address  
Simon Grima, CEDR Chair**

Good Morning.

Minister, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to address the delegates of another TRA conference. Since its excellent start in Goteborg, eight years ago, this event has continued to grow in importance to the Transport Sector. Undoubtedly it is now a leading event for all Transport stakeholders worldwide.

On behalf of the European Directors of Roads I would like, first and foremost, to thank our French hosts and the Management, Programming and Organising Committees for organising this fifth TRA event, which I am sure will continue to build on the enormous success of its predecessors.

It is also my great pleasure and a privilege, as chairman of CEDR, to be able to share some thoughts on the crucial role of TRA.

In these eight years of TRA, there has been considerable development within the transport research community. There is now more research cooperation between the modes, greater cooperation between the member countries and with the European Commission as well as with international partners. TRA is now clearly multimodal and together with our partners from the ETPs, we are now also looking towards the convergence of the respective strategic research agendas.

CEDR is a client for research and innovation results. CEDR's primary interest in TRA is about implementing the results of research and innovation in order to reap the benefits. This is a core theme of this conference.

With our own customers as our focus, our drive is for optimised and reliable utilisation of the available infrastructures within the various social objectives which include safety, social inclusion, energy conservation and minimal disturbance to the environment. The availability of infrastructure is crucial for growth and job creation – the theme of this opening - but for the European Directors of Roads, this comes with a current backdrop of diminishing budgets. Hence the need of deploying even more innovative research in the shortest possible time frames.

As European Directors of Roads, we have defined the following four main challenges for the next years:

### **Challenge 1 – Maintenance**

Regardless of whether we are looking at the increasing amount of the aging infrastructure, or the infrastructure still to be built in the peripheral countries, there is now an urgent need to address an escalating maintenance deficit. Serious measures are required needing innovative approaches supported by solid research.

### **Challenge 2 - Multi Modality**

CEDR is keen to see a concrete move in the design and implementation of multi modal transport solutions. It is time to overcome the organisational and research challenges.

### **Challenge 3 – Climate change**

This is now a reality and we are behind with practical mitigation-and-adaptation strategies to deal with its consequences. Clearly more effort is needed on innovations which will save and create jobs.

### **Challenge 4 – ITS**

ITS is not an aim in itself, but a skilful deployment of ITS will bring further benefits to our increasingly networked society which is clearly ready for the change.

All the CEDR members are keen that all research especially that related to the above challenges is effectively brought to deployment, and we can assist.

We at CEDR think that our tried and tested model for trans-national cooperation could be used by other research entities. Please do visit our CEDR village in the exhibition area where you will find more information on the process and outputs. You will also find a strong interest in readily implementable research and innovative products which help us improve our product. And because our key focus is on addressing our challenges cost effectively and in a timely manner we are ready to share funding and resources with whoever can contribute.

By working together on common challenges we can achieve greater synergies. Not only in terms of shared objectives that TRA has helped deliver, but also in terms of governance structures, procedures and funding instruments. Such cooperation would also result in innovation leadership, stimulating further job creation.

Ladies and gentlemen, now is the time to act. The innovation challenges we are facing are too complex and too costly to address them each on our own. Instead *we must reach out across the borders, modes and sectors and pull our efforts and resources together.*

These 3 days here will provide many such opportunities. CEDR wishes you all a very profitable and enjoyable conference.

Thank you.