

RACE2050 final conference review: “Between dark scenarios and a bright future” – Conference for a sustainable and competitive European transport industry up to 2050

29 January 2015

Venue: European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Brussels

On 29 January 2015, RACE2050 concluded its widespread research activities with the organization of an international conference devoted to the future competitiveness of the European transport industry.

Co-organized with precious support of the European Economic and Social Committee, more than 50 participants from a broad range of transport and transport industry (e.g. policy makers, consultants, manufacturing and service operator representatives) followed our invitation to come to Brussels. With this conference, the project team aimed for the objective to present its main research outcomes (such as the [scenarios for 2030 and 2050](#), the [Transport Synopsis Tool](#) as well as the main findings, contradictions and peculiarities regarding the future competitiveness of the European transport industry) to a prominent audience of transport experts and to the European Commission itself.

This intention was framed with inputs of a selection of distinguished guest speakers ranging from social sciences to the World Bank that addressed strongly relevant and interesting spotlights in the field of transport, transport policy and future studies.

Following these presentations, the participants extensively discussed the leading question of how Europe, taking into account its heterogeneous industrial landscape, can keep its current transport industrial pole position in a strongly globalizing economy and how it might become environmentally and socially sustainable by 2050.

The main message of this conference was that the European transport industry is witnessing a turning point and needs a strong vision to overcome the continent’s inertia, which, if not addressed now and properly, will increase the pressure for the majority of companies under currently changing framework conditions. In order to provide a wake up call, RACE2050 provocatively draw a dark scenario for 2030, visualized also through a set of inspiring movie clips. Thereby, RACE2050 not only provided a critical prognosis regarding the sector’s inertia but also contributed to the field of future studies through an innovative methodological approach of “didactic” functions of such scenarios.

As Europe’s greatest challenge is the continent’s ‘inner enemy’, the conference reminded to the fact that altogether Europe has good abilities to compete on the global markets if it is able to recap its potentials, its ‘critical mass’ and fundamentals.

Following the 30-months endeavor of RACE2050 that aimed for stimulating discussions, the project’s final conference was probably the most fruitful platform to encourage the development of long-duree road maps and to address the need to create a vision for the future of the transport industry.

We would like to thank all the participants that made this meeting a success and not least, the European Commission for its high-level involvement as well as for its rewarding finalizing words about RACE2050’s endeavors.

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