

Transport Planning Society

European Transport Conference 2021

Proposal for TPS Programme Committee / Session on 'Growing and improving transport planning skills across Europe'

The Challenge

As transport moves ever more centre stage in supporting social, economic, environmental, health and climate objectives, it is vital that we have professional transport planners equipped with all the training and skills needed to serve society's expectations. And it is equally vital that these skills are updated to serve changing needs throughout a professional career.

Transport planning requires a uniquely broad skillset and the ability to apply these skills in a wide range of situations. Transport planners must be aware, agile and adept, as well as thoroughly understanding transport in all its forms. So how do we ensure that the profession is suitably trained to deliver the solutions that society demands and deserves?

Deep consideration has been given to this in the UK but we want to share experience across Europe and explore the lessons to be learned and how more pan-European collaboration on growing and improving transport planning skills would be helpful, perhaps through the Association of European Transport (AET).

Background

The Transport Planning Society is the professional body for transport planners in the UK and Ireland. It has been instrumental in designing training and qualifications for transport planners there (and its members elsewhere) and is the only professional body in Europe to offer a professional qualification uniquely for transport planners (awarded jointly with the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation)¹.

At ETC in 2020, the TPS held a Special Session on 'Growing and improving transport planning skills in Europe'. It included presentations on:

- Transport planning as a profession and the role of professional bodies
- Transport planning skills development in the UK and Ireland

This generated an interesting discussion on the different perceptions of transport planning in European countries and whether the skills of those practicing would be strengthened by better recognition of the profession and improved pan-European networking focused on transport planning.

¹ See Chapter 5 of the [TPS State of the Nations Report](#).

Proposal

For 2021, it is proposed to invite papers on this topic from more widely in Europe and hold a Special Session to debate and discuss this further. This could include papers on the theme and topics below, plus a panel discussion from selected representatives from across the continent.

The overall objective is to stimulate thinking and debate on how to create and maintain a pan-European transport planning profession that best serves the ever-changing needs of society.

The theme therefore continues to be:

'Growing and improving transport planning skills in Europe'.

Our call is:

'Following our Special Session on this topic last year, we invite transport practitioners and academics from across Europe to share how transport planning is regarded and structured in your country/region, how skills are developed and recognized, and your thoughts on how transport planning could be improved through better collaboration, networking, training and skills development.

Paper topics could include:

- The development and recognition of transport planning as a profession in European countries
- Routes into transport planning in European countries, covering university courses (undergraduate and masters level) and alternative routes (such as apprenticeships and work experience)
- Post-academic training in European countries – training in employment, professional development schemes and further qualifications which recognize competency in transport planning.
- Ideas for pan-European networking and collaboration in transport planning to support the development of transport planning skills and opportunities to do more through the AET
- Case studies of projects or research that have been delivered through collaboration and integrated working between transport professionals and/or academics in European countries

We welcome papers from practitioners, academics, researchers and anyone else with an interest in the development of transport planning skills in Europe.