



EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
17 – 19 SEPTEMBER 2025
University of Antwerp, Belgium



GUIDE FOR SESSION CHAIRS

Thank you!

Thank you for volunteering to chair one or more sessions at the European Transport Conference. The role of the session chair is vital to the success and professionalism of the conference. Please take note of the pointers in this guide, even if you have chaired at ETC before, to help all delegates (speakers and audience) have a good experience.

Your role before the conference

- Please review the period of time allocated to your session and the order of presentations. In principle, each paper is allotted 30 minutes (20 minutes to present, 10 minutes for questions and discussion). However, in some cases, there may be more or less time available.
- E-mail the speakers to introduce yourself as their chair, ask them to confirm their attendance and offer help in preparing for the session. Please do this as soon as you have received the information on your session. Share your proposal for the use of time in your session and decide on the final order of papers.
- If you are unable to get in contact with one of the speakers (e.g. there is no response or the e-mail bounces), please inform [Sanderijn](#).
- If you decide to change the communicated order of papers (see [website](#)), please inform [Sanderijn](#). She can make sure the programme on the website and in the conference-app are adapted accordingly.
- Ask your speakers for some biographical information, so you can introduce them in the session.
- Ask your speakers to send you their paper and/or presentation before the conference and remind them of the appropriate deadlines.
- Prepare some questions and identify common threads and contrasts, in case the discussion needs some help getting started.
- Some speakers may have requested additional help from their chair. If this is the case, it will be in the session information you received from Sanderijn. They are likely to be inexperienced speakers or may not have attended the conference before. Please adapt your guidance accordingly. We want our speakers to have a good experience and retain their interest in the conference.

Chairing the session

- Make sure the session starts at the correct time. Please be in the room 10 minutes before the start so you can meet the speakers and steward and make everyone feel at ease.
- Introduce yourself and the speakers to the audience at the start of the session. Keep the introduction short, so the speakers can have their full allocated time.
- Ensure speakers keep to their allotted time, as it would be unfair if earlier speakers use too much time and later speakers are hurried.
- Invite comments from the audience and guide the discussions. Please be mindful that we cherish a friendly atmosphere at ETC. Questions and discussion should reflect a sincere interest in the

work of the presenter, a desire to share knowledge and to have a meaningful discussion. We ask you to moderate unconstructive criticism or obvious self-promotion from the audience.

- Ask discussants to state their name and affiliation, so the presenter and the audience have some context.
- As a chair, you are welcome to present your own point of view, however, please ensure not to monopolise discussions.
- The balance in the audience between practitioners, policy makers and researchers may be rather uneven, in which case it may be appropriate for you to invite comments from particular individuals or representatives of particular groups.
- Please do not let the session run out of time.

Please be mindful of diversity

- At AET and ETC we value diversity as we believe that coming together from different backgrounds and points of view make us better in dealing with the challenges transport professionals face. Therefore, we welcome speakers and audience of all levels of expertise and experience and from diverse backgrounds (affiliation, field of expertise, age, gender, English language skills, cultural background, beliefs et cetera).
- Attending an international conference, presenting or asking questions can be an intimidating experience for those less experienced. As chair, you can help make speakers and delegates feel welcome and included by supporting and encouraging them, especially when they are particularly nervous.
- Please be aware that for many speakers and delegates, English will not be their native language.
- Feel free to request explanation of abbreviations used, assist audience members in wording their question and offer to take written questions.

Stewards

- Each session will have a steward allocated. They will be asked to introduce themselves to you before the start of the session. The steward is generally a student with an interest in the topics covered by the seminar.
- The stewards are there to assist and support you and the conference organisers. Their role is to ensure the smooth running of the sessions by supporting the speakers and session chair throughout the seminar. The job includes providing help with the visual aid equipment, solving practical issues, noting the numbers attending each session et cetera.
- They are also your link with the conference desk and technician in case of any problems or an emergency and can be called on to assist with any issues which may arise.

Missing a speaker?

- In rare cases, a speaker does not turn up for the session. If this happens, liaise with your steward and have them contact Sanderijn Baanders (+31 681 426 262 or find her at the conference desk) to check for late updates.
- Start the session as planned. If the missing speaker is first on the list, reorder the presentations.
- If it becomes evident that the speaker will definitely not turn up, feel free to use the time for more questions and discussion or to finish the session early, depending on the energy of the session.

Social media

- We are grateful for any social media exposure we can get from conference participants during ETC. Our main social platform is LinkedIn. You can find us here to tag: [Association for European Transport \(AET\)](#).
- Should you write any posts about the conference online, be sure to use our hashtag **#etcAntwerp2025** in order to link to our other posts.
- AET has stopped being active on X, as this platform no longer aligns with our values.
- We encourage our chairs to post to LinkedIn about their session. If you want to, feel free to post before, after or about your session. A picture of the session and the speakers is a great eyecatcher for a post, but please make sure you have the explicit permission of anyone in any picture you would like to post online!

Any questions before or during the conference?

- If you have any queries or problems, please contact [Sanderijn](#) or [AET support team](#).
- During the conference Sanderijn can be reached at +31 681 426 262