

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

Conference Reflections: Insights from the 4th International Conference "TRANSPORT FOR TODAY'S SOCIETY" under the theme Green Urban Transport Solutions

The 4th International Conference "Transport for Today's Society", organized by the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola, together with its co-organizers, gathered leading experts, researchers, and practitioners from diverse fields to explore the future of sustainable transport systems. This year's conference focused on "Green Urban Transport Solutions", aiming at the development and implementation of environmentally friendly, efficient, and inclusive transport solutions in urban environments.

The event served as a dynamic platform for participants to discuss the critical issues and challenges facing urban mobility in the context of the green transition, with a particular emphasis on the Western Balkans and South East Europe. Through a combination of insightful keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities, the conference facilitated rich exchanges of ideas that will help shape the future of sustainable urban transport including the critical roles of traffic safety and infrastructure planning in achieving these goals.

Here are some key insights and reflections derived from the discussions:

1. The Urgent Need for Green Transport Solutions

Urban transport is one of the leading contributors to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in rapidly growing cities. The conference underscored the pressing need for green transport solutions that reduce dependency on fossil fuels, incorporate zero-emission technologies, and promote sustainable modes of transport. Key strategies identified include the development of electric vehicles (EVs), the integration of renewable energy sources into transportation networks, and the promotion of active transport modes, such as walking and cycling, to foster cleaner, healthier cities. Traffic safety plays a central role in these initiatives, ensuring that new, environmentally friendly transport modes are safely integrated into the urban environment.

2. Smart Solutions as an Enabler of Sustainable Transport and Mobility

The role of smart mobility solutions in achieving sustainable urban transport was a central theme of the conference. Technologies such as Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) platforms, intelligent traffic management systems, and real-time data solutions can significantly enhance transport efficiency, alleviate congestion, and reduce environmental impact. Digital innovations in transportation were emphasized as essential tools to optimize urban infrastructure use while encouraging multimodal transport options.

3. Integrating Land Use and Transport Planning

A major takeaway from the conference was the necessity of a more integrated approach to urban planning. Land use and transport planning must be linked to create cities that are not only accessible but also sustainable. Urban environments that prioritize mixed-use development, compact city designs, and investments in public transport infrastructure are key to making green transport solutions more feasible. The importance of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) was also highlighted, as they provide a structured framework for cities to integrate transportation systems with urban development, ensuring long-term sustainability.

4. Addressing Challenges in the Western Balkans and South East Europe

The Western Balkans and South East Europe face significant obstacles in adopting green transport solutions, including outdated infrastructure, limited funding, and fragmented regional policies. The conference discussions emphasized that overcoming these barriers requires regional cooperation, policy harmonization, and increased investment in infrastructure that supports low-carbon and high-efficiency transport options. Institutions like the Transport Community were recognized for their role in facilitating cross-border collaboration and building a more sustainable transport network across the region.

5. Social Equity and Inclusivity in Green Urban Transport

The conference also highlighted the importance of social equity in the transition to green urban transport. As cities shift toward more sustainable transport options, it is vital to ensure that vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and residents of underserved areas, have equal access to these services. By prioritizing universal design principles and affordable, accessible public transportation, cities can ensure that the benefits of the green transition are shared by all citizens.

6. Policy and Financial Support for the Green Transition

The transition to sustainable urban transport requires strong policy support and financial investment. The conference stressed the importance of creating favorable policy frameworks that encourage the use of electric vehicles, the development of clean infrastructure, and the adoption of innovative transport technologies.

The role of public-private partnerships in financing and implementing green transport solutions was discussed as a crucial strategy for driving large-scale change and accelerating the green transition.

The 4th International Conference on "Transport for Today's Society," centred around the theme of Green Urban Transport Solutions, provided invaluable insights into the future path for transforming urban mobility systems. The reflections from the event underscore the need for collaborative action, technological innovation, and integrated policy approaches to create sustainable and resilient transport networks that contribute to healthier cities and a cleaner environment.

As the Western Balkans and South East Europe face increasing mobility demands, the conference participants agreed that it is essential to prioritize green, equitable, and innovative transport solutions while ensuring robust traffic safety measures and infrastructure planning to facilitate the success of the green transition in urban transport.

By working together, regions and cities across Europe can overcome challenges and create the infrastructure and policies necessary to enable a sustainable, smart, and accessible transport future for all.

> In the 21st century, cities are not just shaped by their history or national pride, but by the transport systems that connect them. A modern transport network is the backbone of a city, enabling movement, fostering innovation, and ensuring inclusivity. As we shape our cities for the future, we must build transport systems that are sustainable, safe, and efficient, while respecting the values and heritage that define us."

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