PRESS RELEASE

Paris, 10 April 2012

Shortlist for 2012 Young Researcher Award announced

International Transport Forum to honour outstanding research on transport connectivity

The International Transport Forum at the OECD, an intergovernmental organisation for the transport sector that comprises 53 countries, has announced the names and projects of candidates shortlisted for its 2012 Young Researcher of the Year Award.

From applications representing 11 different nationalities, the jury has shortlisted the following three (in alphabetical order):

► Wing Yee Winnie Lam received her B.A. and Ph.D. degrees in geography from the University of Hong Kong. Her research interests focus on sustainable transport and include the areas of socially sustainable transport, space-time modeling of travel behaviour, road safety analysis, land use and transport integration. In particular, her research addresses questions in urban, transport and health geography through the application of a geographic information system.

Wing Yee Winnie Lam submitted the paper “Building a seamless transport system through walking”. Her paper shows that the challenge of seamlessness in the transport system necessitates effective reforms at the most fundamental levels of the system— the pedestrian system. Walking plays a dominant role in terms of mobility in both the developing and developed world. While the potential benefits associated with walking have been generally recognised, governments lacking either the political vision or will to address its importance, together with citizens’ changing attitudes toward walking, are major hurdles in promoting its use. Ms Lam’s study proposes a path-based walkability audit which explicitly evaluates the walking environment. To illustrate, the pedestrian environment surrounding three elderly health centres (EHC) in Hong Kong was examined. The results show that pedestrian safety has been given priority above pedestrians’ comfort and convenience. Nonetheless, they should all be fully considered to promote active transport. The assessment tool has clear yet flexible criteria to adapt to the diverse cultures and geography. Finally, the paper recommends the use of a “plan, do, study, act” (PDSA) cycle of the walkability audit for the strategic planning of a seamless transport system.

► Rosa Sanchis-Guarner is a Research Officer (Post-doctoral researcher) at the Spatial Economics Research Centre (SERC) at the London School of Economics (LSE). She was born in Valencia (Spain), where she earned a BSc in Economics. After her undergraduate studies she moved to the University of Barcelona where she completed an MSc in Quantitative Economics in 2006. That year she moved to London (UK), to study economics at LSE.

She is the main author of the paper entitled “Driving up wages: The effects of road improvements in Great Britain”. Her co-author is Teemu
Lahti from the Government Institute for Economic Research which analyses public finances in Finland and evaluates economic reforms. In the paper, the effects of road improvements on individual labour market outcomes using panel data from Great Britain are estimated. To capture these effects, a measure of accessibility to employment through the road network at a very detailed geographical level has been constructed. The effect of accessibility on wages, hours worked, employment status and commuting time has been estimated. They found a positive impact of accessibility from work location on weekly wages and total hours worked but no effect of accessibility from home neither on wages nor hours.

Ömer Selvi is a post-doctoral researcher in the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, affiliated to the action of Multimodal Public Transport Safety (MULTRA). Prior to joining MULTRA, he was a research assistant and accompanied the transportation-related lectures and projects, as well as the urban planning studios, at the İzmir Institute of Technology. He completed all his education in İzmir. He gained his BSc at İzmir Dokuz Eylül University, his MSc and PhD at the İzmir Institute of Technology in City and Regional Planning.

Ömer Selvi is the main author of the paper entitled "An accident risk prediction model based on a fuzzy logic approach for the urban roads of İzmir metropolitan area". Yavuz DUVARCI, Gökmen TAYFUR and Ömür SAYGIN from İzmir Institute of Technology are the co-authors. The main assumption of the study is that road traffic accidents occurring in Turkey, and specifically within the İzmir urban area, involve spatial and other external factors which are independent of the vehicles or drivers. Using Fuzzy Logic Modelling (FLM) as a mathematical prediction tool, a prediction model was built using factors such as traffic volume, precipitation status and road geometry. This study is a preliminary and experimental attempt to develop an Accident Risk Prediction Model (ARPM) for road safety issues within the İzmir urban environment.

The Award is open to researchers under 35 years of age and aims to highlight the importance of research for sound policy formulation and implementation. The Award carries a prize of 5 000 Euros and will be presented at the International Transport Forum’s 2012 summit, the annual gathering of transport ministers from around the globe, to be held on 2-4 May in Leipzig, Germany.

The winner of the Young Researcher Award 2012 will be honoured at a ceremony during the International Transport Forum’s Annual Summit in Leipzig, Germany, on Thursday, 3 May.

For more information on the International Transport Forum’s 2012 Summit and the Awards, please visit the Summit 2012 website.

Journalists who would like to cover the Award ceremony or the Summit should register online for accreditation.