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Interview with WCTR Scientific Committee Chair - Lori Tavasszy

Professor Lori Tavasszy is the Chair of the WCTRS Scientific Committee (SCC) and a full Professor in Freight Transport & Logistics at the Delft University of Technology. He served as Chair of SCC for the WCTR Mumbai Conference in 2019 and the Montreal Conference in 2023.

Professor Gopal R. Patil, Editor of the WCTR Newsletter and Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, recently asked Professor Tavasszy a series of questions addressing scientific matters relevant to participants of WCTR 2026 in Toulouse.

Below is the full interview with Professor Tavasszy

1. **How is the response to WCTR2026, the Toulouse conference, with respect to manuscript submissions from researchers around the world?**

We have received a record number of 1900 submissions, with India leading with almost 300 submissions, closely followed by North-America. I was pleased to see that this number was even higher than the WCTR Virtual Meet of 2022, which had drawn 1800 webinar attendees.

2. You have been the WCTRS SCC Chair for the previous conferences as well, and thus are aware of the broader scientific programs in the previous conferences in Montreal (2023) and Mumbai (2019). Do you see any changes in the scientific activities of the Toulouse 2026 conference?

We can observe a gradual increase in the quality of submissions. I expect that, as with the previous conferences, we will be able to realize at least 20 special issues in scientific journals. This is more than any other conference, even larger ones, can boast of. I want to add that besides the scientific activities, also industry will be well represented, with Toulouse being an important home base of the European aviation sector.

3. Can you give some highlights of the scientific activities of the Toulouse 2026 conference that can be attractive to potential participants?

First of all, we have a Nobel laureate as first keynote speaker: Professor Jean Tirole, from the Toulouse School of Economics, known for his contributions to industrial organization and game theory. We have another famous keynote speaker, one of the most eminent transportation scientists of our time, Prof. Moshe Ben-Akiva from MIT. Another highlight is that, for the first time, we will devote significant attention to presentations with posters. Posters are an underrated medium. As many of us have already experienced, these often provide more visibility to authors, and more opportunity for discussions than a lectern presentation. Thirdly, all SIGs (Special Interest Groups) are preparing special sessions with input from policy and industry, which should provide inspiration for researchers. Finally, a unique highlight for this conference is that we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of WCTRS. Although the official jubilee will be in 2027, we have decided to dedicate a special plenary session to the relevance and future of this unique society.

4. How do you decide presentations for Poster and Lectern sessions? Are Lectern sessions superior to Poster Sessions? Are there any advantages of a poster session?

This is a great question. We are very purposefully selecting good papers to act as anchors for both sessions. Besides the fact that this allows us to firmly root sessions on a topic, we also want to avoid a perception of differences in quality between the two types of presentation. We realize that some topics or methods lend themselves more to a niche audience, or some topics gather too many papers for a lectern session and can better be presented together as posters. Anyone who has been at TRB once will find that poster sessions can be extremely rewarding for both authors and audience, while lectern sessions can sometimes leave one underwhelmed. We trust that these forms of presentation will also be recognized by universities as having an equal status.

5. How can someone get involved in the scientific activities of WCTRS?

We have a structure of working groups, called Special Interest Groups, with each at least 25 volunteer members, who wish to stay connected on an important topic and drive the activities of the society. Typically,

the groups will involve seniors and more junior scholars, all working together to review papers, create sessions, book publications or journal special issues, and workshops in between the WCTR conferences. Once you are WCTRS member, you can enroll in any of the SIGs, after contacting the respective SIG chair. Of course, one can expect that some work will need to be done. As a young member one should also consider becoming active in WCTR-Young, or WCTR-Y. Here the training-on-the-job has much stronger emphasis, which will lead to a steeper learning curve.

6. As a WCTRS SCC Chair, do you have any other message to the transportation research community?

In these geopolitically complex and difficult times, one could be tempted to lose sight of the relevance of global communities. As we all know, however, many problems in and around the transportation system require globally shared knowledge, awareness, and governance. I strongly believe that we are needed more than ever. We must be entrepreneurial, addressing global problems and opportunities more proactively. Also, we must balance difficult trade-offs in our own practice, like the need for young professionals to travel around the world on the one hand, and the pressure to decarbonize activities on the other. The solution of these unique challenges should not be left to chance – and we at WCTRS are smart enough to face them head-on.

WCTR 2026 Manifesto Competition

Celebrating 50 Years of WCTRS

To mark the 50th Anniversary of the World Conference on Transport Research Society (WCTRS), the Manifesto for the Future of Transport Research Competition has been launched.

This global initiative invites teams of young researchers to develop a manifesto that outlines how transport research should evolve over the next 50 years.

Who Can Participate?

The competition is open to:

- Master's students
- Doctoral candidates
- Postdoctoral researchers (within 5 years of PhD)
- Early-career professionals in industry, consulting, NGOs, or government

All participants must be **under 35 years old** and apply in **teams of 3–5 members**. Interdisciplinary team composition is strongly encouraged.



Submission deadline: 30 April 2026



Award: €1,500 prize + plenary presentation opportunity



Deliverables: A detailed manifesto, a one-page summary, and a ten-minute video



Official flyer with all details: **Click here**



WCTR 2026 conference website: <https://www.wctr2026.fr/>

For any queries, email: wctrs-y2026@outlook.com

Special issue on "Advances in freight modelling: WCTR2026"

Senior Editor: Sushant Sharma (Texas A&M University)

Associate Editor: Lori Tavasszy (Delft University of Technology)

SIG B5 is pleased to announce a forthcoming Special Issue in TRR "Advances in freight modelling: WCTR2026".

This Special Issue will feature selected and top-rated papers from WCTR 2026.

About - TRR - Transportation Research Board – *Transportation Research Record* -

<https://journals.sagepub.com/overview-metric/TRR?>

Call for Papers: 2nd World Symposium on Sustainable Transport and Livability

Submit your work to the **2nd World Symposium on Sustainable Transport and Livability (WSSTL 2027)**, taking place at TU Wien, Vienna, Austria, from 30th March to 2nd April 2027.

The symposium focuses on advancing research on the linkages between sustainable transport and livability of cities, shaped by policy, planning, design, and engineering. We especially welcome interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary contributions.

Topics include (but are not limited to) linkages between sustainable transport and:

- Well-being, health and happiness
- Quality of life, equity and social justice
- Safety, accessibility, affordability and environmental quality
- Disaster resiliency
- Other sustainable transport aspects related to livability

All papers will be **double-blind peer reviewed** prior to the symposium and accepted papers will be invited to a **Special Issue of the journal *Transport and Sustainability & Livability (TSTL)***. **Open Access fees are waived** for papers presented at the symposium.

Submission deadline: 30 June 2026

Call for Papers: <https://wsstl2027.fv.tuwien.ac.at/call-for-papers/>

Symposium website: <https://wsstl2027.fv.tuwien.ac.at/>

For inquiries: wsstl2027@tuwien.ac.at

We look forward to your contributions and to welcoming you in Vienna.

WSSTL 2027 Local Organising Committee

Prof. Guenter Emberger, Dr. Takeru Shibayama, and Ass. Prof. Dr. Bingyu Zhao

TU Wien, Austria

Call for Papers: 6th International Symposium on High-Speed Rail Socioeconomic Impacts

The 6th International Symposium on High-Speed Rail Socioeconomic Impacts will be held online on 8–9 September 2026.

Papers addressing the impacts of high-speed rail on productivity, land-use systems, tourism, property markets and pricing policies, project evaluation, competition and integration with other transport modes, as well as equity and inclusion, are welcome.

Abstract submission deadline: 15 May 2026

Registration: Free of charge

The Proceedings of the Symposium will be published by Springer in the book series “Business and Economics” (indexed in Scopus).

Further information, including submission guidelines, is available at: <https://uic.org/events/6th-international-symposium-on-high-speed-rail-socioeconomic-impacts>

Masters Opportunity: C-MAT MSc. Maritime or Air Transport Management at University of Antwerp and Antwerp Management School

In a world where the smooth flow of goods and people across the globe is more vital than ever, the Master in Maritime and Air Transport Management offered by Antwerp Management School (AMS) in collaboration with C-MAT (Centre for Maritime and Air Transport Management) at the University of Antwerp stands out as a forward-looking, industry-aligned program that prepares the next generation of transport leaders.

The Master in Maritime and Air Transport Management offers two specialized tracks:

- **Maritime Transport Management**, focused on the global shipping industry, maritime and port economics and business, maritime supply chains, and logistics.
- **Air Transport Management**, designed around aviation logistics, airport and airline management and strategy, revenue management, and the broader air transport value chain.

Interested in knowing more about this program? Join online info session:

- On March 4th (click [here](#))
- On March 11th (click [here](#))

Interested in joining the program?

The next edition starts on September 7th, 2026, in Antwerp. Applications are now open!

Follow on [LinkedIn](#)

Membership of the WCTRS

The World Conference on Transport Research Society (WCTRS) provides a forum for the interchange of ideas among transport researchers, managers, policymakers, and educators from all over the world from a multi-modal, multi-disciplinary, and multi-sectoral perspective.

Every three years, the Society holds the World Conference, where leading transport professionals from all countries and areas convene to learn from one another. WCTR Toulouse will be held from 6th-10th July 2026.

In addition to our [Special Interest Groups](#), which facilitate research activities and the exchange of ideas in 42 topic areas, the WCTRS has a number of Task Forces that conduct research into emerging issues in transport and aim to bridge gaps between research and policy-making.

All academics, practitioners, students, and interested individuals are invited to apply to become an individual member of the WCTRS. You can apply to join at any time by completing [this online form](#) and paying your membership fees [here](#).

The benefits of membership include:

- Access to a truly international network of transport academics and practitioners, which is the only such worldwide network, with over 1000 experts interested in transport research from over 80 countries.
- A wide variety of Special Interest Groups (SIGs), each dedicated to a specific academic topic, from mode-specific policy and modeling to solutions for climate change and disaster resilience. The full list can be found on the SIGs webpage.
- A free online subscription to the Society's two Journals: Transport Policy and Case Studies on Transport Policy.
- Online access to the proceedings of past conferences.
- Liaison with some 30 partner journals, which publish the best conference papers.
- Outreach to international organizations such as the International Transport Forum, World Bank, and UNFCCC conferences.
- WCTRS Young Initiatives, including the WCTRS-Y Conference, grants awarded to young researchers, and dedicated newsletters and job information.
- Opportunities to contribute to the planning of a future World Conference through participation in Special Interest Groups and other Society activities.

More details: [Click here](#)

Useful Information and Links

1. **WCTR 2026 – 17th World Conference on Transport Research, Toulouse, France (6–10 July 2026)**
For details : [Click Here](#)
2. **WCTRS – Young Researchers' Initiative (WCTRS-Y)**
Opportunities for academic growth, networking, and professional development for early-career researchers
For details : [Click Here](#)
3. **Transportation Research Procedia on World Conference on Transport Research - WCTR 2023 Montreal 17-21 July 2023**
Open Access
For details: [Click Here](#)
4. **Publications by SIG A4-Handbook on High-Speed Rail and Quality of Life and Frontiers in High-Speed Rail Development**

Both books are free to download.

For details: [Click Here](#)

5. **Urban Mobility Research in India Transport: Selected Proceedings from the Research Symposium of the 16th Urban Mobility India Conference & Expo 2023**

For details: [Click Here](#)

6. **A new Transport Research and Education Network to help ESCAP member States achieve sustainable transport**

For details: [Click Here](#)

WCTRS society journals



[Transport Policy](#)



[Case Studies in Transport Policy](#)

WCTRS book series - For details, visit: [link](#)

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WCTRS NEWSLETTER

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