Newsletter
Issue 3 May 2021

Christer Karlsson leaves the VIKING community

Christer Karlsson leaves the VIKING community and the position as VIKING / NEXT-ITS Chairman after more than 25 years. He started the Northern European cooperation in ITS deployment in 1995, when the first VIKING project was conceived. He then successfully acted as the chairman of VIKING, EasyWay VIKING, and NEXT-ITS projects in their different phases.

At the same time, he started and managed ITS Sweden, and acted in various international platforms and committees in the ITS domain gaining global appreciation and respect among his colleagues also indicated by his election to the ITS Hall of Fame. The wide global network and personal interest in technology developments have been extremely beneficial to all of us in the Northern European ITS community. This has been also brought about by his friendly and helpful personality both in professional and private matters.

His personality and great abilities in diplomacy have resulted in an incredible achievement of every decision in the Project Management Board of the VIKING community projects being made in consensus. This despite the sometimes-severe disagreements with regards to the topics being discussed. Christer managed always to calm the tensions and to find a way to go forward in a way accepted by all and without humiliation to anyone. The community will miss the excellent chairman and wishes a happy retirement to Christer!

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Completed NEXT-ITS 3 activities in Finland

Deployments in the Traffic Management Centres, Finland

The whole TMC operator user interface has been renewed by implementing an alarms- and alerts tool, and the development of reference calculation for variable speed limits and information panels. Furthermore, the integration of 112 rescue centres' pre-notifications of accidents has been completed. Real-time data on variable speed limits has been made available as open data, and the first steps in automating traffic management systems have been completed.

Enhanced traffic management on the core network Kempele-Kello, Finland

The traffic management system was deployed with 73 variable speed limit signs, 4 combined warning and speed limit Variable Message Sign (VMS), 3 information VMS on gantries, 16 roadside warning/information VMS, 2 new and 3 upgraded road weather stations, 16 traffic monitoring stations, 9 new and 3 upgraded CCTV cameras as well as the installations, cabling, road side control stations and communication systems. The system has been in operational use since 2020.

Completed deployments in relation to national Traffic Management in Denmark

The large pilot on cooperation and improved incident and emergency handling on the motorway E20 on Funen has been finalised. The pilot trial involved many authorities, local and national police, municipal and national rescue services as well as regional health services. The final report evaluated the effect of 20 tested initiatives on quicker clearance of incidents.

The Danish Road Directorate has made things easier for external service providers as Service Development Kits for Web, Android and iOS solutions have been developed that will make it easier to incorporate traffic information into a web or app service. The kits are presented at the National Access Point https://nap.vd.dk.

Remote monitoring and control of Kronprins Frederiks Bridge from the national Traffic Center

The trial operation has been successfully concluded and the system is now fully operational. The scheme has been evaluated by an external consultant against established criteria, and the conclusion is that it is safe and technically justifiable to proceed with further implementation of remote control of other bascule bridges in Denmark.

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Top right: Weather related speed limit in Finland. Risto Kulmala
Bottome left: Improved incident handling on motorway E20 on Funen (2020). Danish Road Directorate

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Completed deployments of MCS in Gothenburg

The Marieholm Connection Project came to completion in December 2020 when the Marieholm Tunnel was opened up for traffic. The project also marks successful deployment of MCS equipment along the Marieholm connection which has been an important activity in NEXT-ITS 3.

The MCS system around the Marieholm tunnel has been completed and connected to the Swedish Transport Administration's central MCS environment.

The system redirects and directs traffic through the new Marieholm tunnel and on surrounding roads such as the E6, E45 and Lundbyleden by adapting the recommended speed for queues and slow-moving traffic, as well as lane control and traffic diversion in the event of accidents and incidents.

The system works well around the Marieholm tunnel, but in order to function as a comprehensive system which intends to be able to lead and control traffic between the Marieholm tunnel and the Tingstad tunnel, the Lundby route needs to be equipped with MCS and new diversion signs while the E6 through the Tingstad tunnel will be upgraded. The work will take place during 2022-2025.

During the MCS project, there have been many and long discussions about the Swedish Transport Administration's central MCS environment. It is very difficult to handle such transitions in a contracting phase. Long-term and accurate time planning is required as construction in the workplace has very long lead times that can prove to be expensive

Updates from A1 Group Traffic Information Services

The objective of this A1 Group "Traffic Information Services" is to exchange information within NEXT-ITS 3 on all issues of traffic information as well as on the specific projects the partners are carrying out. Furthermore, the objective is to identify and discuss strategic issues in the field of traffic information. A1 Traffic Information group is also a mirror group to the respective EU-EIP Expert groups.

The work focuses on the following issues:

Access to and availability of travel and traffic data, for this area information on EU legislation, projects, pilots and tests including the use of vehicle data in traffic centres were discussed. The main focus was on the delegated acts.

ITS strategies, Partners informed about the national ITS strategies in the different countries. Also, general strategies like "European data strategy", "European green deal" and "Smart and sustainable mobility strategy" were discussed.

Quality of traffic data, Denmark presented the results of a test of the quality of Danish Road Directorate's (DRD) data displayed on service providers' websites. The results were compared on time delay, accuracy of location and description of the incident and are used to improve the dataflow from NAP to end user. DRD has in 2020 developed a new price policy i.e. only free data from DRD on NAP.

The Reference Handbook and the proposed changes and revision have been discussed in the group. Further topics were MaaS and the future role of the road administrations as well as "In vehicle signage".

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Top: Marieholmstunneln, Swedish Transport Administration
Bottom: Variable speed limit in summer and winter conditions, Swedish variable speed limit trial. Karolina Hedberg

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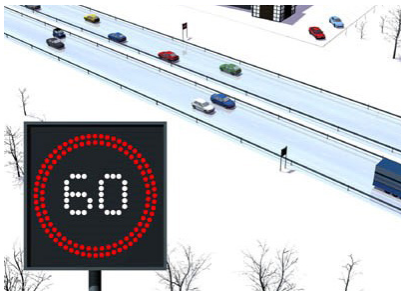
Updates from A2 Group Traffic Management Services



The objective of NEXT-ITS3 A2 Group "Traffic Management Services" is to exchange information between NEXT-ITS 3 partners on all issues of traffic management as well as on the specific projects the partners are carrying out. Particular focus is on three workshops to be carried out during NEXT-ITS3.

The work focuses on the following issues:

Workshop on "Traffic management and autonomous vehicles". This 3rd workshop was planned to be held in 2020 but was postponed to 2021 due to the Corona situation. Some preparations and first planning have been carried out and the workshop is now planned to be held towards the end of 2021.

The Reference Handbook was discussed in the group. The comments from member countries were summarised, presented to the Project Management Board and forwarded to the respective EU EIP expert group.

The group is also involved in the Road Corridor Information Document, Road-CID. The idea with Road CID is to have one general structured way of describing the corridors that will include for example network overview with important hubs, terminals and bottlenecks, how traffic management centres are structured along the corridor, were there are traffic management plans and which ITS services like HGV parking that are in place. Road-CID is a project under EU-EIP Cross Corridor Cooperation and was initiated from NEXT ITS 2 A2 Group.

Updates from A3 group Freight and Logistic

The freight and logistic group serves as a platform for the northern countries of Europe to discuss ideas and exchange and build knowledge within the NEXT-ITS 3 projects. The aim of the expert group is to facilitate and solve the increasing challenges of truck transport and parking on the core transport network in Europe and in specific border crossings.

The A3 group provides a NEXT-ITS 3 mirror capacity to the EU EIP Freight & Logistics expert group. Thus the A3 group supports European harmonization by contributing to the development of the EU EIP Reference handbook. Each expert contributes with national comments in relation to the specific Deployment Guidelines for safe and secure truck parking and abnormal goods transport regulations. Thus also facilitating a common view on these topics. The group has also established a web service with an overview of the regulations and application procedures for oversized and heavy transports in the EU.

Updates from A4 group ICT Infrastructure

The group has continued its work in monitoring the European and global developments in the digital road infrastructure domain via virtual meetings and communication. The domain of the group contains traffic, travel and road weather related monitoring systems and services, databases, information management systems, traffic centre systems, data exchange and other digital infrastructures facilitating ITS service provision.

The discussions in the last virtual meeting dealt with e.g. safety related message sets, future work on DATEX II, intelligent truck parking information, road maps for road operators to facilitate automated driving, road availability KPIs, event logging systems at TMC, multimodal data platforms, and floating vehicle data on road surface friction. The next virtual meeting will be on 11th May 2021.

Updates from Evaluation group

The Evaluation group has the task to evaluate the costs and benefits of the NEXT-ITS 3 services deployed i.e. the work includes how the services contribute to reductions in travel time, accidents and emissions from road transport.

Further, the group is supporting the continued European harmonisation and knowledge building by liaising with the EU EIP A5 on evaluation, e.g. in relation to assessment methodologies, KPIs and evaluation reporting.

The Evaluation group has continued its work and recently finalised the clarification of all services and their foreseen operational target dates and as well the determination of the various networks influenced (impacted) by the services and network data and statistics for the networks.

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