

INFRALERT 1st Open Workshop, Brussels (Belgium), 16th November 2016

Opening and Welcome

Axel Simroth, Fraunhofer IVI

Good morning everybody,
Dear guests and partners,

it is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you to the 1st Open Workshop of the Horizon2020 project INFRALERT, organised by the project consortium. We thank you for taking your time to meet with us here in Brussels, and for your willingness to participate in this workshop, which indicates us that there is an interest in INFRALERT's work.

When you informed yourself about the project, you will have seen that - very generally speaking - INFRALERT is about Asset Management (AM): AM in linear transport infrastructures with particular focus on road and rail networks. Obviously, AM currently is an issue with growing importance for Asset Owners, for Infrastructure Managers and for related stakeholders like Maintenance Operators and Service Providers. It is widely recognised and accepted that there is a need for new approaches to efficiently manage and operate assets, and that AM shall be based on standardised processes and frameworks. Ongoing initiatives for instance in the railway industry show this awareness: Here, under the leadership of the UIC, an AM framework is being developed, by adapting existing standards PAS55 and ISO55000 to rail specifics.

But as it is important to have standards, guidelines, frameworks - which lay the foundations for sound AM - it is similar important to provide intelligent IT tools to support the defined processes in AM. And this is what INFRALERT is specifically about: INFRALERT is about tools to support AM, and this workshop today is dedicated to this very scope of INFRALERT.

During the workshop we hope to be able to make clear the ambition of INFRALERT. We often use this diagram to symbolise the different dimensions of INFRALERT's ambitious approach:
On the one hand, INFRALERT covers the whole processing chain from data to decisions. This means we develop tools that help to make best use of collected data, turn them into meaningful information and then make well-informed decisions. This implies that we have to bring together different scientific and technological areas, and to use their synergies: from data management to condition analysis, artificial intelligence, optimisation and decision theory. Of course, this is an ambition in itself.

On the other "axis", INFRALERT is not specifically directed towards railways or roads, but follows a transversal approach: We intend to find solutions that are applicable in a more general context of AM in transport infrastructures, which forces us to apply a generic, universal approach.

We are particularly happy to have representatives of both road and rail sector today here in the audience, so that one goal of the workshop can be achieved easily: To exchange opinions and experiences from different industries, which is in the spirit of INFRALERT.

But what are the other goals of this workshop?

First of all, we want to share the developments made so far with the interested public. It is always important for research projects like this to go out and disseminate results and ideas.

Because this is also the way to achieve the next goal: To get aware of needs and suggestions from you as potential users of the solutions we will provide. Input from you can improve the work we do.

And last but not least, we would like to encourage you to have an active and vital discussion with us and to provide us your perspectives and opinions about the issues we will raise during the workshop.

According to these goals that we like to achieve the workshop is organised as follows in three parts:

In the first part we will give you an overview about the project, present the motivation behind its approach, and we will also hear about examples and challenges in AM from an external point of view, namely from a Road Infrastructure Manager, represented by Mr. Joao Morgado of Infraestruturas de Portugal, and from a Rail Maintenance Contractor, represented by Mr. Henk Samson of Strukton Rail. Then the second part is dedicated to the presentation of the technical developments and results in the several sub-topics of INFRALERT. Here you already are invited to ask your questions and provide your feedback.

We then go over to an open discussion about the topic "ICT tools for capacity improvement of existing transport infrastructures", which of course is strongly linked with INFRALERT's scope. This discussion will be moderated by Dr. Jesus Rodriguez from the Spanish Construction Technology Platform.

Before I now hand over to my colleague Noemi Jimenez - who then will give the first presentation - I want again to welcome you and thank you for your attendance. Special thanks go to Mr. Henk Samson and Dr. Jesus Rodriguez, who support the INFRALERT team with presentations and moderation.

And now we are looking forward to have an interesting workshop with fruitful discussions!