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Special session ERSA2019: “Transportation and Mobility in an Ageing Society. Perspectives, Trends and Drivers”

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The population pattern of the world is changing, and a global population ageing is to become one of the most significant transformations of the 21st century, which is basically associated to an increasing life expectancy and declining fertility rates. More specifically in Europe, it is estimated that nearly 25 percent of the population in 2030 will be over 65. This process places several issues on the society regarding social and economic aspects. One of the key issues at stake is the mobility needs of the elderly: their ability to travel and access opportunities to involve in social, economic, cultural and civic affairs. The issue of ageing mobility is a major consideration also for other policy areas, such as public health, social care, economic development, and urban planning/design. Moreover, travel seems to be an important element of well-being and quality of life of the elderly (Banister and Bowling, 2004), with respect to ageing in place (the neighbourhood environment), social activities and health issue.

Although in recent years studies on mobility in older adults have caught a significant attention of scholars from varied disciplines - transport researchers, geographers, economist, urban planners, etc.- there is yet an urge for a more complex understanding of ageing and mobility in a variety of geographical settings. Through applying more sophisticated interdisciplinary approaches, this special session calls for theoretical perspective (such as the Amartya Sen's capability approach- see Ryan et al., 2015) and empirical evidence (see Mercado et al., 2010), with the aim to tackle the issues of an ‘ageing society’ associated with the topics: changing mobility behaviour; current and future mobility needs and measures of older adults; local public transportation; adult-specific transport policies; and research methodological approach (see Akhavan and Vecchio, 2018) in studying the ageing mobility. Within this sphere, and moving towards a more age-friendly society, the current special session shall address and discuss the following research questions:

- With reference to different contexts, what are the travel patterns and transportation alternative preferences of the elderly?
- What is the role of regional policies, national government approaches and local governance in responding to the mobility needs of an ageing society?
- Considering the importance association of mobility to the well-being and quality of life of senior citizens, what are the implications for future transportation?

Reference:

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