

12 May 2015 – for immediate release

Oxford researcher wins ITF Award for work on logistics governance

“Young Researcher of the Year Award” for Turkish scientist Dr Nihan Akyelken / Presentation at global Summit of transport ministers

Paris - Turkish-born Dr Nihan Akyelken from University of Oxford is the recipient of the International Transport Forum’s 2015 Young Researcher of the Year Award.

The Award will be presented during the 2015 Summit of transport ministers in Leipzig/Germany on 28 May, in the presence of ministers from the 54 member countries of the ITF. The award carries a prize of 5 000 euros.

An international jury of experts chose Dr Akyelken for her contribution to developing a conceptual framework for the governance of sustainable freight transport in the age of globalisation. The jury praised the paper for showing “a real new policy dimension” that is “relevant to the policies pursued by International Organisations such as the OECD and the ITF”.

“It is no longer possible to distinguish between logistics and manufacturing systems,” writes Akyelken in her winning paper, together with her associated author Hartmut Keller. “What we see as freight transport is in fact an integrated part of the changing trends of mobility.”

The paper goes on to make a compelling case for an integrated perspective on emerging logistics practices, manufacturing systems and freight transport policy:

Shifts in global production and consumption patterns have wide-ranging economic and environmental impacts, not least on the sustainability of freight transport. The geographical distribution of environmental impacts caused by changing logistics and manufacturing patterns is closely related to the policies in place.

“Firm’s decisions of where to produce and what mode of transport to use are strongly associated with regional and national policies and regulations and global agreements”, Akyelken and Keller emphasise. In fact, policies set by territorial institutions - such as national governments or regional bodies like the EU - play a more significant role than the firms’ own organisational routines.

Therefore, the approach to governance for manufacturing, logistics and freight movements needs to be holistic:

- ▶ First, it must look at the supply chain as the unit of analysis, considering the relative importance of institutions, firm behaviour and scale of governance.
- ▶ Second, it must involve actors from all levels such as the EU institutions, not only governments and firms.
- ▶ Third, it must pay special attention to the design of logistics and manufacturing practices.

“If economically and environmentally sustainable patterns are to be maintained in freight transport, a deeper understanding is required of these new logistics and manufacturing systems,” concludes Dr. Akyelken. [Download the winning paper](#)

Dr. Nihan Akyelken is a Research Fellow in the Transport Studies Unit at University of Oxford’s School of Geography and the Environment. She is also a Departmental Lecturer in Sustainable Urban Development at Oxford. Dr. Akyelken obtained her DPhil degree at Oxford in November 2011 with a thesis entitled “Capital and Development in Social and Cultural Contexts”. She holds an undergraduate degree in Economics and Philosophy and a Master degree in European Political Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research interests span urban and regional political economy, economic geography and development planning and policy. The current empirical focus of her research is on social inequalities and regional development, infrastructure and labour markets, and governance of urban transport innovations. [Photo for free download](#)

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About the Award

The ITF Young Researcher of the Year Award aims to highlight the importance of transport research for sound transport policy formulation and implementation and to foster closer links between transport policy and research. The award carries a prize of 5 000 euros. It is open to young researchers under 35 years of age who have undertaken their research in an institution, university or consultancy firm located in a member country of the International Transport Forum. [More about the ITF Awards](#)

About the International Transport Forum

The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 54 member countries. It acts as think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers. ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. ITF works for transport policies that improve peoples’ lives. [More about the International Transport Forum](#)

About the Annual Summit of Transport Ministers

ITF’s Annual Summit is the world’s largest gathering of transport ministers and the leading global platform for dialogue on transport policy. The 2015 Summit convenes in Leipzig, Germany from **27-29 May 2015** on the theme of Transport, Trade and Tourism. [More about the Summit programme](#)

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