



18th International NECTAR Conference
Munich, Germany, 13 - 15 July 2026

Call for papers for the thematic session of Cluster 1: Social and Health Issues in Transportation General Call for Papers

The lived experience of mobility and its impact on equity and well-being

Our cluster theme is focused on promoting social equity, health and wellbeing, and inclusive transport systems for all. In the current era, urban mobility transitions are unfolding under significant uncertainty driven, for instance, by climate change, pandemics, technological innovation, shifting work patterns, and economic pressures. While these transitions are often framed around environmental and efficiency goals, their social and health consequences remain less understood. In particular, questions of mental health, autonomy, and inclusion are critical to ensuring that sustainable transport futures are not only low-carbon but also equitable and life-enhancing.

Mobility directly shapes people's capacity to live autonomous lives, to connect socially, and to experience emotions such as safety, stress, joy, or achievement. Yet these benefits and burdens are unequally distributed. Active modes and public transport may support physical activity, independence, and community cohesion, but they may also create risks and exclusions for groups who face unsafe environments, digital barriers, or affordability challenges. Similarly, shifts in work and leisure patterns, or policies such as car reduction, can expand accessibility for some while deepening social isolation or exclusion for others. These dynamics highlight the importance of linking accessibility and inclusion with the psychological and emotional dimensions of mobility, particularly in times of transition and uncertainty.

In line with the overarching conference theme, this session invites contributions that explore the interconnections between mobility, mental health, perceived accessibility, ease of travel, and equity in the context of sustainable transport transitions. We are interested in papers that examine how changes in transport systems (positively or negatively) affect autonomy, social connectedness, emotional experiences, ease of travel, and wellbeing outcomes. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the role of accessibility in enabling autonomy and participation, social and psychological impacts of digitalisation, new mobility services and car reduction policies, varying levels of ease of travel with different modes, and mental health implications of active travel and public transport, particularly considering priority populations or equity-seeking groups.

We welcome empirical case studies, theoretical contributions, and interdisciplinary work drawing on transport studies, geography, psychology, sociology, planning, and public health. Our aim is to advance

understanding of how planning for sustainable mobility transitions can better promote mental health, accessibility, and inclusion, and how insights into autonomy, emotions, and social connection can inform more equitable and human-centred transport planning.

Deadline for abstract submission

The deadline for abstract submission is January 31, 2026. Abstracts (max. 500 words) should be submitted electronically, using the form available on the conference website and following the instructions found there: <https://nectar26.eu/>

A copy of the abstract should also be sent to cluster co-chair Hannah Hook: Hannah.Hook@aalto.fi.

Criteria for acceptance

Criteria for acceptance are scope, scientific quality, NECTAR membership, and the possibility to fit the presentation in a coherent conference session. The number of participants of this thematic session will be limited to 8.

Venue

NECTAR 2026 will be hosted by the Accessibility Planning Research Group at Chair of Urban Structures and Transport Planning, Technical University of Munich (TUM), at the Technical University of Munich, in collaboration with the NECTAR Board and its thematic clusters.

Participation and NECTAR membership

All practical details will be communicated through the conference website. In order to participate in the conference, a consecutive and current two-year NECTAR membership is necessary (2024-2026). Non-members can find details of how to join the association on the “Membership” page of NECTAR’s website: www.nectar-eu.eu/membership

Important dates

Abstract submission: January 31, 2026

Notification of acceptance: April 1, 2026

Confirmation of attendance: April 30, 2026

We look forward to seeing you in Munich!

Michael Widener, Cluster 7 co-chair, University of Toronto, Canada

Tanu Priya Uteng, Cluster 7 co-chair, Norwegian Centre for Transport Research, Norway

Dick Ettema, Cluster 7 co-chair, Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Hannah Hook, Cluster 7 co-chair, Aalto University, Finland

NECTAR is a European-based scientific association. The primary objective is to foster research collaboration and exchange of information between experts in the field of transport, communication and mobility from all European countries and the rest of the world. It is a multidisciplinary social science network bringing together a wide variety of perspectives on transport and communication problems and their impacts on society from an international perspective. For further information on NECTAR, use the link: <http://www.nectar-eu.eu>.