News from the Department

Just before this newsletter’s deadline, it was announced that no fewer than four of the Department’s research proposals in the field of Urban, Transport and Environmental Economics have just been accepted. The proposals fall within in the Dutch SURF programme (Smart Urban Regions for the Future) and the European JPI Urban Europe programme (ERA- NET COFUND Smart Cities and Communities (ENSCC)). This allows our department to attract four new PhD students, and provides post-doc research time to work on themes such as: automated driving; smart incentives and tradable peak hour permits; evaluation of commuting behavior and innovative urban transport policies; and the interrelations between urban form, energy use and local environmental quality. Principle investigators from the Department include Peter Mulder, Steven Poelhekke, Jos van Ommeren and Erik Verhoef. Read more

Three researchers from the Department made it into the ESB Top 40 of Economists this year: Erik Verhoef (11), Jos van Ommeren (13) and, new in the list, Vincent van den Berg (36, picture). Special mention was made of Rick van der Ploeg: had his affiliation in the Netherlands been large enough, he would have been number 1 in the list. The ESB list is based on journal publications in the years 2010-2014, using the Web of Science database of Thomson Reuters, weighted by a bibliometric quality indicator. For more information see http://www.economie.nl/artikel/economentop-40-2015 (in Dutch).

Hans Koster received the Van der Knaap Prize for his dissertation on “The Internal Structure of Cities: The Economics of Agglomeration, Amenities and Accessibility”. De Van der Knaap Prize (€ 10,000) is meant as an incentive prize for young researchers in the area of economic and social geography, as well as urban and regional economics, and awarded by the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities (Koninklijke Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen). The award ceremony was held on October 28 in Haarlem. For more information, see http://www.khmw.nl/prijzen/prijs/van-der-knaap-prijs/11 and www.urbaneconomics.nl.

On September 10, during its annual conference in Toulouse, the French Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (FAERE) elected Cees Withagen (professor of environmental economics) membre d’honneur . The title of honorary member was awarded to Cees for his contribution to promoting, valuing and advancing research and expertise works in environmental economics.

Erik Verhoef is appointed Member of an Advisory Committee on public transport and railway. For the next five years, the committee will advise the State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment on proposals regarding infrastructural programmes and projects. Erik’s aim is especially to make sure that investment decisions will contribute to the social welfare on the long term. Not only financial aspects are to be considered, but also non-tangible aspects, e.g. travel times, travel time reliability, service level and environmental effects.
In October, **Eric Pels** was appointed associate professor at our department. Eric graduated in 1994, and defended his doctoral dissertation in 2000, both at VUA. Eric’s research focuses on airline networks and pricing and competition with other modes (rail). His reaching activities focus on micro economics, transport and aviation economics.

**Hans Koster** was invited guest lecturer at the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lank, within the framework of a World Bank Project. Read and see more of this here: [https://www.facebook.com/hrakoster/media_set?set=a.959061790820669.1073741833.100001505728075&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/hrakoster/media_set?set=a.959061790820669.1073741833.100001505728075&type=3)

### Upcoming Events

**Eureka Seminars:**

- **January 14, 2016**
  - Philip Verhagen: “Roman transport networks”
  - Maurice de Kleijn: “Long-term land use modelling during the first decade after Christ”
  - Location: Room 12A-37

- **February 11, 2016**
  - Kenmei Tsubota: “Partition, independence, and population geography in Bengal”
  - Elena Calegari: TBA
  - Location: TBA

Time: 13.00-14.00 hrs, lunch included.

More information: [H.R.A.Koster@vu.nl](mailto:H.R.A.Koster@vu.nl) or [G.C.van.der.Meijden@vu.nl](mailto:G.C.van.der.Meijden@vu.nl)

**Spatial Economics Seminars at the Tinbergen Institute:**

*Please note:*

As of 2016, Spatial Economics Seminars at the TI will usually take place on Thursdays from 12.15-13.15 pm

- **January 25, 2016**
  - Mogens Fosgerau (Technical University of Denmark)

- **February 11, 2016**
  - Torfinn Harding (NHH Norwegian School of Economics)

- **February 25, 2016**
  - Tiago Cavalcanti (Cambridge)

- **March 10, 2016**
  - Kyle Meng (UC Santa Barbara)

- **May 9, 2016**
  - Steve Gibbons (LSE)

Titles: TBA

Time: 12.15-13.15 hrs

Location: Tinbergen Institute Amsterdam, Gustav Mahlerplein 117, 1082 MS Amsterdam

More information: [S.Poelhekke@vu.nl](mailto:S.Poelhekke@vu.nl)
**Staff**

**Welcome...**

Paul Pelzl from Austria completed the MPhil program at the Tinbergen Institute in September and joined our department this month as a PhD student. Paul will stay at the VU for three years and is supervised by Steven Poelhekke. His research interests are empirical banking and corporate finance on the one hand and energy and development economics on the other.

Kenmei Tsubota is a research fellow at the Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO and will spend a sabbatical year at our department until October, 2016. He got his PhD at Kyoto University in 2012. His research covers empirics of economic (dis) integration and asymmetric freight rates. Currently he is focusing on population geography and partition in Bengal and in other regions.

Iris Theunisse is a researcher specialized in the use of geographical data to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the built and natural environment. She obtained a bachelor degree in Architecture, urbanism and building sciences and specialized in Architecture and Geomatics during her double master degree at the University of Technology in Delft.

As of March this year, Jan-Hylke de Jong does research on pricing differences between office real estate with a monumental character and offices nearby without monumental features, supervised by Jan Rouwendal. Jan-Hylke works at our department on a weekly basis. Next to researcher, he runs Fenicks, a company which he started in 2011. Fenicks is specialized in digital data monitoring of buildings, monuments and their users.

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**Journal Articles and Working Papers 2015**

**Journal Articles**


Dementyeva, M., Koster, P.R. & Verhoef, E.T. (2015). Regulation of road accident externalities when insurance companies have market power. Journal of Urban Economics, 86(March), 1-8. 10.1016/j.jue.2014.11.001


Koster, P.R., Pels, A.J.H. & Verhoef, E.T. (online first). The User Costs of Air Travel Delay Variability. Transportation Science. 10.1287/trsc.2014.0551


Working Papers


The next *Spatial Economics Newsletter* will appear in March 2016.

Are your publications not in the above list? Register – if you have not done yet – at METIS and add your publications:

https://metis.vu.nl/metis/personal/login/login.view%3bsessionid=2Qt1j8GH21VrQXG0R39DK6qkyNb7wtJpQpJrfH8gKhsIQ1S1nl61732445808?moduleOfOrigin=personal

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*