

Hello! This will be a short newsletter, before most of us close shop and get lost into “the season to be jolly”. Before I start, I would like to congratulate HVTT15 organizers for the level of presentations, discussions, events, as well as for the memorable trip to the port of Rotterdam on the last day. Not to say the people I met! I am so looking forward to HVTT16 in 2020.

It is supposed to be summertime in South America, however it is unseasonably cold and wet, which confuses everyone and brings a dilemma of what to wear, or people asking for heating instead of air conditioning.

As confusing are the contradictions brought by some of the regulations we have been facing lately in the region. It is a “crazy world, full of crazy contradictions”, says the 1979 song by Henry Mancini. For example, Scrappage Programs, used to encourage safety, sustainability and employment, going hand in hand with regulations allowing older trucks -and here old means 70s and older- with very low power to ratio to circulate until December 2022, for example, for “social reasons”.



These Scrappage Programs are used as a way of promoting the renovation of the vehicle fleet, usually through alliances between the National Governments and the automotive and transportation sectors, so politically are very attractive. For example, when asked about some of the benefits of the Renova 2.0 Plan -Ecuador, 2017- *“...are the savings of US \$ 474 million dollars per year in the fuel subsidy, based on the study on transportation prepared by the Renewable Energy Institute - INER, according to which, if 50,000 units were renewed, a savings of US \$ 30 million per year would be generated in the import of spare parts, in addition the plan supports the formalization of transport, safer and environmentally efficient vehicles, among others.”* Colombia, for example, has extended its Scrap Program until July 2019, and at the same time, is finally having trials with up to 60 VCC (Combined Cargo Vehicles), according to [Resolution 2546/18](#) . Success of these programs is varied not to say unknown in the longer term. The [World Bank paper](#) *Can Vehicle Scrappage Programs Be Successful?* is worth reading, explaining the different schemes with their associated pitfalls.

Changing to brand new trucks, with safety and fuel efficiency technologies does not mean these will be used as per designed, as I explained in my HVTT15 paper and presentation (between 70% to 90% of the drivers attending the course indicated they did not know all safety devices or fuel efficiency technologies included in the modern units previously to attending the course or used them incorrectly, therefore making those technologies, which had been developed and included specifically to provide higher levels of safety, useless). By the end of November, the School of Bitrain Drivers -[EMaBi](#)- closed its ninth training course, reaching 100 specialized drivers. We had a great and emotional end of the year

party, where drivers along their transport owners, instructors and authorities shared stories and thoughts about the training.

In Argentina, this coming January will see one year of bitrains circulating nationally, outside of San Luis province, where they have been circulating with 0% accidents for 10 years. Many provinces have adhered to the national legislation, adapting their provincial laws in order to do so. While the Drivers' training course was compulsory in Argentina since 2015, in October 2018 a new [national regulation](#) took that requirement away, so that any truck driver can hop on one, regardless of which vehicle he is experienced driving.



While it is very difficult to align speech and deed, some regions or countries like Uruguay are managing to. And this give me the strength to finish the song and say yes, *it is a crazy world, and every day the same old roller coaster ride...oh but I love this crazy world.*

Happy 2019 to all of you.

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