



FISITA

Promoting excellence in mobility engineering

An Open Letter from the FISITA CEO, Chris Mason

July 2020



Dear all

As the head of the international FISITA organisation during this time as we look to establish a fairer society and professional working environment for future generations, I feel it is important to express my long-held belief that our community has a core strength which is derived from the inclusive and collaborative intent of our international membership.

I spend my professional life engaged with our members, extending a reach to a massive community of people, based in over 30 countries. I believe that in our collective pursuit of the FISITA Mission, a shared and natural instinct of embracing people for what they are and can become is valued and contributes in sustaining the excellent collaborative spirit to be found within our community. Whether the individual is a member, student, CTO or CEO, staff colleague or external stakeholder, we build connections through our mutual appreciation and intent to progress in support of each other.

For me personally, I seldom think about the broad mix of people in my personal or professional life as being anything other than the people I want to be around and involved with, and feel fortunate that they conclude the same about me.

As I reflect on this recently, maybe I too need to think more about diversity and inclusion.

It may be that recent events and the current enforced isolation are making me see a different picture, leading me to question my assumption that my 'optics' on society are commonplace.

Is it, in fact, the default of the majority to assume inclusivity? I guess, I have taken the natural diversity around me for granted.

Or maybe, more specifically, I have taken for granted an assumption that others see things the same way that I do.

My preferred sign off reference to any FISITA call to action is:

'Engineers create solutions, FISITA supports them to do so'

For many years since I first formed these words, I have felt that I am indicating our intent to be supportive and inclusive of all engineers, period. As I reflect, maybe I should be more explicit, and demonstrate leadership at a time when a community is looking to people in roles such as mine for clarity.

I apologise for allowing myself to be lazy in my assumption, and not questioning whether I could do more – I know I can, we all can.

I therefore refresh my determination to ensure diversity and inclusion are recognised within the FISITA community, by issuing the first international FISITA Guide to Professional Conduct, which following a membership consultation period, we will embed within our mission and encourage all FISITA members to support and positively position within their organisation and communities, as not only a guide to ethical and professional best practice, but also to explicitly state their intent to promote 'diversity through inclusion' within their organisations.

I have also agreed with the Chair of the FISITA (UK) Ltd Board, to create a new non-executive director role to specifically focus and advise our organisation on diversity and inclusion.

To conclude, I have too often seen the words of middle-aged, white, greying, males to be delivered with what I guess they believe to be sincerity, but can sound kind of hollow, unless they're delivering an intent that they have to put their name to.

I hope that today, I have put a foot forward with sincere purpose and intent, as we look to gather the support of our community and in doing so establish sustainable corporate intent and deliver a legacy initiative which current engineers and future generations will benefit from.

By the way, I have also updated my sign off reference, still subtle, still inclusive.

'Engineers create solutions, FISITA supports them to do so. Regardless'

I guarantee that these initiatives are not merely an indication of intent but are a genuine and purposeful move forward for me, our organisation, and our community.

All the best

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Mason', followed by a period.

Chris Mason
Chief Executive Officer
FISITA (UK) Ltd