



## **UIRR opinion on the Vision and Action Plan of the *FREIGHTVISION* -project**

At the final conference, on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 in Brussels, FREIGHTVISION partners draw a vision of CO<sub>2</sub>, accident and fossil fuel reduction at the horizon 2050. The proposed actions and measures were based on a **non-visionary, “business as usual”, trend forecast**; hence they seek possible progress mainly in technology progress of today’s dominant transport mode road traffic.

In UIRR’s opinion, the study – based on the so-called “FORESIGHT process” – is **barely an opinion survey** of those interviewed. The resulting “vision” mainly **reproduces popular opinions**.

Within the study’s time-horizon of forty years climate change and social problems will likely cause **fundamental changes in framework conditions**, either mitigated through long sighted policy, or else forced through crisis.

The study does not sufficiently reflect that railways are already largely electrified **producing five times less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**, which may be further reduced to nearly “zero” through switching to renewable energy resources. The “electrification of road”, which the study foresees on the other hand, will require very high investments.

Accidents are simplified into “loss of life”, whereas all accident events cause disruption and substantial economic loss. Increased traffic will bring about more road accident events, notwithstanding the study does not capitalize on the fact that **railways presently have a forty times lower accident rate!**

Significantly increasing safety on roads would require measures such as: reductions in permitted top speeds, bans on driving under adverse weather conditions, strict enforcement of driving hours, load securing and speeds. These measures, as well as road electrification, will increase road transport costs significantly thereby **placing the competitiveness of railways on a completely different footing**.

FREIGHTVISION partners did not take into account that completely different framework conditions will introduce a “run” towards rail to better exploit its inherent advantages. That a completely different modal split between road and rail is not utopia is demonstrated by **the Swiss example**, which resulted in a modal split of two third rail versus one third road in transit by today.

**Self-declared shortfalls** of the study include: “no fundamental system change”, “no rebalancing among the modes”, and “synergies among modes not considered”. A disclaimer is also hidden, whereby the authors admit that “the project team has not assessed, if the measures recommended are sufficient for reaching the targets defined”.

**UIRR strongly cautions decision-makers to base any material decisions on the FREIGHTVISION study which projects the future exclusively through progress of the mode which causes today’s problems. The authors failed to argue for likely trend ruptures. The current crises taught us, that continuing foreseeable trends on a long run will not describe the most probable outcome. While high expectations are pinned to progress in road-technologies, little consideration is given to progress in rail-technology, and systems which are neither traditional road nor conventional rail, such as automatic guided vehicles.**