

Press release

Brussels, 11 June 2008

CESAR Customer Reference for Intermodality

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 11 June in Brussels, the partners and shareholders of “Cesar Information Services” (CIS) were able to look back on a successful outcome for the year 2007. There are now eight intermodal transport operators who serve 370 terminals, affiliated to the “CESAR” system. Tracking and tracing information on three million transports i.e. more than two thirds of European combined transport with swap bodies, containers and semitrailers, can be called up via this standardised interface. And more and more customers are making use of this: 400 active customers visiting 33,000 pages a day and making around 5,000 status queries per transport day – it speaks for itself!

CESAR provides transport and logistic companies sending their cargo units via rail in the main run with an information source that permits inquiries about all their cargo units via a single Internet address, regardless of which of the affiliated operators is carrying them and irrespective of whether such transport consignments are carried out continuously by only one operator or in cooperation with several operators. The CESAR system is strictly neutral in this regard: each customer, each affiliated operator and now also each terminal agency can call up information about “his/her/their” cargo units while completely protecting the confidentiality of such information vis-à-vis the other participants.

The company “Cesar Information Services” was founded in 2004 by the leading intermodal transport operators Cemat, Hupac, Kombiverkehr and Novatrans, as well as the combined transport association, UIRR. UIRR represents the interests of all other intermodal transport operators in this respect and provides the company based at the same address in Brussels with business premises and administrative assistance. Four more operators have joined in the meantime as licensees. The further development of the system software is carried out by the Belgian company, Uniway, which specialises in Internet solutions and was involved in the development of the system as a consultant right at the beginning of the European research project, “CESAR”, from 1997 on. CESAR is thus an example of successful, application-oriented research support by the European Commission.

The principle of CESAR lies in gathering all the transport information coming from the operators’ systems in a central database, where it is integrated and made available to the customers in real time following quality checks. The customers can then access all this information at the website www.cesar-online.com.

This Internet application consists of different function areas, some of which are public, while access to others is only possible with the user name and password supplied by CIS.

The dispatchers at the transport companies and the terminal operators can very easily obtain an overview of their incoming and outgoing consignments by making an inquiry in the CESAR database. At the push of a button, they can receive lists via the Internet showing, among other things, what consignments are for collection at the terminals and which ones have already been loaded onto the truck or have been picked up. CESAR also supplies each customer with a list of irregularities, should these occur, because the attention of the parties involved is naturally directed primarily at everything that is not running according to plan. The trucks collecting the consignments can be rescheduled in the case of delays, for example, in order to avoid unnecessary costs and optimise upstream and downstream operations.

High information quality is therefore at the centre of the endeavours undertaken by CIS. A new feature is the Customer Feedback function. This enables structured comments, questions and reports concerning possible malfunctions to reach the people responsible without delay. A monitoring procedure ensures that queries are answered in a targeted way even in relation to questions concerning more than one operator and provides comprehensive statistics on the performance analysis of the system as a basis for further improvements.

CIS provides services to operators enabling them to offer their customers an improved service in this way. One of the most important advantages in practice is the rapid and reliable supply of information for customers from a single source. However, the CESAR software has now also become an important instrument for the operators themselves, enabling them to obtain real-time information about trains organised in cooperation with other partners.

You can find further information:

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