

Address of Janez Sušnik, President of Adria Kombi

Dear Mr. President, dear Minister of transport, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen

First I would like to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Türk and Minister of Transport Mr. Radovan Žerjav for their participation in our congress. Your presence is greatly appreciated and gives support to our efforts to achieve for Slovenia its deserved position in intermodal transport in Europe.

It is my honour to greet in the name of Adria Kombi the most eminent businessmen and experts in the field of railway and road traffic from across Europe. I am especially delighted to see the exceptional interest for this gathering shown by Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian and Montenegro railways.

Awareness of the importance of the transfer of goods from the road to rail is something which already emerged in the area of ex-Yugoslavia in the beginning of 1970s. It began with the entrepreneurial initiative of individual enthusiasts, and after several different attempts commenced in 1974 with the introduction of a regular rolling motorway service between Ljubljana and Munich. The pioneering collaboration between Kombiverkehr and forwarders Intertrans and cooperating railway authorities provided the conditions for a successful development of combined transport in this part of Europe. The rolling motorway has always been considered an important factor in the conservation of the environment, which helps road hauliers overcome geographical and administrative barriers alike and allows them to carry out their mission uninhibited, while also connecting the economies of South-Eastern Europe and the EU. In 1987 the first container train was launched.

During the second half of the 1980s the transport authorities of ex-Yugoslavia also realized that the development of combined transport had to be supported. Development of unaccompanied transport was so intense that in 1989 some transport companies and Slovenian Railways established Yukombi d.o.o., a company which took over the role of a national company for combined transport with the task of creating the conditions for faster development of combined transport. I am proud to have been a part of this process from the very beginning. In 1992 we, out of known reasons, changed the name to Adria Kombi. Meanwhile we also became members of the UIRR. Due to the war in ex-Yugoslavia, combined transport in this area was also affected as goods were redirected to other corridors. Rolling motorways were poorly booked. We intensively oriented ourselves to the transport of containers and swap bodies. We started project KOMAR together with Slovenian Railways, which is domestic transport from Koper to Maribor through Ljubljana, and have nowadays developed it into a modern network, which covers the entire of Slovenia. The KOMAR network offers transportation of containers by rail from door to door to all larger cities in Slovenia. It rivals road transport both by cost and transit time. Every workday we offer three shuttle trains from Koper to Ljubljana, from which one continues to Celje and Maribor. In 2007 we transported more than 44.000 TEUs overall.

After the year 2000 we have been intensively developing the concept GATEWAY SLOVENIA. Slovenia's geographical position, support from Slovenian Railways, high level of expertise and entrepreneurship of the entire Adria Kombi team and last but not least the cooperation of our partners from the UIRR, who believe in our project and knowledge of South-Eastern Europe, all confirm that we have made the right decision. Our strategy includes the three main terminals in Slovenia: Koper as a terminal for maritime containers, Ljubljana as the Gateway hub and starting point for all destinations and the Maribor Terminal as a terminal for the rolling motorway (RO-LA).

Because of the extraordinary increase of traffic in Koper and the corresponding operational difficulties, we have decided to introduce two daily shuttle trains with which we transport all containers to Ljubljana immediately after they are handed over to us and then transfer them to our regular shuttle trains, for example Adria Express towards Munich, Combi Express to Budapest, Beograd Express towards Belgrad, Boporus – Europe Express to Istanbul and Verona Express towards Verona. Our partners then arrange in their networks for the transportation to the final destination and vice versa. We connect Koper with 72 terminals in the EU and South-Eastern Europe, e.g. from Poland, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium down to Romania, Turkey and Greece. Koper has also been connected to North Sea ports as well as the Black Sea port of Constanza and all the way to Istanbul. The cooperation between Koper and Adria kombi is on a very high level. Colleagues from the Port of Koper are very responsive to our proposals and demands and are ready to help us at any time. I am sure that it will be so also in the future despite sometimes different strategies. The competition in Koper is exceptional as there are currently five operators in the port.

GATEWAY SLOVENIA has been split into two phases. The first phase has been successfully concluded in August 2007 in under the SINGER project (Slovenian Intermodal Gateway to European Rail). We joined forces with our partners KOMBIVERKEHR, CEMAT, HUNGHAKOMBI/HUNGARIA INTERMODAL and Slovenian Railways. We connected Ljubljana as a starting point for South-Eastern Europe with shuttle trains from MUNICH, VERONA and BUDAPEST. Ever one of the partners then connects all major industrial centres in their networks. In this project, which was supported by the European Commission under the Marco Polo project, the UIRR office in Brussels has participated as a coordinator.

The second phase, which we are currently making happen and which has also been supported by the European Commission under the Marco Polo project, has been named SEEIS (South East European Intermodal Service). This is a logical continuance to the SINGER project, as we will connect the most important economic centers in South-Eastern Europe with shuttle trains, those being Zagreb, Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul, Skopje, Thessaloniki and Athens. Kombiverkehr, Cemat, Rokombi and the UIRR office are all cooperating in this project. We have also introduced the Boporus Europe Express alongside the Belgrade Express train in the end of March, which goes from Ljubljana to Istanbul. The partners are Kombiverkehr and Adria Kombi. Together we established the company EUROPE INTERMODAL with headquarters in Istanbul, which provides for a coordinated appearance in the Turkish market. We are ready to accept interested Turkish companies as partners in the future.

Let me go back to our beginning and the service, which we have been offering successfully for thirty-eight years. This is the rolling motorway, popularly named RO-LA. Until the most recent expansion of the European Union, two lines have successfully operated, those being Szeged – Ljubljana and Wels – Maribor. We tested a third line between Spačva and Ljubljana, but it unfortunately did not work out and we stopped it in it's test phase. After the accession of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU the Szeged – Ljubljana line became uncompetitive and was cancelled as well in the beginning of 2007. Together with Oekombi, Vienna we organized the rolling motorway Maribor-Wels which is functioning exceptionally well. There are 12 trains operating every day and in 2007 we transported nearly 54.000 trucks. The efficiency of the trains is over 90 percent. For this I would like to thank my colleagues from Oekombi and Austrian Railways for the long standing successful cooperation.

Some more numbers. Since we last met at the congress in Slovenia in 1999 we have increased traffic seven-fold. In 2007 we jointly transported 250.077 TEUs. I am convinced that the KOMAR network, Gateway Slovenia and the Maribor – Wels rolling motorway are the right direction and our contribution, if I may be so bold to say, the contribution of Slovenia to greener transport in Europe.

I would also like to point out some problems, which are slowing the future development of rail and especially combined transport in the region. This is primarily an aged infrastructure and lack of locomotives and rolling stock. Liberalisation of traffic is not enough if the infrastructure does not allow for the increase of traffic because of increasing demand. Big investments into the road infrastructure and neglect of rail infrastructure modernisation decreases the railway traffic's ability to compete. Declared environment friendly and the need to decrease greenhouse gasses needs to bring about the intensive renovation of the rail infrastructure in the region and modernization of means of transport in the shortest time possible. At the same time it is important to encourage the road hauliers and forwarders in the region with political measures to use combined transport. These measures are known and I would rather not repeat them here.

In the end I would like to thank all our partners abroad and especially national railway authorities, with which we cooperate. I thank all our customers for trusting and supporting us in the realisation of our projects. Of course, without the support of Slovenian Railways from the very beginning of combined transport this wouldn't be possible. Our collaboration is on the highest possible level as it is to the benefit of both sides. I am convinced that it will be so also in the future. Last but not least I would like to give thanks to Mr. Colle and his colleagues from the UIRR office in Brussels for their help in the organization of this congress and long standing successful cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.