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Consultation

between **Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc** from the European Commission

and

the **leaders of European Road-Rail Combined Transport**, Operators and Terminal Managers.

Time and place: 10:00 - 11:30 on Thursday, 19 May 2016, Thon Hotel EU, Brussels

Participants on behalf of UIRR (in alphabetical order):

UIRR Members:

Miklos Ágh, RCT-BILK
Livio Ambrogio, Ambrogio Trasporti
Andrés Ambrogio, Ambrogio Trasporti
Ben Beirnaert, Combinant
Robert Breuhahn, Kombiverkehr
Jean-Claude Brunier, T3M
Antonin Brunier, T3M
Jean-Louis Chérel, Novatrans
René Dancet, RALpin
Claudia Dittrich, Far East Land Bridge
Vladimir Fiser, Bohemia kombi
Marco Gosso, Cemat
Peter Howald, Hupac
Slavko Mamic, Crokombi
Sven Mertes, CFL Intermodal
Nóra Miklósi, RCT-BILK
Charles Puech d'Alissac, Naviland Cargo
Christian Ressenaar, Lugo Terminal
Kenneth Russell, John G Russell Transport
Rok Svetek, Adria Kombi
István Wagner, Railport Arad

UIRR Staff:

Ralf-Charley Schultze
Barbara Bento
Pekiye Biçici
Eric Feyen
Ákos Érsek
Henri Maillard



Summary of the discussion:

The Commissioner's opening statement

Whatever is done it should be people-focused: initiatives are not for objects like trucks, planes or trains, but for people. Transport is 95% dependent on oil, which will be addressed in the upcoming Commission communication on the decarbonisation of transport.

The Commission is pushing for the internationalisation, the globalisation of European services, the export of European regulatory framework and standards. For instance, the intention to extend TEN-T towards Balkan countries will be reaffirmed during the Paris summit planned in July.

Innovation and investments should remain strongly present in all modes. Shift2Rail is the framework for rail-related R&D.

€700 billion worth of investments are needed in the TEN-T network. The first two CEF Transport calls were substantially oversubscribed. EFSI will bring another €350 billion to new projects such as the energy and transport infrastructure of Europe. UIRR is encouraged to propose EFSI projects during the TEN-T Days speed-dating organised with private investors.

The Commission legislative agenda ran along vertical, modal lines: the Fourth Railway Package was inherited from the previous Commission. A forceful aviation strategy was launched in 2015. In 2016 road initiatives will be put forward, while 2017 will focus on maritime. Once completing these modal legislations, the next initiative of 2018-19 shall be the horizontal, multimodal. Perhaps the revision of the Combined Transport Directive (92/106) can herald this multimodal initiative as soon as in 2017.

1. Rok Svetek / Adria Kombi: Intermodal Initiative and the revision of 92/106

How does the Commissioner see the chances of transforming the Directive 92/106 into the comprehensive framework for European Intermodal and Combined Transport - as suggested in the UIRR Position Paper? Does she support it? How can we, the closest stakeholders contribute to the Commissioner's efforts to get it on the table?

Response:

A full scale impact assessment and public consultation will be started soon to determine whether, and if yes, how to change the directive that sets the regulatory framework for intermodal and combined transport. Participants are encouraged to participate in the process. (*Ralf-Charley Schultze, UIRR's President then handed the UIRR Position Paper on Directive 92/106 to the Commissioner.*)

2. Marco Gosso / Cemat: Track access charging and road tolling

CT Operators have several problems when it comes to infrastructure charging:

- (i) unpredictable year-on-year increase in the level of TAC,
- (ii) the unjustified discrepancies between TAC levels - from one Member State to another,
- (iii) the even greater heterogeneity in road tolling, which is the payment of road hauliers that correspond to the track access charge payment of rail freight, and the disorder in this area: the lack of common rules, the relatively low weight of road tolls in the cost structure of a long-distance road haulier as opposed to a rail freight operator (ref. ACEA figures), and
- (iv) the unlawful state aid that is being extended to road hauliers, competitors of Combined Transport in the land freight transport market, when their tolls are reduced while track access charges are being increased.

What kind of solution can rail freight expect?

Response:

Commission services are currently conducting some analysis on taxes and charges applicable to different transport modes in Member States. This is the basis for any further action at EU level. But we need to keep in mind that charging and taxation is primarily a Member State competence. The Commission will continue to encourage Member States to apply the user-pay and polluter-pay principles, however subsidiarity means that final decisions reside with Member States.

3. **Livio Ambrogio / Ambrogio Trasporti**: Energy prices in transport: the reduced price of diesel versus the increases in the cost of traction energy

The price of diesel, the fuel of trucks, has dropped by as much as 20% over the last two years; and this is the largest cost component of road hauliers (according to ACEA). During the same time traction electricity (electricity for industrial use) has only gotten more expensive: by how much? As the market is not unified, it depends on the Member State; but the Eurostat figures suggest stagnant or rising prices everywhere. All this at a time when electricity generation is getting cleaner, the rapidly increasing investments into renewables result in less CO₂ emissions as well as ETS also pushes up the prices, while the burning of ever more oil, irrespective of how efficient the internal combustion engine is, causes global warming. The recent reply on energy taxation by Commissioner Moscovici on behalf of the Commission - which you have received as well - and having a COP21 Climate Agreement on our hands raises the question: do you, does the College of Commissioners understand this problem, and what is their suggested approach to tackle it?

Response:

Decarbonisation and alternative sources of fuel is a complex question. Electricity vs. oil is a question to which an answer should be found to. Energy taxation will be discussed with Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, while the Commission's decarbonisation strategy is expected to be presented in July 2016.

4. **Ben Beirnaert / Combinant**: Digitalisation in Combined Transport

Terminals and Operators of Combined Transport continuously strive for better technologies and processes, more IT and less paper, involving the parts of the business that they control. However there are other, modal circumstances that set limits to this innovation. Train position information - the use of RNE's Train Information System (TIS) - would be extremely useful, but the regulatory ambiguity regarding "who owns the information" paralyses implementation. The eConsignment Note on rail is progressing at a snail's pace. And administrative interoperability between modes is almost nonexistent. This treasure chest for productivity enhancement needs to be opened through defining or redefining the applicable regulatory framework. What is the plan of the Commissioner for doing this? How does the Commissioner foresee it done?

Response:

The Commissioner is a big believer in open data. The boundaries of proprietary and public data must nevertheless be agreed and defined. This work is undertaken in conjunction with Commissioner Andrus Ansip responsible for the digital single market. It is a major concern that SMEs are allowed to enter the market in order to change the landscape.

5. **Sven Mertes / CFL Intermodal**: Investments and their financing

Infrastructure is very important to all transport modes. The rail network has several shortcomings, bottlenecks and capacity constraints. Hence we viewed the emergence of CEF Transport with hope, while the EFSI initiative of President Juncker with worry. While CEF promised funding for rail, EFSI seemed not suited to the needs of rail. The latest EFSI Transport report from last March underscores these fears, as 60% of the number of projects, and who knows what percentage of the total outlay, went to funding road investments, while only a fraction to rail projects. Does the Commission have a strategic plan on how to finance the needed rail investments? What is the plan to boost the earning ability of rail - to qualify it to borrow on its own right as in the late 19th - early 20th Century? Does the Commissioner foresee rail infrastructure to be made available as collateral? What path does the Commission offer for private capital into European rail (infrastructure) projects - beside through buying government (guaranteed) bonds?

Written response of the Commissioner:

CEF priorities are clear and set in law. Rail is by far its first beneficiary as confirmed by the outcome of the 2015 call. For EFSI, we have now 11 projects selected. Half of them relate to the road transport but the others to rail (in Italy and Spain), maritime transport or are multimodal. I am convinced that PPPs are possible for all modes of transport and that EFSI does not necessarily go to road projects. Thanks to

technical assistance, through different instruments - for instance blending between funds - we can make sure that EFSI focuses on projects with a real EU added value. This has been the Commission's objective since the very beginning.

6. **Ken Russell / John G Russell Transport: Research and Development discrepancies between modes**

Whereas ACEA proudly states that 41 billion euros (5% of revenues) are spent on road related R&D, on top of which the Commission also offers considerable funding for road projects, the money available to rail is much more limited. How is it that the most futuristic ideas get ample funding if they involve road, like protruding aerodynamic elements, or fancy futuristic electronics like for platooning, BUT rail cannot get most elemental R&D funded at the same time - like the development of LL brake blocks, or disc brakes for freight wagons, or replacing high pressure air with electricity to operate brakes! Private capital will see a business case wherever the regulatory environment continues to suggest a payoff: in case of road it is positive, whereas on rail it is not. What does the Commissioner think about this problem?

Written response of the Commissioner:

Making the Shift2Rail programme operational was one of the first priorities. This is now done: (1) the first call was launched in December 2015, the associated members in the Joint Undertaking are now selected, the Executive Director is recruited. This is an essential instrument to promote R&D in the rail sector. UIRR is invited to make the best possible use of it. There is no equivalent for the road sector. The Commission is also reviewing this year transport R&D activities financed under the Horizon 2020 programme - the so-called STRIA. UIRR is invited to express its views and proposals in this respect.

CONCLUSION: UIRR and the European Commission should continue to regularly and intensely cooperate, holding similar meetings to the one today, as well as through regular exchanges on a working level in order to help exploit the potential of intermodality when aiming to reach the European Union's transport policy targets in long(er)-distance freight transport.

