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Cooperation as key to shift traffic from road to rail

Transport is a key factor for the economic growth. In the last ten years rail freight had a growth of 6%, road transport of 35% in EU-25 and the combined transport of the UIRR companies showed a growth of 38%. Especially in international traffic UIRR companies were particularly successful in transferring road traffic to rail. The 19 full members of UIRR are transporting 2.5 million truckloads yearly, an equivalent of 5.6 Mill. TEU. This means 10.000 truck loads daily on 500 complete long distance trains. UIRR stands for about two thirds of Combined Transport brought to rail by operators. Combined transport is representing a more and more important part of rail freight, even for big railways like SNCF or DB, up to 20% of the transported tonnekilometres. On some international relations between big industrial centres, Combined Transport already presents between 10 and 30 percent of the total volume transported, for example Cologne (D) – Milan (I).

Combined traffic is especially successful on long distances and where geographical and administrative obstacles complicate road transport. About two thirds of our traffic is transalpine. All transit roads are congested and the alpine countries are charging high road tolls. Reasons are the more costly infrastructure investments but also the environmental sensitivity of the population in the transit countries who feels bothered with noise and air pollution and with the cutting into pieces of the landscape by roads draining so much traffic that it is often difficult to cross. So the alpine transit countries, mainly Switzerland and Austria use high road tolls, night traffic bans and other measures to limit road traffic on one side, but they also invest in rail infrastructure and grant financial help for rail on the other side. With the enlargement of the European Union traffic is still rising over proportionally and other countries like Germany, France, Hungary, Czech republic... are as well confronted with additional traffic. These countries will introduce or raise road tolls and will use a number of instruments to limit road traffic and assure road safety.



Those instruments are week-end and night traffic bans and more severe controls of the technical conditions of trucks, of licences of resting times, of speed limits etc. All this, together with the saturation of roads will ameliorate the competitive position of Combined Transport as a more secure, reliable and environmentally friendly alternative.

In European countries like France, Germany, the alpine countries and Italy the saturation of the road, the environmental and safety problems had already 35 years ago led to the creation of Combined Transport operators and to the foundation of UIRR.

UIRR has a decentralised structure, with a liaison office in Brussels and member companies who organise the combined transport as operators.

The task of the liaison office is the overall promotion of Combined Transport in close collaboration with the European Institutions and other international associations and the coordination, harmonisation and standardisation of its members' activities. The liaison office is also a service centre in special fields like, distribution of codes for telecommunication, project management for research and traffic shift actions.

Most of the member companies were founded on a common initiative of road and rail and with the political support of the transport ministries. As road and rail are competing modes, the basic philosophy was to create operators with a majority of shares of road hauliers or logistic companies but with a participation of the railways. In this way, neutral operators were created to manage the Combined Transport in the interest of the customers and to guarantee to the customers that these operators will never try to directly intervene in the relations between shipper and logistic company. So profit making is not the principal objective, Combined Transport operators fulfil best their task if they organise a fast and reliable service at reasonable prices for their customers who are often also shareholders. This is also in the very interest of the railway companies who are benefiting by increasing freight traffic.

UIRR is since some years with upcoming rail liberalisation also open for Combined Transport operators who are daughter companies of railways. These members are mainly operators who organise the maritime container hinterland traffic.

The success of continental Combined Transport is based on the good cooperation and trust between road and rail and has always shown the best results when both



are in the same boat and together with the transport policy, taking care of favourable framework conditions.

Combined Transport is based on two different techniques:

- the unaccompanied transport of swap bodies, containers and crenable semi-trailers, representing today 87% of UIRR traffic and
- the accompanied transport or Rolling Motorway where the whole road train is transported on special flat wagons and the driver is accompanying his truck during the rail transport in a sleeping car, representing 13% of UIRR traffic.

Both techniques are serving special markets. The unaccompanied transport of loading units, in the long run the most economical form of Combined Transport, is minimising the dead weight to be transported on rail. But this technique requires a long term collaboration between road and rail. The road hauliers and logistic companies have to invest in loading units and they must have regular traffic if possible with backload. In this case they can benefit by investing only in trucks used for the short distance transport to the transshipment yards. They need a reduced personnel who mainly can work during day hours. And with a given number of trucks they can multiply the number of transports, which are transported by rail on the long distance. But they must organise the terminal haulage also at the destination area. This is either done by establishing own dependencies abroad or by collaborating with local haulage companies.

The use of the accompanied traffic requires on the contrary no special investment or organisation and Rolling Motorways may also be occasionally used, or only in one direction. Often Rolling Motorways make part of a long international journey to overcome an obstacle like the alps or just to move forward while sleeping, so during the resting time. This may accelerate the whole international round trip. Another motivation may be to cross a country with limited road permits.

If using Rolling Motorways regularly, the logistic company should consider if they cannot switch to unaccompanied Combined Transport with loading units, so that truck and personnel are not unnecessarily immobilised during the rail transport.

On the Rolling Motorway the accompanying driver is able to inform his company in cases of delay or problems. To assure the same information level in unaccompanied traffic most Combined Transport operators are offering EDI tools for customers. The



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most important is the CESAR system. Under one unique internet address (www.cesar-online.com) the customer can track and trace all his loading units regardless of the country where they are transported and independently of the CT-operator where it was booked. The customer can query the status of all his loading units. Cesar also offers timetables, a common booking interface and irregularity messages in case of delays. CESAR has been developed in a European project and is commercially running for three years now, to the increasing satisfaction of the customers. Today two thirds of all UIRR traffic are already treated by CESAR.

The UIRR companies are very dynamic and offer a number of new relations to link South-Eastern Europe to Central and Western Europe. As an example I will show a map of the direct train relations which are established in the framework of the Marco Polo project SINGER with Ljubljana in Slovenia as Gateway.

There are also new relations connecting Romania with Belgium and the port of Antwerp. Both are offers for the unaccompanied transport of containers, swap bodies and cranable trailers.

The UIRR operators Alpe Adria and Ökombi are in collaboration with the logistic company Roder organising a multimodal transport chain connecting Turkey with Salzburg at the Austrian-German border. After using short sea shipping between Turkey and Trieste the trucks are transported on Rolling Motorway before heading Northwards from Salzburg to Germany.

My last slide shows existing Rolling Motorway services between Austria and Hungary or Rumania and between Hungary and Slovenia. With all these services truck drivers may accelerate their long international journey and Central and Western Europe comes closer to the Near East and to Turkey.

More details about recent developments will be given tomorrow by my colleague Wilhelm Patzner, director general of our Austrian member company Ökombi. Thank you for your attention.

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