

## **BULLETIN I/2009**

### **Editorial**

Switzerland and the EU have recently concluded their talks on amending the bilateral agreement on the carriage of goods.

As a consequence of the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent tightening of security regulations in international trade, the European Union has decided to require prior notification with regard to goods crossing its external borders as of 1 July 2009.

In their negotiations, the parties have now agreed that this restriction shall not apply to merchandise exported from Switzerland.

This is excellent news for the transport industry, since the new regulation ensures that no additional administrative barriers may be set up to impede the exchange of goods between Switzerland and the EU.

The agreement also avoids further obstacles and longer waiting times for traffic at the Swiss frontier.

*Dr. Rainer Füeg  
Secretary General*

### **Table of contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<i>Reactions to UECC resolutions</i>	2
<i>General Assembly of the UECC in Strasbourg</i>	2
<i>Straubing-Vilshofen: Bavaria's minister of the environment changes tack</i>	2
<i>Czech Republic plans to improve the interoperability of its railways</i>	2
<i>Green light for a second railway bridge over the Rhine</i>	3
<i>Seine-Nord Europe Canal forges ahead</i>	3
<i>Study recommends Europe-wide permission for mega trucks</i>	4
<i>Agenda 2009</i>	4

### **March 2009**

**Editor:**  
Union of European Chambers  
of Commerce and Industry  
Generalsekretariat  
Aeschenvorstadt 67  
CH-4010 Basel  
Tel.: 0041 61 270 60 10  
Fax: 0041 61 270 60 05  
Internet: <http://www.uecc.org>  
E-mail: [r.fueeg@uecc.org](mailto:r.fueeg@uecc.org)

## **Reactions to UECC resolutions**

### **TGV Rhin-Rhône**

The UECC resolution has met with a positive response. Dominique Bussereau, the French Secretary of State in charge of transport, Adrien Zeller, President of the Regional Assembly of the Alsace, and Pierre Messulam, Director of the French State railways (SNCF), have thanked the UECC for its efforts and confirmed that they will continue to press ahead with the project.

At a press conference in connection with a meeting with the Regional Transport Association of Freiburg in January 2009, Pierre Messulam announced that the SNCF is also planning to extend the first section of the TGV's new eastern line to Freiburg.

Mulhouse should be linked up with TGV Rhine-Rhône by the end of 2011. The first section of the eastern line from Mulhouse to the east of Dijon is currently still under construction.

### **No overtaking ban for trucks**

Andreas Mölzer (MEP) has failed in his attempt to secure a written declaration of the European Parliament in favour of an overtaking ban for trucks on dual carriageways. The UECC had written a letter to members of the European Parliament in November 2008, arguing against such a ban.

## **General Assembly of the UECC in Strasbourg**

This year's General Assembly will be held in Strasbourg on 15 May 2009. The invitations have already been distributed. The event is a good opportunity to meet members of the Executive Committee and the Working Group

and to discuss any comments or suggestions with regard to the UECC's position papers on transport policy. All members are cordially invited to register for the General Assembly by the middle of April.

## **Straubing-Vilshofen: Bavaria's Minister for the Environment changes tack**

Proposals for the upgrading of the Danube waterway between Straubing and Vilshofen have always taken the centre stage in Bavarian transport policy. CSU and the inland shipping industry on the one hand and FDP, SPD, the Green Party and environmental organisations on the other have been arguing about the project for decades. So far, the ruling party CSU has always insisted on the construction of a barrage near Aicha and a canal near Mühlham.

Now, Markus Söder, the Minister for the Environment, has suddenly changed direction and questioned whether the upgrade will fulfil the "high expectations". In response, Prime Minister Horst Seehofer has said that the coalition treaty signed with the FDP stipulates another review of the advantages and drawbacks of the project before a final decision can be taken.

## **Czech Republic plans to improve the interoperability its railways**

With the agreement of the European Commission, the Czech Republic will invest a total of CZK 1 billion (EUR 40 million) in the improvement of the interoperability of its rail transport. 85 % of the capital should be covered by the Cohesion Fund and 15 % by the State budget of the Czech Republic.

The measure aims at gradually achieving technical and operational interconnection

between the railway systems in the Czech Republic and those in the neighbouring countries. It will also promote interoperability among rail transport operators. Other objectives are the reduction of the environmental impact of rail transport, the expansion of services and the encouragement of innovation. The subsidies are limited to a period of five years.

## Green light for a second railway bridge over the Rhine

In March 2009 the board of directors of the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) approved the proposal for a second, 240 m long bridge over the Rhine in Basel. Construction is to begin in the spring of 2010. Discussions are still underway with the German Railways (DB) on the building of the northern access route to the bridge on DB territory.

The German Railways are also to bear the costs for this part of the project. An agreement to this effect is expected to be reached by June this year.

The bridge will cost the SBB CHF 57 million and should be completed by the autumn of 2012.

## Seine-Nord Europe Canal forges ahead

The plans involve the construction of a 106 km long canal running from the South to the North between the catchment areas of the Seine and the Escaut in Northern France. Vessels up to category Vb (pushed barge train with two lighters) will be able to operate on the new inland waterway. The project is part of the European Union's plans for a trans-European transport network (TEN). Planning procedures should be finalised by 2010 and the canal opened by 2014 or 2015. The French Minister for the Environment Jean-Louis Borloo and Secretary of State for Transport Dominique Bussereau signed the "declaration of public

interest" on 12 September 2008, which paved the way for test drillings and ground surveys.

The project was included in "Grenelle 1", an environmental policy bill which the French Government adopted at the end of 2008. In December 2008 the European Commission also announced that the EU would provide a total of EUR 333 million for the construction of the canal by 2013.

Finally, the protocol for the financing of the canal was signed by the State, the regions and the Voies navigables de France (VNF) on 11 March 2009. The project is worth a total of EUR 4 billion.



### Seine-Escaut waterway

The Seine-Nord Europe Canal will run from Cambrai to Campègne (dotted line):

Length: 106 km, width: 54 m, depth: 4.5 m.

Source: Voies navigables de France, [www.vnf.fr](http://www.vnf.fr)

## ***Study recommends Europe-wide permission for mega trucks***

Directive 96/53/EC regulates the weights and dimensions of heavy commercial vehicles in national and international traffic within the territory of the European Union. With a length of about 25 m and a weight of 60 tonnes, the so-called monster trucks exceed these limits by far.

In a study commissioned by the General Directorate for Energy and Transport of the European Commission, the Belgian research company Transport & Mobility (TML), in cooperation with the Technical University of Aachen (RWTH), investigated the following four scenarios:

1. No change with regard to the restrictions for length and weight of the trucks.

2. Europe-wide permission for 25.25 m and 60 t trucks on all motorways – the usage of these long and heavy vehicles (LHVs) may be restricted on regional roads.

3. Corridors: LHVs are allowed in some countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium, in this scenario), while the other EU Member States only permit trucks with the currently admissible dimensions (length 18.75 m and weight 40 tonnes).

4. Europe-wide permission for trucks of up to 20.75 m and 44 t – a compromise which would gradually increase load capacity by up to 10 %.

Taking into account current forecasts for economic development and the growing demand for transport services by 2020, the study concludes that the second scenario would generate the largest amount of benefit.

The report mentions higher investments into the upgrading of bridges and other infrastructure improvements as disadvantages of scenario 2, but adds that these costs would be lower than the expected savings.

According to the authors, monster trucks are more cost effective, since they carry 1 % more weight per kilometre than conventional trucks and thus require 15 % fewer vehicles for the same amount of cargo. Their fuel consumption is also said to be more efficient.

More information on the study can be downloaded from [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/studies/doc/2009\\_01\\_weights\\_and\\_dimensions\\_vehicles.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/studies/doc/2009_01_weights_and_dimensions_vehicles.pdf).

### ***Agenda 2009***

#### **Executive Committee**

15 May 2009

Strasbourg (F)

2 October 2009

St. Pölten (A)

#### **General Assembly**

15 May 2009

Strasbourg (F)

#### **Working Group**

23/24 April 2009

Bern (CH)