

**BULLETIN****II/2007****Editorial**

Last autumn, the UECC conducted a survey among transport companies in the member countries of the UECC in order to assess the impact of environmental regulations on costs and competitive conditions in the road haulage market. The results of the survey, which was carried out as part of a Master thesis, showed that costs ranged from 10 % to 23 % of the companies' gross turnover, depending on their country of origin. Surprisingly, the companies surveyed do not consider the additional costs that result from environmental regulations as a serious problem and report only few competitive disadvantages. This may be due to the fact that most of these costs – road tolls, higher investment costs, etc. – can be passed on to the customers.

However, the differences in checking procedures, which vary between countries, are sometimes perceived as a problem. Most companies assume that compliance checks are more frequent and more stringent in their own countries than for their competitors. The results of the survey show that the UECC must continue to demand an equal treatment for all modes of transport and a uniform implementation of the regulations in the individual member countries, but that no further specific activities are necessary.

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Secretary General*

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Reactions to UECC resolutions

“Baden – Württemberg 21”

Transport commissioner Jacques Barrot has welcomed the UECC's position paper on the railway project. The Stuttgart - Ulm section is still a bottleneck on the Paris-Bratislava rail axis. An upgrading of this section could increase the capacities and therefore the profitability of the axis and provide uninterrupted high-speed railway services from Paris to Bratislava in the near future. Because of its importance for the trans-European network and the efforts to improve transport connections to the new member States of the EU in eastern and central Europe, this railway link was included in the list of 30 priority transport projects.

Directive on enhancing supply chain security

Dr. Wolfgang Elsner, head of the unit “security of surface transports and transport of dangerous goods” at the EU's Directorate General for Energy and Transport, confirmed in his reply to the letter from the

UECC that the relevant bodies of the European Parliament have decided not to pursue the EU's proposal for the moment. At the same time, he mentioned the new customs regulations which entered into effect on 18 December 2006. They refer to an essential part of all transport services for which the security proposal was intended. However, Dr. Elsner is doubtful whether the new customer regulations are more advantageous than the European Commission's original proposal.

Straubing-Vilshofen

In her reply to the letter from the UECC, Mrs Annette Fasse, who reports on inland waterways to the transport committee of the German Federal Parliament, did not respond to the UECC's suggestion to review the Federal Parliament's decision, made in 2002, to favour the proposal A for upgrading the Danube between Straubing and Vilshofen.

General Assembly of the UECC in Frankfurt

At this year's General Assembly, which will be held in Frankfurt am Main (D) on September 27/28, the UECC will present the results of its current survey on the gaps and bottlenecks in the European transport network.

Dr. Wilhelm Bender, Chairman of the Executive Board of Fraport AG, Frankfurt Airport Services Worldwide, has been invited as a guest speaker.

The invitations to the General Assembly will be distributed this month. As always, this event offers an excellent opportunity for member companies to meet the executive board and the working groups and discuss any requests concerning the transport policy positions developed by the UECC.

Particulate matter: health risks are exaggerated

At a symposium organised by the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, three scientists from various relevant fields of expertise discussed the dangers arising from exposure to particulate matter. All three experts agreed that the possible health risks

were exaggerated in the current public debate; from a medical point of view there is no reason for panic.

A significant link with severe lung disease can only be proven for smoking, but not for particulate matter, the scientists said.

About 80 % of the substances that are harmful to the lungs come from enclosed spaces and only about 20 % from outdoors. The scientists pointed out that the effects of indoor pollution have hardly been discussed so far. They recommended that future studies should assess the interaction between indoor and outdoor pollution and measure the concentration of toxic substances. Background pollution should also be taken into account.

On January 1, 2005, the European Union introduced strict limits for the amounts of particulate matter permitted in the air. The new regulations stipulate no more than an average of 50 micrograms of particulate matter per cubic meter air per day on at most 35 days per year. Should the amounts measured exceed these limits, the member States are obliged to take counteractive measures.

Lötschberg base tunnel opened

After eight years of building, the 34.6 km long Lötschberg base tunnel was opened on June 15, 2007. The new tunnel, the third longest in the world, is seen as a major step forward in Switzerland's efforts to shift traffic from the roads to the railways. It is the first project to be completed within the framework of the New Railway Link through the Alps (NRLA). The second major project, the 57 km long Gotthard base tunnel, is scheduled to be operational in about ten years. The Lötschberg base tunnel plays an important role in the plans for a high-speed rail freight link between Rotterdam and

Genoa. Full-scale operation on the Lötschberg base tunnel is expected to begin on December 9, 2007.

The costs for this part of the NRLA were estimated at 3.2 billion Swiss francs in 1998. The Swiss Government's most recent estimate mentions a cost overrun of 34 % and total costs of 4.3 billion Swiss francs. 67 % of the additional costs are due to changes in the plans and geological risks. With inflation and interest accumulated during construction, the Lötschberg Base Tunnel cost 5.3 billion Swiss francs in total.

Working group "Waterways"

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Dealing with climate change

The German Federal Ministry of Transport has commissioned an expertise which is to examine the possible effects of climate change on conditions for inland shipping on the Rhine. The first stage of the project began on June 1, 2007 and will last two years. First, the expertise will assess what is likely to happen when no steps are taken to combat the effects of climate change. In a second phase, possible strategies – including waterway construction measures – will be developed. Other

options include for example the improvement of forecasting procedures and logistic systems as well as the development of new transport concepts which will help shippers to adapt to the changed conditions.

New mooring facilities

Dutch authorities plan to provide mooring facilities every 30 km along the river Waal. On this river, ships cannot be moored in the stream over night, because difficult conditions in the navigation channel do not allow a safe anchorage. Currently, there are three ports on the Dutch part of the river. A further port is planned near Lobith. However, planning and building has been delayed because the new port is in an area

that falls within the purview of the FFH directive. The existing ports are already operating at full capacity and should be extended. The UECC will ask the Dutch Ministry of Transport to advance planning procedures for the new port in Spyck and to examine whether additional mooring facilities can be provided to satisfy the needs of inland shipping companies in the short term. Mooring facilities on the German part of the river are in sufficient supply above the city of Wesel. The relevant authorities are

planning to build additional ports between Wesel and the Dutch frontier.

Hinterland traffic connections for inland ports

The European Union will publish a paper on port policy in October this year, and Berlin's Technical University plans to conduct a study on containerised traffic in cooperation with the shippers concerned. Both working groups of the UECC will continue to follow this issue closely and prepare a position paper.

Working group "General Transport"

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Last May, the working group defined the subjects and guidelines which will determine its activities. Each subject was assigned to a member of the group, who will report on the subject at meetings, prepare position papers and, if necessary, invite external experts to the meetings of the group.

Gaps and bottlenecks in the European transport network

The information received from the Chambers participating in the current survey is very detailed and provides an excellent basis for the UECC's future activities. The working group will evaluate the replies and draw up a list of those gaps and bottlenecks that are the most important from a pan-European point of view.

Agenda 2007

Executive committee:

27/28 September 2007 Frankfurt (D)

General assembly:

27/28 September 2007 Frankfurt (D)

Working group "General Transport"

12/13 September 2007 Cologne (D)

Working group "Waterways"

12/13 September 2007 Cologne (D)