

**BULLETIN****III/2007****Editorial**

At its General Assembly in Frankfurt last September the UECC discussed the current state of transport infrastructures in Europe on the basis of the results of the survey it conducted among its member Chambers in the summer. Although some bottlenecks have been eliminated and other projects have at least been started over the last five years, the UECC is disappointed about the lack of progress, especially concerning the TEN projects. Obviously, the current distribution of decision-levels in Europe tends to hinder rather than promote the building of the required transport infrastructure, not to mention the complicated approval procedures and the often incomprehensible emphasis that is laid on local concerns.

The European Union determines European priorities and also finances feasibility studies. However, the implementation of the projects is still up to the member States, which often prefer not to invest in cross-border transport projects, even if the earnings from road tolls and other utilisation fees continue to increase, thanks to growing demand. The building of cross-border traffic axes ought to be a European task!

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Secretary General*

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Resolutions

At its General Assembly on 28 September 2007 in Frankfurt, the UECC adopted the following resolution on European rail transport:

European Chambers of Commerce and Industry demand a clear commitment in favour of the extension of the rail axis Karlsruhe – Basel to four tracks by 2016.

The railway axis between Rotterdam and Genoa is the most important north-south connection for rail freight in Europe. It crosses areas with high economic growth, steadily increasing traffic and high population density. Almost 70 million people, about a seventh of the total population of the EU, live in these areas.

With its links to the Magistrale for Europe in Karlsruhe, to the TGV Rhine – Rhone – Mediterranean in Basel, and to the high-speed railway line Lyon-Turin-Verona-Ljubljana-Budapest in Milan, this railway project is destined to play a major role in the integration of large areas of Europe.

The European Union has recognised the importance of this axis and included it in its list of priority projects of the trans-European network (TEN 24). However, the axis still has several major deficiencies in the north (Karlsruhe-Basel, Basel by-pass, tunnel through the Jura Mountains) and in the south (access to the railway network in the Milan area) of the transalpine route.

The railway link between Karlsruhe and Basel is a major part of the north-south axis and also serves as an access route to the New Rail Link through the Alps (NRLA)

in Switzerland. With the opening of the Loetschberg Tunnel this year and the Gotthard Base Tunnel, which is due to open in 2016, Switzerland will considerably increase its capacities for rail freight transport. In order to make full use of these new infrastructures, the access routes must be upgraded so that they can deal with the expected growth in traffic.

The Karlsruhe-Basel section does not fulfil these conditions, however. About 270 trains, of which about 160 are freight trains, operate on this line every day. The railway infrastructures in the Upper Rhine region are used to capacity. By 2020, as many as 320 trains per day are expected to run between Karlsruhe and Basel. Back in 1996, the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement with Switzerland in which it undertook to extend the northern access route to the NRLA to four tracks, inline with increasing demand.

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany is called upon to honour its agreement with Switzerland and to implement the upgrading of the section through the Rhine valley to four tracks by 2016. In particular, it is high time a decision was taken on the funding of the building of the Rastatt tunnel and the two new railway tracks between Offenburg-Freiburg-Basel. The European Chambers of Commerce and Industry call upon the German minister of transport, the German state of Baden-Württemberg and the Deutsche Bahn AG to hold a meeting to discuss the problems regarding the funding and planning of the Karlsruhe-Basel section.

Annual report 2006/2007

Focal points

The executive committee of the UECC held meetings in Salzburg (A), Arnhem (NL) and Frankfurt (D). In addition to the upgrading of the Danube and the Rhine-Rhone link, the main topics of discussion were:

- Environment-related regulations and their effect on European Freight transport
- Missing links and bottlenecks in the European transport network
- Inland ports and their connections to regional transport network

At the committee meetings and the General Assembly, the UECC adopted the following resolutions, position papers and letters to the attention of national and European authorities:

- European Chambers of Commerce and Industry demand a clear commitment in favour of the railway project "Baden-Württemberg 21", "Stuttgart 21" and the new line between Wendlingen and Ulm (Basel, January 2007)
- Withdrawal of the proposal for a directive to improve the security of the supply chain (Salzburg, February 2007)
- Mooring facilities for inland ships in the Netherlands (Arnhem, June 2007)
- European Chambers of Commerce and Industry demand a clear commitment in favour of the extension of the rail axis Karlsruhe – Basel to four tracks by 2016 (Frankfurt, September 2007).

In addition, the UECC addressed several position papers and letters concerning infrastructure projects to national transport ministers and the European Commission.

Personnel changes

Mr. Cees de Graaff was elected as the new chairman of the working group „Waterways“. He replaces Mr. Teun Muller. Mr. Claudio Camponovo resigned from the Executive Committee in September 2007. Dr. Veronika Kessler has left the Austrian Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Michael Grub-

mann has succeeded her as secretary of the Austrian group and as a member of the working group "General Transport".

Members

The Chambers of Commerce of Wiesbaden and Antwerp will resign from the UECC, effective 31 December 2007. The CCI Strasbourg joined the UECC this autumn. The UECC will therefore have 67 full members and 5 associate members as from 1 January 2008.

The Secretary General attended a meeting of the Community of Chambers of Commerce of the North-South Railway Axis in Turin in April 2007, in which the Chambers again asked for a close cooperation with the UECC. The Chamber of Commerce of Karlsruhe is a member of both associations and is prepared to act as a link between the two groups. The Italian Chambers do not intend to become full members of the UECC at present.

Finances

For the UECC, the 2006 financial year closed with a profit of EUR 265.54. Unlike other years, the UECC had to pay Swiss VAT, since, in accordance with the statutes, the domicile of the UECC was moved to Switzerland in 2006. The upgrading of the website and the new logo also added to expenses last year.

European Air Transport Policy 2020

At the General Assembly in Frankfurt, Professor M. Schölch analysed current issues of European air transport policy and their impact on airports and airlines. For years, there was no uniform European air transport policy. First concepts were formed in the 1980s, on the basis of European competition law. Increasingly, the existing national regulations were seen to be incompatible with European law.

In the 1990s, the liberalisation of the European market for air transport and ancillary services was implemented in several

separate stages (tariffs, market access, elimination of the quotas, slot allocation). Now, around 30 directives and other laws regulate European air traffic, and the structures in this sector of the economy have been completely transformed. What is still lacking is a uniform controlling body. The present system with its 26 jurisdictions and more than 50 control posts is inefficient and wasteful.

The industry is currently dealing with the effects of the new anti-terrorist directives, which increase costs enormously. At least

some exaggerations (concerning hand luggage, for example) could be avoided. Although security should be a responsibility of the State, all European States refuse to accept this responsibility and the costs involved and leave the task to the airports. At the same time, the airports take advantage of their local monopolies to introduce further local regulations. In many cases, however, it is the airlines that have the monopoly and not the airports. Environmental concerns and regulations (protection of the environment, noise, FFH directive, etc.) on a local, and increasingly

also on a European level, obstruct or even prevent plans to expand existing airports. This often puts the large European airports at a disadvantage with regards to their global competitors in the Near East, the USA and Asia. If we assume that today only about 7 % of the world's population flies regularly, the potential for economic growth seems boundless. However, growth can only occur in those areas where the necessary capacities are provided or expanded.

The Alsace will introduce road tolls as from 2009

Trucks travelling on the French side of the Rhine will have to pay road tolls as from 2009. In a trial run, which is to last until 2012, tolls will be demanded for trucks weighing 12 or more tonnes. Charges will be EUR 0.06 per kilometre for vehicles with two axles, EUR 0.09 per kilometre for

vehicles with three axles and EUR 0.12 for vehicles with four axles. The Alsace hopes that road pricing will reduce traffic congestion from trucks that cross the Rhine in order to avoid the tolls on the German motorways.

Slovakia's road pricing to be less expensive than expected

The Slovak government has decided on the following charges: trucks up to 12 t will have to pay road tolls of up to EUR 0.084 per kilometre – depending on the vehicle's emission class. Road tolls for heavier trucks will be up to EUR 0.19 per

kilometre. The charges will therefore be less high than previously announced. They will be applied on 2500 km of road network, of which 553 km will be motorways and fast roads.

EU supports the upgrading of the Danube waterway

The European Union has announced that it may invest up to EUR 100 million into the upgrading of the Danube waterway in Ba-

varia only if the authorities concerned opt for a construction project that includes the building of a new barrage.

Inland shipping

Because of transshipment problems in the sea ports, container shipping on the Rhine reported less rapid growth or even decreased in 2006/2007.

For the shipping companies, on the other hand, conditions improved. The current economic upturn increased the demand for transport services. At the same time, high costs of capital for newbuildings pushed

up expenses and discouraged any tendencies towards price wars among competitors.

Supplements for container services

Prices for container transshipment services in the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp increased in August 2007. Some container

handling companies now charge an extra fee to compensate for the costs of waiting times and delays in the ports.

Working group "Waterways"

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At its meeting in Cologne in September 2007, the working group "Waterways" discussed the recent German policy paper "freight traffic and logistics". They criticised that the paper does not take sufficient account of the waterways, and that, where it does mention them, it places too much emphasis on the North Sea ports. The working group pointed out that access routes to and from the ports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp are equally important, since these ports supply a large part of the economies in the Rhine region. Little progress has been made on the NAI-ADES programme. The funds are likely to remain at EUR 40 millions, because various member States refuse to participate. The working group also discussed the connections of the ports to the adjacent transport networks. In some sea ports

problems have even increased in the meantime, and long waiting times for inland ships have become common place. In 2006 and 2007, the number of containerised transports on the Rhine even dropped somewhat, since it was often impossible to return the empty containers. Transshipment volumes are expected to treble to 100 million tonnes over the next few years. Companies therefore urgently demand coordinated measures to solve these problems, since their just-in-time delivery concepts are being increasingly put at risk because of transshipment delays.

The problems are mainly due to a lack of storing places for empty containers, even in areas further away from the ports, and newly built transshipment facilities are soon filled up. In the medium term, the new ports, which are planned for the Mediterranean (Marseilles, Algiers) or the Black Sea (Contanza), are likely to have a considerable impact on Europe's transport routes.

Working group "General Transport"

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At its meeting in September 2007, the working group elected Dr. Hans-Jürgen Reichardt, IHK Region-Stuttgart, as its new secretary.

Missing links and bottlenecks

On the basis of the 40 replies to the questionnaire the working group drafted a list of priorities to be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

Declaration of Karlsruhe

The resolution was compiled in cooperation with the Community of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the North-South Railway Axis Rotterdam-Genoa (CCC) and will be presented to the general public at a conference in Karlsruhe on November 17, 2007.

Green paper on climate change

A web-based public consultation on the Green Paper is currently under way. It will be open until the end of November 2007.

The working group will compile an evaluation of the Green Paper from the point of view of the transport industry and distribute it to the Chambers so that they can take part in the consultation procedure in a concerted manner.

Alpine transit traffic

Freight traffic across the Brenner is on the increase. Of 4.2 million transit journeys in the Alpine region per year, about 50 % cross through Austria, and 90 % of those journeys take the Brenner route (1.8 million by the end of 2006, probably 2.1 million by the end of 2007). Trucks are now being processed in blocks, which has caused further delays.

Agenda 2007

Executive committee:

March 2008	to be determined
19/20 June 2008	Brussels (B)
24 September 2008	Basel (CH)

General assembly:

27/25 September 2008	Basel (D)
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Working group "General Transport"

7/8 February 2008	Würzburg (D)
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Working group "Waterways"

7/8 February 2008	Würzburg (D)
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