

## BULLETIN III/2009

### Editorial

The stimulus packages which the countries of Europe have launched to boost the economy have also provided an incentive for the upkeep of transport infrastructures. Ironically, and for the first time in many years, some States now have the funds they require for the ordinary maintenance work that should be done every year. On the other hand, the sharp short-term increase in demand in some regions has absorbed all the capacities of the local road construction industry and thus pushed up prices.

The outlook for the medium term, however, is a lot less encouraging. In their efforts to combat the crisis, some European States have substantially increased their already massive debt burden, and almost all European countries are facing large shortfalls in tax earnings – losses which will take a long time to replace.

The outcome is predictable: There will be no funds left for the upgrading of transport infrastructures, which will result in congestion, traffic jams and gridlocks once the economy picks up again.

With an increasing number of interest groups all competing for ever decreasing amounts of public funding, the business community and its organisations must continue to demonstrate that reliable and efficient transport infrastructures are essential for Europe's economic development and future prosperity. After all, only successful businesses enable the State to generate the funds it needs for its investments in all sectors of the economy!

Dr. Rainer Füeg  
Secretary general

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## ***Independent studies on the upgrading of the Danube waterway***

The German Ministry for Transport has begun preparations for new studies on the upgrading of the Danube waterway between Straubing and Vilshofen. To this end, it has formed a monitoring group which will actively follow the progress of the survey. Walter Keilbart, managing director of the Chamber of Commerce of Passau (Bavaria), will represent the UECC in the group, which will consist of delegates from both business and environmental organisations.

The costs for the new survey are estimated at 33 million euros, of which the European Commission will pay half. The aim of the survey is to provide more detailed information on whether only additional dykes are required to upgrade the waterway or whether the construction of weirs and locks is necessary. The survey's findings shall be used to draw up specific plans and a new proposal for the upgrade.

## ***European Commission renews mandates for TEN coordinators***

The European Commission has renewed the mandates for the following coordinators:

- Laurens Jan Brinkhorst: railway axis Lyon-Trieste-Divača/Koper-Divača-Ljubljana-Budapest-Ukrainian border (project No. 6)
- Pavel Telička: "Rail Baltica", railway axis Warsaw-Kaunas-Riga-Tallinn-Helsinki (project No. 27)
- Karel Vinck: Project ERTMS
- Karla Peijs: waterway axis Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube (Project No. 18) and Seine-Scheldt inland waterway (Project No. 30)

- Luis Valente de Oliveira: "motorways of the sea" (project No. 21).

In addition, the European Commission has named Carlo Secchi as the coordinator for the projects No. 3 (high-speed railway axis in south-west Europe) and No. 19 (high-speed rail interoperability in the Iberian Peninsular). The new mandates will expire in July 2013.

## ***New action plan for urban mobility***

At the end of September 2009 the European Commission adopted an action plan for urban mobility. The purpose of the instruments proposed by the Commission is to help local, regional and national authorities to meet their targets for sustainable mobility in the urban areas. The action plan includes the following measures:

- Support for the integration of the different transport networks
- Improved travel information and a higher level of protection of passenger rights, better exchange of information between the regions involved

- Promotion of cleaner vehicle technologies and alternative fuels
- Exploration of existing funding opportunities, innovative public-private partnership schemes and possible new funding solutions
- Assistance for efforts to improve road safety.

Further information on the action plan may be downloaded from [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/urban/urban\\_mobility/urban\\_mobility\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/urban/urban_mobility/urban_mobility_en.htm).

## ***France wants to double rail freight's market share***

The state-owned French rail company SNCF is planning massive investments into its high-speed network in order to lift its freight business out of the deficit zone by 2013.

"For a green rail freight service" – this is the title of the new guidelines for reform which the SNCF published at the end of September 2009. However, there is still a lot of ground to cover before the railways can overtake road haulage in terms of heavy cargo shipment. As a first step, the French government wants to increase rail freight's market share from its present 11 % to 25 % by 2015.

Accordingly, seven billion euros will be channelled into France's railway infrastructures over the next few years. The main focus will be on the construction of four new and exclusive express routes for freight traffic, which should accommodate up to 50 shuttle trains per day by

2020. Cooperation between the railways and the maritime ports and inland shipping is also to be improved.

Furthermore, freight traffic is to benefit from the successful technological advances developed for the TGV passenger services. But the main objective is to shake off the deficit by 2013. Since 2003 the freight business has accumulated a deficit of three billion euros. A further 600 million are expected to be added to the losses this year.

With its new plans, the SNCF intends to strengthen its position with regards to the German railways, its main European competitor, and develop its cross border services with neighbouring countries such as Switzerland.

## ***Swiss rail freight volumes are down 20 % in the first half of 2009***

Because of the economic crisis, the number of trucks crossing the Alps dropped from 768'000 in the first half of last year to 659'800 in the first half of this year, which is the lowest figure in ten years.

Rail freight is also experiencing a slump; in Switzerland, the railways' market share in Alpine traffic amounted to 61 % in the first half of 2009, significantly reduced from the 63.9 % share of the year before. Back in 1990, the railways were responsible for a good 80 % of total rail freight traffic.

A total of 16.9 million net tonnes of goods were transported through Switzerland during the first six months of 2009. This equals a decrease of 20 % to the level of 2003. With a reduction of 24.2 %, the railways lost much more ground than the road haulage companies (-14.2 %). One of the reasons given for this difference is the intense price competition among road hauliers. Another reason is that the trade in raw materials, machine parts and cars, which are predominately carried by rail, has been exceptionally badly affected by the economic downturn.

## ***Chambers of Commerce demand a new motorway bridge north of Basel***

At a transport congress in Freiburg (Germany) in September 2009, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of northwestern Switzerland, the Alsace and Baden-Württemberg have called for the building of a new motorway bridge near Märkt, north of Basel.

This measure would connect the French A35 motorway with the German motorways A5 (Basel-Karlsruhe) and A98 (Binzen-Lörrach-

Rheinfelden) and improve access to the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg.

Realising the project will however be difficult, partly because of environmental concerns. Planning procedures are expected to start in 2016.

## ***Germany provides more funds for its railway network***

As part of the stimulus package for its economy, the German Ministry for Transport has decided to invest 517 million euros in the elimination of bottlenecks in the country's railway network in order to speed up the extension and upgrading of eighteen major rail axes and terminals. In many sections, work is already underway.

The largest sums will be used for the upgrading and extension of the Halle/Leipzig-Erfurt-Nuremberg section (123 million euros) and the extension of the Berlin-Cottbus line (120 million euros). A further 10 million euros will be invested in the Mainz-Nuremberg section.

In total, some 1.3 billion euros of Germany's stimulus packages will be deployed for rail transport. In addition to the funding for the lines and terminals, the government will invest 300 million euros in modernising the stations. It will also promote the installation of the European Train Control System ETCS. The aim is to improve the capacity utilisation of the transport corridors and noise protection measures. 200 million euros will be invested in regional networks, other rail facilities and innovative technologies. All investment programmes should be concluded by the end of 2011.

## ***Danube-Oder-Elbe waterway***

The Czech Republic has adopted new guidelines for the further development of its inland shipping industry. One project concerns the Danube-Waag-Oder waterway.

A proposal for a government policy statement on another major project, the Danube-Oder Elbe waterway, should be drafted by December 31, 2009.

The Czech Minister for Transport has been given a mandate to explore international demand and possible sources of funding for this corridor with the neighbouring countries (Poland, Austria, Slovakia, Germany) and the European Commission. A first balance of these negotiations will be drawn towards the end of next year.

### ***Calendar 2009/2010***

#### **Executive Committee**

March 2010

Brussels (B)

1 October 2010

to be determined

#### **Working group**

29/30 October 2009

Mulhouse (F)

#### **General Assembly 2010**

March 2010

Brussels (B)