

## BULLETIN IV/2009

### Editorial

*For many transport companies, 2009 has been a year "to forget". Because of the collapse of the export trade and the slump in industrial production, freight volumes on the roads, railways, inland waterways and in the air plummeted as well. On the other hand, company results for the last quarter appear to show a slight upwards trend again, albeit on a much lower level than before the economic crisis.*

*Thanks to the economic stimulus programmes that are currently underway throughout Europe, more funds have been made available for the up-keep of transport infrastructures than in the past. Hence, at least some progress has been made in the TEN projects and other important areas of the transport networks. But a great deal remains to be done, if Europe's transport industry is to make a meaningful contribution towards a lasting economic recovery.*

*I would like to thank all members of the UECC for their efforts to achieve our common objectives and for their valuable input to the work of the Executive Committee and the Working Group this year.*

*My best wishes for a successful New Year with many more large and small improvements in all areas of European transport policy.*

*Dr. Rainer Füeg  
Secretary General*

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### December 2009

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## **Meeting of the Working Group in Mulhouse**

### **Chairman:**

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At its meeting in Mulhouse at the end of October 2009, the Working Group elected Dr. Michael Grubmann, Austrian Chamber of Commerce, as its new chairman. He replaces Dr. Jürgen Reichardt.

The group also adopted the following position papers:

### **Press ahead with the Saône-Rhine project**

In its resolution, the UECC refers to a study which was published by Eurotrans in 2009. The authors forecast freight volumes of 11 to 19 million tonnes on this waterway as from 2025, which is the most realistic date for the opening. The authors believe that 10 % of goods traffic could be transferred from the roads to this waterway once the project has been completed (this share could be as much as 15 % in the areas immediately adjacent to the canal). This would mean saving about 80 million litres in fuel and almost 250 million tonnes in greenhouse gases.

The Eurotrans report also demonstrated that both the routes suggested (one via the Doubs and the other via the Haute-Saône) are technically feasible; however, more investigations on the ground are required. The UECC calls upon the French Government to commission these additional studies as soon as possible and to submit the project again to the European Commission so that it can be included in the current review of the plans for the European transport network which date from the year 2004. Important steps in the development of the European transport network are expected to be taken in 2010.

An inclusion of the project in the European transport network would also open up interesting options for co-financing: the EU could take over up to 50 % of the costs for the studies.

### **Railway axis from the Rhine/Main to the western Mediterranean**

The UECC calls for an upgrading of the rail freight axis in the Rhine-Rhone corridor, one of the major thoroughfares for trade traffic between the Rhine/Main area and the western part of the Mediterranean basin.

This rail freight route is part of the TEN priority project Nr. 24 which was adopted in 2004. The following measures are necessary in order to remove bottlenecks and improve the efficiency of this European axis:

- in Germany: capacity increases on the sections Frankfurt-Mannheim and Offenburg-Basel
- between Germany and France: extension of the Mulhouse-Müllheim rail track
- and, in France: upgrading of the tunnels between Belfort und Besançon to a B1 gauge.

The UECC calls upon the French government to include this project in its economic stimulus package for rail freight. An investment of 60 million euros will be required.

In addition, the working group sent a letter to the European Commission and the members of the Committee on Transport and Tourism of the European Parliament expressing its views on the proposal for a regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight (COM(2008) 852 final).

All the UECC's resolutions and position papers can be downloaded from the website [www.uecc.org](http://www.uecc.org).

### ***General Assembly of the UECC in Brussels on March 5, 2010***

The UECC will hold its next General Assembly at the Bavarian delegation to the European Union in Brussels on March 5, 2010. The invitations will be distributed at the beginning of next year.

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.

### ***Green light for a new underground railway station in Stuttgart***

The German Railways and the federal state of Baden-Württemberg have finally approved the plans for the "Stuttgart 21" project, which aims at transferring the entire central railway station underground. The costs for this undertaking are now estimated at 4.1 billion euros, about one billion more than previously calculated.

All in all, Stuttgart's new underground railway station and the construction of a 121 km long high-speed rail track from Stuttgart to Ulm are expected to cost about 6 billion euros.

New rail tunnels will be built on a total stretch of 63 km, 33 km of which will be in the city itself.

The objective of these projects is to fill the remaining gaps in the European high-speed rail networks between Paris and Bratislava and Amsterdam and eastern Europe. Construction work is to begin in February 2010.

### ***Barroso proposes Siim Kallas as new EU Commissioner for Transport***

The Estonian Siim Kallas has been put forward as the new commissioner for transport in the European Commission. So far, he has been in charge of administrative affairs, audit and anti-fraud. He replaces the Italian Antonio Tajani, who is to take over responsibility for industry and entrepreneurship. Both commissioners will remain vice presidents of the Commission.

All the commissioners named by the Commission's president, José Manuel Barroso, will be vetted by members of the European Parliament at hearings of the relevant parliamentary committees in mid January 2010. On January 26, 2010, the European Parliament will vote on all the 27 members of the Commission. Only after parliamentary approval has been given can the commissioners be elected by the European Council, i.e. the heads of state and government of the European Union.

### ***Financial support for European transport networks***

At the end of October 2009, the European Commission will provide 500 million euros for European infrastructure projects as part of its stimulation package to combat the current economic crisis. These funds shall be invested in TEN projects in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

More information and a list of the projects that are to benefit from this support can be downloaded from the internet at [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/events/2009\\_10\\_21\\_naples\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/events/2009_10_21_naples_en.htm).

## ***New plans for road pricing: kilometre charge in the Netherlands***

In its press release of November 16, 2009 the Dutch ministry of transport presented its plans for a kilometre charge as from 2012. The Dutch motor vehicle tax and the purchase tax will be abolished and replaced by a charge per kilometre travelled in the Netherlands, from motorways to roads in residential areas. The proceeds shall be poured directly into a special fund which shall be used for the upgrading of roads, railways and other transport infrastructure. With the new regulation, the government hopes to achieve considerable reductions in both traffic volumes and pollutant emissions.

A basic fee will be levied for every kilometre, depending on the type of vehicle: private cars, small private vans, company vans, busses and lorries. For private cars, the basic fee will be calculated in accordance with the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, for other vehicles the weight will be the determining factor. As from 2012 private cars will be charged an average basic fee of 3.0 cents per kilometre. The fee will be gradually raised to 6.7 cents by 2018. However, in order to calculate the fee, all Dutch cars will have to be equipped with a special GPS system, which will register the kilometres

travelled and transmit the data to a central public collection facility which will deduct the relevant amount from the vehicle owner's account. Information on the itinerary will not be stored for reasons of data security. An alternative system of payment will be introduced for foreign vehicles.

The government has calculated that 59 % of all Dutch car drivers will save money with the new system. For 25 % costs will remain unchanged, and 16 % of car drivers will have to pay more. In total, the government hopes to reduce the number of kilometres travelled by Dutch cars by 15 %, since it believes that more people will switch to public transport or bicycles.

The transport ministry's plans are controversial – objections have been raised concerning the security of the data and the tight deadline for the introduction of the new system.

### ***Calendar 2010***

#### **Executive Committee**

5 March 2010

Brussels (B)

1 October 2010

to be determined

#### **Working Group**

4 March 2010

Brussels (B)

#### **General Assembly**

5 March 2010

Brussels (B)