SESSION 1 – PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

CONTRIBUTION

“THE FUTURE OF COMBINED TRANSPORT AND THE NEED TO SET UP A WIDE-GAUGE RAIL FREIGHT NETWORK”

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The economy identifies two types of activities:

- Business to Consumer (B2C)
- Business to Business (B2B)

where B2C in rail transport is related to passenger traffic (the Users), operated both on long distance in regional travel and beyond, as well as commuting on a daily basis. Passenger traffic has priority in the areas of investment, train paths allocation, engines and drivers.

Business to Business (B2B), as far as combined transport is concerned (the Clients), is limited to full train loads - namely black trains – running over long distance between large cities, on the same routes as passengers.

Both passengers and freight take up the same slots, on the same corridors, in the same directions (morning and evening) and this results an inevitable congestion of the infrastructure.

In commuter traffic, this situation is reproduced in same conditions on the road, whereby persons and freight are forced to coexist day after day. In the case of rail transport, the “management” of traffic congestion and bottlenecks prioritize the passengers mainly for political reasons as they are voters contrary to freight.

In order to improve the use of infrastructure, one could envisage to develop further collection and delivery of freight at night, which we already do in certain fields of activities, but we will still be obliged to consider some kinds of obstacles such as:

- The freight volume will continue to increase plus the fact that new needs have to be satisfied,
- Night work will develop only when its economical conditions will be properly covered, considering the constraints it is generating on family life: ca 50% of our drivers and workers are already working at night for express and parcel traffics and long distance haulage,
- Shippers could implement a new strategy and forget « Just in Time » as well as « Next Day AM Delivery » allowing us more time to deliver but this would ruin the system as it works today and it is highly illusive in my opinion to envisage such a step back.
Alternatively, it does not make sense to forecast that:

- Daily Commuter traffic will decrease
- Cycle of family life will change with babies being entrusted to the nursery and young children going to school at night; this would generate a complete destruction of the family frame whereas it is on the contrary vital to safeguard and protect it at best.

Therefore we must find another solution repeating that Politicians give priority to passengers, who being voters, are their clients, freight being for them a secondary consideration which is widely demonstrated in France by the decisions of the "historic" Railway undertaking, which does not hesitate in case of a strike of its personnel, to suspend the forwarding of freight, including combined transport.

Hence the conclusion that co-existence of passenger transport and freight (combined transport) on rail is definitely not possible.
The 1980s saw the move from a stock economy to a flow economy: Toyota’s *kanban*, Ford’s Just in Time system, Toyota’s *kaizen*.

This trend was accompanied by a number of significant concepts such as: refocusing on core business, search for excellence, zero defect and quality certification (ISO 9002 – ISO 14000), relocating production, outsourcing logistics services, use of EDI and the Internet for managing information exchange, triumph of new logistical principles: Supply Chain Management, Enterprise Resource Planning, Efficient Customer Response, European Distribution Centres, as tools of “Glocalisation”.

So far in Europe, road transport of freight was the only mode which could continuously adapt, increasing its efficiency as well as its competitiveness and this evolution was accompanied by productivity gains proving its creativity and innovation.

Industry and trade will not go back to a stock economy; therefore the other modes are faced to the challenge of adapting...Rail transport, inland waterways transport, short sea shipping, only combined transport, firmly based on a quality road transport culture will be able to do so in a wider Europe.
Interoperability – Challenge, risk or delusion?

The interoperability of the TEN is a real challenge, because today the TEN is a patchwork rather than a network, even if the TERFN concept is correct.

The results of thirteen years of 91/440 (and 2001/12) and ERTMS highlight the inertia of Governments and monopolistic Railway undertakings and more, the lack of continuity and of coherence of their attitudes – but the remarkable exception of Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria – mainly consisting of statements of intent, announcement effects, changes of plan, etc.
They also show woefully inadequacy of the power of the European institutions.

“Revitalising the European Railways and achieving interoperability for 2010” said EU in 2001. Of course ! But there is a serious risk that we will have to admit its failure in 2010 in respect of the billions of euros that will have been invested in a skilful sort of D.I.Y?
The real question is : are we deluding ourselves about the success of interoperability?
An effective, innovative, competitive combined transport

The European Commission White Paper published on 12.09.2001: “European transport policy for 2010, time to decide” refers to modal shift from road transport to intermodal as well as road-rail combined transport as one of its major options for freight.

As such, EC moves closer to Switzerland in its strategy over thirty years to cross the Alpes on the North – South route thanks to a package of measures applied in several phases: construction of two new base rail tunnels under Saint Gothardt and Lötscheberg as part of NLFA (New Line for Crossing the Alps), progressive implementation of RPLP as from 2001 to contribute to the financing of the new rail infrastructures, progressive raising of the maximum authorised weight of road vehicles from 28 to 40 tonnes, intensification of HGVs control on the roads, direct involvement of the Swiss Federal Government in the pricing of paths. This ambitious action plan concerns both unaccompanied combined transport and rolling highway operated between Germany and Northern Europe to and from Italy. It was recently complemented by the Swiss Federal Railways decision to operate as from late 2003 in Northern Italy, its own traction system based on an own fleet of 100 locomotives and drivers for its transborder traffics.

France, at last, must commit to a comparable strategy for its traffics to Italy either national or with United Kingdom, Benelux, Spain and Portugal. Unfortunately our country does not show a similar consistency in its attitude: this is proved by the long-standing poor quality of unaccompanied combined traffic exchanged with Italy as well as prevarications over the past ten years regarding the new Lyon-Turin rail line, which was part of the Essen fourteen priority projects agreed by EC under the chairmanship of Jacques DELORS. Today this infrastructure should be extended to Milan and Ljubljana as Slovenia will soon join EU.

This Lyon-Turin line is still under debate to decide whether it must accommodate both high-speed trains for passengers and freight or vice-versa or freight only…Our position is clear: it must be dedicated to freight only so that it will not be polluted by passenger traffic, HSTs being operated on the existing line whereas this new direct freight line Lyon-Turin / Milan with its base tunnel, will have no stop en route.

This is the binding condition so that unaccompanied combined transport, rolling highway, rolling motorway and waggon traffic can be operated on a daily basis delivering high quality and competitive services permanently measured by key performance indicators characterising top quality freight trains. Such indicators exist: they were created in 2000/2001 together by GNTC, FNTR, NOVATRANS and SNCF as part of the so-called 95/20 domestic deal. They have been internationalized in 2002 by GETC and NOVATRANS together and have been recently referenced by UN-ECE.
To deliver an innovative and competitive high quality road-rail combined transport, it is necessary to separate freight from passenger transport in Railway undertakings with locomotives and drivers being dedicated to freight; among others it will have a favorable consequence: in case of a strike in the passenger entity, it will not pollute the continuity of freight forwarding. And as the final objective is to achieve modal shift together with sustainable mobility, then freight will be allocated a new dedicated rail infrastructure, which it deserves!

“RF2G2” is a top priority challenge for Europe. It must also and more importantly be a system of corridors building up a veritable backbone of the network for 2015 and beyond. Long (1500m) and heavy (4000 tonnes) trains on which EILUs can be double-stacked as in the USA, Canada and Australia, guaranteeing an average speed of 80 km per hour “gantry – to – gantry”, delivering a quality of service at a level of 97/98%. This massified network should be able to operate under the Galileo programme using “green” Diesel traction unless it is possible, to work out a new way of capturing electrical power.

The major centres of production and consumption are linked together in a network of programmed shuttles: they are hubs where logistics centres are located. These terminals ensure the capillarity of the system.

The wide-gauge rail freight network – RF2G2 – would also link the major European ports served by 8000/10000 TEUs cellular vessels and airport hubs than can accept B747 and A380 Cargo such as Schiphol, Francfort, London and Paris CDG, Vatry as well as large existing or will-be waterways: Danube, Rhine, The Meuse, The Moselle, Seine-Nord waterway and their interchange hubs: Duisbourg, Neuss, Strasbourg, Paris Genevilliers, Delta 3.

The high capacity Lyon -Turin / Milan and Lyon – Barcelona legs should be together with the Betuwe Lijne, the pilot links of what would be this backbone of this European-wide network.

The European Union should pilot this project and manage this infrastructure, so as to ensure that RF2G2 operates according to a single European technical standard. And this infrastructure could benefit from EU funding at a rate of 20%, provided there is compliance with this single standard to be established by the EU. And since this 20% is European taxpayers’money, the European Court of Auditors should ensure that the funds are used properly.

This infrastructure which will deeply penetrate the European territory is vital for the Union, as it will provide the means to ease the transfer of road traffic and operate effectively on rail where massification makes sense.

Any other solution is cosmetic!