



European Rail Infrastructure Managers

- Statement on Congestion - ECMT Ministerial Session, Sofia, 30-31 May 2007

Problem: Sub-optimal use of available capacity

As the European Environmental Agency notes, growth in freight transport volumes still outpaces economic growth.

As a consequence of the increasing demands on the transport system as a whole and the ambitions of rail to bring about a “modal shift”, the European railway networks in the coming years will have to accommodate considerable growth. Major studies have demonstrated the need for structural solutions. The UIC DIOMIS project recently concluded: *“Even when all enlargement investments take place by 2015, considerable bottlenecks will remain and hinder traffic growth”*.

In the short term improved management of the *existing network* is the key to growth, as decisions to invest in *new rail infrastructure* are often dependent on political processes and are part of longer term strategies to increase capacity. In an enlarged Europe without internal borders, traffic growth on existing networks is highly dependent on the scope for cross-border activity. This is currently hampered as a consequence of the longstanding lack of interoperability between national rail networks (for instance signalling problems, track gauge differences and customs formalities at borders).

Solutions:

EIM believes that national and international authorities together with the railway industry should contribute to relieving congestion of the existing European rail network. The approaches should be based on the further development of international corridors, and give priority to the following measures:

- Execution of plans for the integral development of international corridors (ERTMS, RNE, ERIM) and TEN-T rail projects.
- Effective non discriminatory management of available slots for access to the national rail networks, and for instance freight terminals, shunting and marshalling yards.
- A corridor concept for access charging and path allocation procedures; the corridor organisation has responsibility for taking decisions along the whole corridor in a number of operational areas.
- Targeted investments to remove bottlenecks.

EIM contribution:

EIM and its members actively work together with the European institutions and rail industry stakeholders to find improved and innovative ways of managing the available capacity of Europe's rail network. This is done for instance by highlighting best practices from the membership and providing practical examples to the European institutions and other stakeholders.