



FORUM 2009 • 26-29 May • Leipzig

TRANSPORT FOR A GLOBAL ECONOMY

*Challenges and Opportunities
in the Downturn*

WORKSHOP 1 OUTLINE

Intermodal Transport and Supply Chains Moving the Global Economy

Tuesday 26th May 2009, Hall 2 - 14:00 to 17:30

Background:

Global supply chains have experienced profound change over recent decades. Freight volumes and container traffic in particular have grown strongly with the intensification of global trade and the geographic dispersion of production.

The industrial organisation of the sector has evolved rapidly with many agents along the supply chain engaged in horizontal and vertical integration of activities. This has increased efficiency in the movement of cargo and seen the emergence of some very large companies, including logistics businesses operating across the world and maritime shipping companies controlling large assets and operating globally.

The business environment in which these firms operate is, however, risky and cyclical, given their investment patterns and their vulnerability to macroeconomic demand swings. The current economic downturn severely impacted trade volumes and profit margins have collapsed, most notably in maritime shipping. Road haulage has suffered a wave of bankruptcies.

This workshop will examine the forces driving development of the sector, discuss the potential ramifications of the current severe downturn and reflect on the future development of supply chains over the longer term.

Participants:

- Moderator: Zoltan Kazatsay, European Commission
- Mary Brooks, Dalhousie University, Canada
- Weijun Fei, Waterborne Transportation Institute, China
- Hans Jeekel, Ministry of Transport, Netherlands
- Lauri Ojala, Turku School of Economics, Finland
- Boris Lapidus, Russian Railways, Russia
- Jean-Claude Raoul, Académie des Technologies, France
- Lars-Göran Rosengren, AB Volvo, Sweden
- Wolfgang Stölzle, University of St Gallen, Switzerland
- Hans-Georg Werner, DB Schenker Rail Deutschland AG, Germany

Organisation:

The workshop will be organised around the issues described below. It will open with a short presentation of the introductory paper by Jean-Claude Raoul and Wolfgang Stölzle.

Issues to explore:

- The long term impact of the current credit crisis and potential reshaping of supply chains as a result of exit from the sector of weaker players in the downturn;
- The impact of volatile energy prices and a potential return to high oil prices on supply chain configuration in the long term;
- Ensuring reliability in transport services;
- The broadening activity base and integration of transport and logistics firms (e.g., warehousing, packaging, customs clearance, processing etc.), relocation of activities and the rise of freight villages, and impacts on trade and transport. Is there more to come?
- The emergence of new global “mega players”. Are there limits to the size of efficient businesses? Are there issues of market power abuse that require new powers for competition authorities?
- The potential for growth in intermodal rail, barge and short sea shipping services.