



INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF RAILWAYS



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Operational and technical innovations for the South-Eastern European Rail Freight Corridor successfully implemented

The CREAM¹ project has reached the home stretch with today's Conference at the Royal Academy in Brussels

(Brussels/Paris, 04.11.2010). On behalf of the CREAM consortium, the International Union of Railways (UIC) succeeded in inviting and registering 120 participants (among them the European Commission, national transport ministries and vital players of the European logistics sector) with the conference offering the opportunity of an exclusive one-day insight into this European rail freight research project, summarising the results and achievements on rail freight logistics on the corridor from Western Europe across South-East Europe to Greece and Turkey.

For four years, the work led by the German consultancies HaCon and KombiConsult has involved developing and implementing concepts ranging from innovative telematic solutions to new rail services. The partners delivered a comprehensive catalogue of technical and operational recommendations to a broad audience from all over Europe.

The CREAM project, with the involvement of Central and South-Eastern infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, carriers and shippers, has led to remarkable service and quality improvements. Although the rail freight sector had been challenged by the economic situation, increased transport volumes were achieved, resulting in a modal shift of 950 million tonne-kilometres in 2010. Altogether in the last four years, 2.2 billion tonne-kilometres, corresponding to 115,000 truckloads, have been shifted to rail services. Based on the specifications of the Marco Polo Programme, the respective CO₂ savings are 145,000 tonnes and the external benefits come to around 44 million Euro.

Today the project partners have formally signed a Management Commitment, in which they agree to follow and maintain a common quality management system to fix and ease internal and external processes, and clearly define interfaces.

One remarkable outcome is cutting the total travel time on the corridor e.g. on the Bosphorus Europe Express line connecting Ljubljana and Istanbul in 40 – 50 hours, with the train becoming faster than the truck. The CREAM project paved the way for further developments to the rail network to South-East Europe. New connections are now in operation such as Antwerp to Sopron in Hungary as well as extensions of the existing corridor to Greece and a seamless multimodal service linking Turkish ports via ferry and rail shuttle to Germany.

¹ Customer-driven Rail-freight services on a European mega-corridor based on Advanced business and operating Models

New train concepts were put on track allowing freight trains to compete with road. In order to transport copper anodes between Bulgaria and the biggest copper manufacturer in Europe based in Belgium, rolling stock was changed and new loading schemes were developed. Simple but innovative changes turned out to be a success story.

The CREAM partners have been taking a holistic approach to freight transport services on the important South-Eastern corridor. All aspects of the railway business were taken into account. Border crossing procedures were analysed, the weak points identified and bottlenecks removed. Traction schemes involving multi-system locomotives were introduced. Other rolling stock innovations such as a semi-trailer (FLOATRAILER) developed to transport plate glass on rails and roads, and an easy system (ISU) to also load non-craneable semitrailers on conventional pocket wagons are to be highlighted. With operational measures and due to the implemented "STRING-OF-PEARLS" concept, with terminals being managed like pearls on a string, freight trains have achieved a punctuality rate of 90 %. This has been supported by innovative IT solutions for real-time tracking and tracing (Train Monitor System, NavMaster GPS-Devices).

This systematic and collaborative approach to meet the challenges has enabled the CREAM partners to ensure the freight sector on this corridor remains competitive and stays successful.

Note to the editors:

The project partners are as follows: Hacon (coordinator), KombiConsult, Lokomotion, International Union of Railways (UIC), Kombiverkehr, DB Schenker, CFR Marfa, Ökombi, Rail Cargo Austria, MZ, Rail Cargo Hungaria, IFB, Eureka, Offergeld Logistics, Rail Traction Company, Balnak, BDZ, Key Rail, TCDD, TRAIN OSE, TU Delft, SZ, VOITH, ICA, NTUA

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