

COSMOS Press Release

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4th Round Table Meeting of the COSMOS Project conducted in Bucharest on November 20, 2013

The Round Table convened high-level representatives of the Romanian intermodal industry and international stakeholders who discussed recent achievements and future prospects of intermodal transport in Romania. They achieved a consent about the challenges that need to be faced for further growth and relevant measures that will be necessary to foster the increase of intermodal rail services.

The meeting was moderated by COSMOS project manager Uwe Sondermann (KombiConsult, Frankfurt am Main) who concluded the following results which were agreed upon with invited participants:

- The Romanian transport sector provides for various forms of logistics concepts including CT-Operators for rail/road transport.
- Private sector railway's increased to gain market share of 53% in 2012, one of the highest in Europe. However, the "competition on rail" has not prevented from a total decrease of rail volumes.
- After the fall of the iron curtain, and during the „accession period“ quick wins could be realised by road transport which was often more flexible, open to entrepreneurship and promoted by truck industry.
- In contrast to that the rail sector lacks coherent infrastructure investments, both in maintenance, refurbishment and new builds while improved roads can be used on sections, already.
- Alignment of TEN-T and RFC-Corridor on rail network were achieved by the RFC-Implementation Plan in November 2013, but also highlighting lines with limited capacity. Improvement measures are (partly) identified but require effective implementation (financing, timing, monitoring).
- Accompanied intermodal transport (RoLa), only in 2005 and 2006 (Wels-Arad/Oradea) until accession to EU.
- Intermodal market dominated by container traffic with a clear importance of domestic (~ 60%, Constanta hinterland) over international transport (~ 40%, focusing on Western Europe).
- Growth of intermodal transport is directly depending on the country's own economic performance and not generated by transit traffic.
- Semi-trailers became standard equipment in international road transport and thus intermodal operation, but all rail loading gauges are too small for continental CT, mainly due to tunnel profiles.

- Intermodal terminals, generally, provide for sufficient handling capacity for the currently (low) handling volumes.
- Training of personal engaged with transport decisions on the merits of intermodal transport would be required.
- An intermodal strategy is needed at country level to guide public and private investment. The intended “dialogue” is appreciated by the stakeholders but did not take place, yet.
- The strategy needs to be revised taking into account the recent market development, terminals developed by the private sector, shortcomings on rail infrastructure and transparent rules for application by market parties including realistic business plan.
- The strategy should investigate (re-)activating incentive scheme in favour of intermodal transport such as
 - Derogation from Directive 96/53/EC governing the weights and dimensions of heavy good vehicles (“44 tonnes”).
 - Exemption from driving bans for road vehicles, e.g. weekend ban
 - Vehicle tax exemption of up to 100% for vehicles used exclusively in terminal pick-up and delivery operation
 - Exemptions from road usage fees or tolls for vehicles in CT

Further Round Table meetings will be organised within the COSMOS project for Bulgaria and Croatia in the next 3 months. The first Round Table was held in Ljubljana in April 2013.

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About COSMOS:

COSMOS stands for Cooperative Solutions for Managing Optimized Services and is the reply to the market needs for improved cooperative intermodal freight services in South-East Europe.

The CREAM project and DIOMIS studies on intermodal rail freight transport in South East Europe (SEE) have shown a large market potential for seamless intermodal transport chains on dedicated pan European transport corridors or sections thereof. The two recent projects showed also a large discrepancy between the requirements of shippers and logistics service providers and the usual product railways and intermodal operators could offer to them in SE-Europe.

Against that background the present Common Learning Action COSMOS addresses these issues and sets the following objectives:

1. Designing and implementing “good practices” to become more efficient in supplying (intermodal) railway services, completed by a “good practice manual”.
2. Training on identified “good practices” to improve skills in view of their successful implementation performed by a series of training courses.
3. Periodical exchange of information for developing a mechanism and procedure for developing coordinated international intermodal services.
4. Designing and implementing a knowledge platform for better accessibility and transparency of railway / intermodal services among each other and towards (potential) customers and shippers.
5. Promoting and disseminating intermodal transport towards targeted stakeholders.

These measures will lead to improved cooperation for structurally optimizing working methods and service offer in rail freight transport in SEE countries that will prepare for a further modal shift due to the involvement of market parties and stakeholders.

The project is carried out by a consortium of 12 undertakings, representing a mix of experienced intermodal operators, railway undertakings, terminal operators, logistics service providers, and consultancies.

The works which are financially supported in the framework of a Marco Polo Common Learning Action started on September 1, 2012, and shall be completed within 24 months according to the schedule.

More information is available on the website www.intermodal-cosmos.eu.

About KombiConsult:

KombiConsult is a consulting firm specialized in intermodal logistics. We are working on modal shift projects, rail freight transport and intermodal terminal improvement programmes for institutional and business customers. www.kombiconsult.com.