

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Mega-trucks versus rail freight

European rail sector highlights the effects of the introduction of mega-trucks in Europe

(Brussels/Paris, 20 July 2007) The introduction of 25-m or 60-t trucks on Europe's roads would lead to more traffic on the road and not reduce it. Today, the European rail transport associations UIC, CER, EIM, UIRR, UNIFE and ERFA are publishing a brochure explaining why the argument of the mega-truck lobby is misleading politicians.

According to the supporters of mega-trucks, these vehicles would increase road transport capacity, and at the same time reduce congestion and emissions. In reality, however, the resulting reduction of costs would have the reverse effect. With road transport becoming even less expensive, new transport demand would be generated. The phenomenon of "mobile warehousing" on Europe's roads would increase.

Another effect would be a modal "re-shift" of transport from rail to road. The new brochure lists the different studies which were undertaken in this respect. A significant conclusion of these studies is that combined traffic would be at risk - after huge efforts by all stakeholders in recent years to set up an attractive offer in this efficient and environmental friendly transport segment. Rail-based combined transport is currently enjoying significant growth annually averaging 6.8% in Europe.

A study by EWS Railways indicates that also bulk transport would be affected by mega-trucks.

The EU's target to cut emissions by 20% by 2020 - which is mainly a challenge to cut emissions in the transport sector - cannot be realised with an increase in transport on Europe's roads. Transporting goods by rail creates only 20% of the CO2 emissions generated by road transport.

Allowing mega-trucks raises also a financing problem because of the necessary road infrastructure enhancements. There is agreement that existing roads, bridges, access lanes, parking areas etc. will have to be modified and new roads to be constructed. In the debate on mega-trucks, however, so far there is no idea on how to finance these significant investments, nor what the effect on necessary rail infrastructure investments would be.

The rail sector's concern is an overall increase of external costs by the introduction of mega-trucks - i.e. more CO2 emissions, more congestion, more accidents - while those costs are still not borne by the user, but by society as a whole. The competitive situation of rail transport would improve significantly were all modes of transport to pay for the external costs they create, instead of leaving the bill with the taxpayer.

The European Commission will shortly launch a study on the effects of a possible Europe-wide circulation of mega-trucks, which are so far only allowed in Sweden and Finland. In Germany, the Ministers of Transport of the Federal States will decide on 10 October 2007 whether to allow mega-trucks in Germany or not.



The publication is available as a pdf document on the associations' websites. For a hard copy and further information, please contact

UIC - Liesbeth de Jong, dejong@uic.asso.fr, + 33 1 44 49 20 53, www.uic.asso.fr

CER - Elke Schänzler, elke.schaenzler@cer.be, +32 2 213 08 90, www.cer.be

EIM - Jérôme Guyot, jerome.guyot@eimrail.org, +32 2 234 37 73, www.eimrail.org

UIRR - Rudy Colle, rudycolle@uirr.com, + 32 2 548 78 90, www.uirr.com

UNIFE - Niall Doheny, niall.doheny@unife.org, +32 2 642 23 28, www.unife.org

ERFA - Monika Heiming, monika.heiming@erfa.be