

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Informal document WP.24 No.5 (2008)

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

26 September 2008

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and
Logistics

Fiftieth session
Geneva, 6-7 October 2008

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

ENGLISH ONLY

MODERN TRANSPORT CHAINS AND LOGISTICS

Design and management of freight and intermodal transport and the role of Governments:
Possible contributions by the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Note by the secretariat in cooperation with a “virtual expert group”

The secretariat reproduces below comments related to document ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4 prepared by Mr. Y. Laufer (GETC), member of the “virtual expert group”.

Due to the internal UN documentation deadlines, these comments could not be incorporated in time into the note prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with the “virtual expert group” as reproduced in document ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4.

* * *

The references given below refer to document ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4:

Paragraph 9:

We have another– professional–definition of logistics:

« La logistique est la science qui traite des voies et moyens permettant aux entreprises d'approcher le plus efficacement possible les matières ou les produits, des lieux d'approvisionnement aux lieux de production et de là, aux sites de consommation, en connaissant en temps réel, tout au long de la chaîne, leur statut.»

Paragraph 15:

For me, it is important to point out that there is a privileged link between (road-rail) intermodal transport and freight transport logistics– as well as logistics– as collection and delivery of goods are organized and operated locally, i.e. on a short distance basis. Therefore control and reactivity are at their best against the customers' needs.

Paragraph 17 (first sentence):

I do not really agree as the progresses made so far since the early 70ies - next day AM express delivery in certain countries by European operators like TRANSOFLEX in Germany and CALBERSON in France...- and in the 80ies with the implementation of logistics here – Just in Time, Stock Zero, Total Quality – have been HUGE and today, the level of service delivered by road and air transport are definitively in the range of 98/99 %. At same time, empty running has been dramatically and continuously reduced in road transport. The field where improvement needs to be consistently achieved is rail transport / intermodal transport, on the rail leg.

In other words, where the initiative is a private one, the necessary progress has been made based on good project management. Whereas where it is public, it goes very slowly and therefore still needs to be improved! (Question: whose mission is it ?)

Paragraphs 18-25

Governments are responsible for “Land Use Planning“. They are also responsible for the harmonization of freight transport policies so that the smooth running of supply chains is not stopped by borders.

Paragraph 31:

The German 2008 Masterplan proves that the situation is different in Germany, compared to 28. This is one of the many reasons why the German industry has a strong export policy and can deliver its good products everywhere in the world.

Paragraphs 34 and 35:

The “ package “ - Logistics Action Plan – Bottlenecks exercise – 96/53/EC – Green Corridors – Intermodal European Loading Units – is questionable as too big and it should be segmented to be workable. Simultaneously, a Steering Committee should be established to monitor its efficiency, but not under the influence of strong lobbies, the so-called “stakeholders“). At the same time, the EU is still a patchwork of Member States and the principle of subsidiarity is spoiling the effectiveness of some Directives, such as 96/53/EC which does not apply to national transport. Similarly, the EU is still hesitating to prepare a specific civil liability regime for intra-European overland intermodal transport, extended from CMR and CIM, despite strong and clear recommendations of a high

European experts group in 1999. The consequence of this lack is that this mode of transport is operated in total legal emptiness.

Paragraphs 38 and 44-45:

Civil liability regime: Accelerate the pace– take the lead– move, finalize and demonstrate that an intergovernmental body can act efficiently and rapidly. If necessary, coordinate action with the EC! Forget UNCITRAL which refers only to sea transport as the main leg. In Europe, this is not the main constituent of intermodal transport.

Paragraph 48:

Reduce transport demand...Technocrats, civil servants, politicians ...make a major fault. Logistics service providers, combined transport operators, intermodal freight forwarders are competent and even experts in their fields of activities. They do what their customers want/need/require and pay with the objective to optimize their performance to reduce costs... as they must be competitive to exist.

Paragraph 49:

UNECE is administering...AGTC agreement providing... and m/m infrastructure standards as well as operational standards. Reduce transport demand, if feasible, but also improve the efficiency of infrastructures and operations when referring to outdated and inadequate standards (rail). Therefore, the AGTC must be updated with regard to ERTMS, ETCS and STIs, etc. as rail traffic– mainly intermodal– within Europe and soon with Asia and the Far East will demand that standards/norms and performance level are fully interoperable end to end, in order to be competitive, i.e. reliable.

Paragraph 57:

Intermodal European Loading Units must first refer to road-rail cooperation for overland transport to cover Europe and beyond on the future Europe-Asia land bridge. (SSS not being a viable solution to cover Europe and beyond, when looking factually at the situation. Motorways of the sea are only a “façade“ solution, if any).

Paragraph 60:

How to influence (!) developments in the field of freight transport logistics and intermodal transport as described in this document and, among others, eliminate lobbying actions that can spoil projects. But also and mainly how to coordinate/consolidate and optimize the necessary cooperation between UNECE and EC (DG TREN) in this project in the framework of a common freight transport and logistics master plan ? The problem is that the EU is business-minded whereas the UN is Nations (diplomacy-) minded. How to coordinate efficiently such a construction where the EU can prepare Directives, etc. while the UNECE can only recommend, suggest and propose. In addition, the dependency from New York in this case is not easing the process.

New paragraph 66 (to be created):

Don't forget what M. Jacques MOYSON said during the spring 2008 sessio of WP.24: The core objective of logistics is to create value.
