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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY AND TRANSPORT
24th of June, 2009, Albert Borschette Conference Centre**

Notes taken at: Workshop on Heavy Goods Vehicle Weights and Dimensions including the 'gigaliner' issue

Barcanescu Mihai, ECTA Trainee

Opening speech by Mr. Antonio Preto, Head of Cabinet of VP Tajani.

- The only modification of the Directive 96/53 was made in 2002;
- The present study provides information for further analysis (Common Research Centre);
- The aim is that before 2010-2011 the Commission may have enough information in order to modify the present directive;
- The necessity of such measures is to offer a standardization to the whole EU market, otherwise countries will resort to bilateral agreements, which are at odds with the rules and regulations of the single market;
- The aim is to offer a “traffic package” that will liberalize and discipline the market.

Comments made by the Chairman (J. Scheele).

- The present meeting will be structured in two parts:

- The first addressing the economic implications of the different options;
- The second will be tackling the technical implications for the infrastructure, for the environment etc.

I. The economic section

J. Scheele: The economic aspects are to be discussed in order to set the parameters for the next stage of our analysis. The aim is to draft terms of reference for the next stages of the study.

According to a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) applied to all 4 options currently assessed, the benefits are ranging between €1.5 bln. and €3.2 bln., depending on the choice that is to be made.

1. Presentations

Panayotis Cristiadis (GAC)

- Addressing the economic perspectives using the data from the JRC report;
- One of the main problems was the fact that stakeholders offered contradictory evidence when asked to provide their input in regard to this matter;
- The study underlines the expectance of a decrease in rail market, mainly on long distance bands and non-bulk products;
- It is up to the market itself to maximize the share of the market for LHVs, not through policies;
- Analysis of uncertainty in technical and economic aspects;
- The need to identify the main factors that will influence potential impacts

Tom Jones (Freight on Rail)

- Representing all major rail operators in the UK, as well as trade unions from the transports sector;
- Inconvenient matters;
- In the present meeting LHVs are not decided whether good or not, but how to be introduced and utilized;
- Although hardly taken into consideration, public opinion does matter, and politicians will always be interested in it;
- A democratic deficit that is obvious;
- Although many have been contacted for contributions, these were either lost or not taken into consideration (from companies, subcontractors etc.);
- Presently, the stress is on “how”, but where is the “if” – no tests in the public of the bigger EU countries in order to assess their opinion;

- The current problems of the transport system are being overlooked (the appalling record of trucks in safety, environment etc.), the focus being now switched on the bigger, newer things;
- In the discussion truck vs. rail, there are cases when rail is preferred even below the 800 km limit (countries like The Netherlands, where you simply cannot make 800 km)
- The problems of the cost of these studies: €20 mln. used for a trial in Denmark;
- 80% of the rail freight container market in the UK would disappear with the introduction of the mega trucks.

Claus Doll (Mega Trucks, Fraunhofer)

- Neutral studies, institutes. Monitoring logistic chains;
- The positive aspects are related to the fuel, pollution, congestion and drivers (less in numbers, better trained) issues;
- Data extracted from case studies, literature, market segments review;
- The case of the Swiss railways, which are very efficient on a small territory;
- The example of a port hinterland route (Netherlands to Poland), where there are different obstacles: problems in the infrastructure, countries to be crossed have different regulations etc.;
- When LHVs are allowed only on motorways, taking the goods on the other roads implies the splitting of the cargo and extra costs;
- Combined transport markets can drop, depending on the case. Also, mega trucks may get the biggest share of the market on long distances;
- The 60 t vehicle brings a serious increase of pollution, CO2 emissions, while its impact on the rail system is rather difficult to quantify (unsure)
- The 50 t vehicle brings no environmental benefits, but its impact on the rail system is less of that of the 60 t truck;
- All scenarios imply a severe impact on climate.

CER Presentation, Johannes Ludewig

- The slide of various effects on modal shift;
- The sensitivity analysis of the project is actually looking at the intramodal shift (the shift from normal trucks to mega trucks), and not the intermodal shift in transports (between road and rail);
- Although there are studies commissioned by national governments, no results from the European member-states have been incorporated in this document;

- The economic growth has not been updated, and there is no reflection of the economic crisis;
- The German Government has decided not to introduce this system, a fact that has been overlooked in this study;
- One major problem is the fact that this system is to be implemented in populated areas of the EU;
- Germany, Austria and Switzerland are unlikely to accept this system. What will be the results if there is such a gap in the middle of the EU?
- Another problem regards the countries in East-Central Europe, where the situation is completely different. The study reveals a Western European view, ignoring the realities in many EU countries;
- It needs to compare concrete aspects, not the potential of one or the other;
- On a per truck basis the risks are higher, a fact that will make no politician dare to offer its support;
- Transport in the EU has increased and the idea of the EU development plans was to bring rail and road together, and not this situation;
- €500 mln. have been allocated for these projects by the EU Commission through the Marco Polo Programme (2003 – 2013);
- The result will be a substantial shift on long distances, a fact that will change the current system;
- The present system offers reliable economic conditions. By changing it, these conditions will disappear;
- There is still a high level of uncertainty regarding the dynamics of the future system;
- Furthermore, it is a situation that will not only disadvantage the rail, but will also lead it to a spiraling of losses;
- The study deals with consequences until 2020, since it is obvious that beyond this term the situation for the rail system will only worsen;
- It has not been shown how low-cost trucking will actually make costs explode: since the costs will be lower, there will be an increasingly higher demand for their service, which will ultimately lead to an overall increase of costs;
- A contradiction of the EU transports policy measure, namely the support for intermodality, which will be severely affected.

Marco Sorgetti – CLECAT

- Representing freight forwarders, shippers, road transport, retailers, vehicle manufacturers, couriers etc.

- Roads are the main targets when dealing with the CO2 emissions, pollution, environmental problems;
- The intermodality is highly beneficial for logistics and for the economy as a whole, and it is not going to change;
- The possibility of sending 2 boxes for the price of one cannot go unnoticed in a market economy. The system is about combining the existing modules, also taking into account the demands of the client, the infrastructure as a whole and the dedicated road network(s);
- Longer vehicles reduce CO2 emissions per unit of cargo carried, a fact that is to be taken into consideration by governments when trying to achieve the goals of the Kyoto Protocol;
- There will be no need for large investments in the infrastructure, since more goods will be carried on less road;
- Other advantages are represented by: less traffic congestion, reduced space occupancy even during idle times
- The number of accidents is directly proportionate with the number of trucks, therefore a lower number of trucks on the road means a lower number of accidents;
- One other significant advantage for this project is the truck – rail wagon compatibility for the freight;
- As stated previously, road and rail are complementary, the actual areas of competition between the two being limited;
- Countries implementing modular system score higher in the rail share of the transport.
- Currently, the biggest problem is the 44t, 5-axle truck, which causes the most of the damage for the infrastructure, the others being less problematic;
- CLECAT is asking both the states and the EU institutions to help implementing these projects for mutual benefits;
- It is also asking for the lifting of internal barriers on the road transport in favor of better logistics.

2. Comments

Rudi –KCI(?)

- The timing for this subject is ill-prepared;
- Hardly any studies on safety issues: the gravity of accidents is connected to weights and frequency in traffic; higher mortality rate in accidents. Also there is a need for more studies on infrastructure;

ASECAP

- A study on motorways has revealed the fact that current infrastructure will have difficulties accommodating bigger and heavier vehicles;
- Regarding the intermodal system, the need is felt to further develop it, while taking into account the fact that mega trucks would affect this system on medium and long distances;
- 55% of the whole transport is jeopardized, especially the railway traffic
- The EU objective is to harmonize legislation, therefore it is against the rules that mega trucks should be allowed only in certain countries.

Int. Road Transport Union

- An inquiry about how many studies have real life tests (positive or negative);
- The main concern is that there are not enough tests, only real-life experience in different countries under different circumstances being able to offer relevant data;
- The rail representatives should sit at the same table with clients, vehicle manufacturers and the other segments in transport in order to improve and strengthen all aspects;
- There should be no definite position since tests are still under way.

(Spanish)?

- Considers that the issue is beyond favoring the trucks or not, but whether there is a real need for revising the Directive or not;
- The key indicators that are to be taken into consideration when making the analysis are the heights, weights and weights per axle;
- The problem of co-modality as a whole is important, and not whether the rail is happy or not. It is about making the system efficient;
- Social costs need to be addressed, especially those in relation to the drivers operating the trucks;
- Other incumbent costs for the companies, since they will have to adapt their fleet;
- An issue to be discussed within the transports sector is the problem of 1 or 2 segments used by the trucks;
- The task of the Commission is to contribute to an agreement over the Directive, yet it should also take into consideration the inherent problems such as infrastructure maintenance (the current infrastructure may not be able to cope with all the demands as, for instance, in the case of the height of bridges).

Bernard Jacob

- The concept of “bridge formula”, stressing the importance of weight limit depending on the bridge’s length and number of pillars;
- The load may be increase, but not up to 60 t without causing problems;
- Actually, volume is more important than weight in many cases;
- The issue to be addressed is not the increase in weight, but the increase in volume.

Bosch & Siemens

- Data drawn from practical experience between the traffic carriers;
- Rail will never loose its importance, since the actual competition is on the roads, between carriers;
- There is a problem of transport between different EU countries (for instance the Spanish case with rails)
- Recommendations should be made on maximizing the usage and loading of the existing facilities and machinery.

Other Comments:

Panayotis

- Efforts to improve efficiency in all sectors;
- Individually, the accidents will be more devastating, yet their number will be significantly reduced

J. Berry (Administrator, EU Commission) – an error in the TML report calculations: revisions are on the website

M. Sorgetti (CLECAT) – rail has a possibility to be resilient; they do not want to change their paradigm to meet the challenge

II. The technical implications

OECD (J. Christensen) – Chairman International Group Heavy Works Vehicles

- Working with the issues in a global approach, experience being needed from different places;
- There is a need to increase efficiency of road freight transport

- The DIVINE project has been focused on analyzing the possibilities of usage for HGVs;
- The stress has been put on productivity, safety and protection of the environment;
- The tasks: benchmarking, logistics, regulatory means;
- This come in the context where one cannot overlook the fact that there has been a significant growth in freight (especially on the roads) all over the world;
- The issues concerning these developments are: road safety, CO2 emissions, fuel prices & consumption, traffic congestion, mobility, pollution;
- There are those unsatisfied with the current road freight development;
- Social acceptability must be sought, and this can be done only through measures that are directed against those specific problems;
- It must be noted the fact that Higher Performance Vehicles are already in use;
- One other aspect that need thorough investigation is the compatibility of the vehicles with the infrastructure assets;
- The effective utilization of trucks will be able to prove to the public and the politicians alike the fact that these vehicles are complying with the restrictions and the safety, environment, and consumption norms;
- When trying to make comparisons between countries the basis are weak, since there are distinct classes and categories (vehicles, roads, bridges etc);
- Errors in hazard recognition and decision-making are behind the majority of truck accidents, and not technical features;
- Computer-based method in Australia for Performance-Based Standards – a good output of the system has been registered;
- The bigger trucks have more advantages when compared to the older ones: less km, better driver selection and training, better regulations;
- Taken into account the reduction of vehicles and km needed, studies have shown that fuel consumption may be reduced up to 30% (at about 25 l/100 km)
- The systemic impacts are to be summed up as follows: a large number of small trucks will be replaced, but only a small fraction of the rail gains will be eroded; rail will loose depending on the types of HPVs and their routes, yet rail will certainly gain important business when HPVs will provide efficient service in the intermodal system;
- It is important that whenever possible to use the least aggressive truck to infrastructure;
- Axel loads are far more important than gross vehicle mass;
- A solution to problems raised by bridges is provided by the ITS system, or the WIM (way-in-motion) system;
- Strong regulations are needed to optimize truck operations and maximize their acceptance;

- There is a need of enforcement of rules not just for the trucking segment, but for all actors in the Chain of Responsibility;
- In order to achieve better results, control systems, self-monitoring schemes and good management should be introduced;
- Regulatory systems and transport operations can benefit from the same technological advantages (system of monitoring and surveillance etc.);
- Such measure are of utmost importance in order to demonstrate to the public and the politicians alike that vehicles comply to the rules, while at the same time delivering economic growth and profit;

Panayotis – the safety and technological issues have been carefully considered, since they also limit the external costs of mega trucks

ASECAP (Mr. Calystratos?)

- Common standards are needed throughout the EU in order to facilitate the transit of goods (something that needs to be learned from the Swiss issue, when the authorities were not allowing passage for vehicles with different standards);
- The main issue ought to be the present vehicles and the attempt to make them cleaner, safer etc.
- Only after dealing with these issues the attention should be diverted towards bigger, heavier trucks
- The issue of using the infrastructure, which has been designed for 40t /18m. the need to evaluate the alternatives, the possibilities and the costs;
- Studies effectuated on safety and environment correlated with the modal shift of the giganliners have shown higher risks. Also, a study on motorways commissioned by a EU member-state has shown the impact of these trucks on facilities and maintenance,, on bridges and on the pavement structure, underlining the numerous problems that will arise;
- What also needs to be taken into account is the fact that stakeholders are many, but the infrastructure provider is one (generally the state);
- Therefore it is obvious that the usage of a wrong model and a wrong scenario will lead to a crisis in the real life;

ACEA – Stefan Larsen

- Sweden has already been using bigger trucks, composed from existing modules;
- ACEA supports a wider EU application of EMS: positive environmental approach, better intermodality etc.;
- The advantage of using this system is that you can leave one module behind, thus switching to a distribution model;

- The problem of cross-border activities needs to be developed, since there are different considerations between the countries;
- Concerning the safety aspect, each axel has its own brakes, thus making the trucks safer;
- The stress for the bridges will not be a problem, since the bigger trucks have a better combination of weight/axel than the trucks used today;
- The same goes for pavement;
- Nonetheless, the 60t combination will be rarely used, generally operating cargo;
- Nowadays, there real competition is shipping vs. rail and air vs. roads.

CEFIC – Verlinden

- The combination 44t/18.75 m already widely used in the EU, a fact against the TML conclusion;
- By deleting a few lines from the Directive (thus making a minor change) the Commission will help industries such as chemical, steel, paper etc. become more competitive;

ECG – Mark Morgan

- The car transport has a different case in the EU: 5 different height standards, no norms regarding the overhang parts
- There is no interest for changing the unloaded dimensions;
- An interest to change the loaded dimensions;
- There should be a set of common rules for both local and foreign operators;
- There is enough equipment to reduce CO2 emissions, and using it should actually be one of the main concerns;
- Weight is not an issue, since it is still below limits;
- The need to harmonize signaling of long vehicles.

ADAC – Christoph Heck

- Instead of investing in new trucks, the money should be used for technology in order to improve the safety and environmental standards;

- Another aspect of accidents: such heavy vehicles are harder to prevent from falling from a bridge/main road, and very difficult to pull them as well;
- Problems arising with circulation (traffic congestion) and parking;
- Motorists fear and oppose mega trucks.

The German Government:

- Highly interested in the safety, efficiency and competitiveness of the transport system;
- It is not clearly visible how the internal factors are taken into account (the difference between 3% and 13% in less traffic does not offer certainty);
- The government has asked for a critical study;
- Also questioning the aspect of methodology;
- Germany is also a transit country, so they have a different idea about transport, a different assessment and different results;
- There is no evidence of a positive intermodality: the rail system is clearly disadvantaged;
- All these taken into account, a meeting of the German Land ministers has decided that the gigaliners will not be allowed, taken into account the increased German road traffic.

TRL – Iain Knight

- Surprised that he has not been contracted by either part after a 300-page evaluation;
- Each side has collected whatever suited its goals best;
- Regarding the safety issue, one must not forget that all innovations in this field are implemented on the trucks;
- One solution for several problems would be to change the shape of the trucks, but it cannot be done because of standardizations;
- All in all, safety is not an issue when dealing with the mega trucks.

Denby Transports – Investment in junction should be sought

Transport and Environment

- The environmental case is not relevant in this context;
- No latest developments in improved truck fuel consumption;

- OECD with their predict and provide idea is not welcomed, given the fact that it cannot take into account the real problems

AK Europa

- Too little reference in the social dimension;
- No studies about the effect of (un)employment for other modal transports;
- One other directive that ought to receive scrutiny is the one setting the working hours in the transport sector (in order to avoid accidents);
- Prevention of accidents should receive more attention.

Initiative Transport Europe – Tony Ashvanden

- There is little information about this issue, given the fact that it will certainly have a negative impact on car users and pedestrians

FIA

- There are significant drawbacks when it comes to infrastructure and road safety when using the mega trucks;
- One important aspect is that the vast majority of the infrastructure is public, which makes this aspect important to the public and highly politicized, especially since the maintenance of infrastructure is made with public funds;
- In some areas roads have been narrowed for speeding reasons, a fact that will definitely create problems for trucks.

ELFRA – instead of using the mega trucks, a suggestion to use containers directly on the transport platform, all the process becoming faster and easier, not to mention the fact that there will be no necessity to break the bulk.

Franz Figelruud

- Business with cooling wagons, especially for food transports will have serious problems with weights and volumes;
- The directive for insulated good must also be revised;

- What is the strategy for vehicles, and for the branches that have difficulties?

U.K. Government

- The stress that chemical transports in these situations are not accepted (?);
- Interested in other adaptations of the directive
- The two major components when dealing with trailers: vehicle issues and market issues;
- They would recommend more axles for heavy trailers

OECD intervention – a similar discussion about weights and dimensions in the US, yet the Europeans seem to have ignored it.

Conclusions – J. Scheele

- The commission is working to achieve optimal efficiency in all modes, also bringing clarity;
- The choice between a modification and an interpretation, yet it is clear that interpretations of interpretations are not good;
- Dealing with separate, yet linked aspects;
- One of the main challenges is about the assumptions that we make (like economic growth, environmental issues, etc);
- The climate change needs to be taken into consideration (greenhouse gases effect, CO2 emissions) in close correlation to the modal shift;
- The drive towards energy efficiency and reduced fuel costs;
- The rising price of oil puts a huge impact on the relative competitiveness;
- A number of divergences have appeared in relation to distances, what type of freight to be used, long term implications of these changes (dynamic and static implications);
- A special attention will be given to infrastructure (such as real costs, implications of standards etc.);
- Road safety will also be addressed; there is not the problem of aggravating the situation, but it cannot satisfy all demands;
- The traffic diversion issue represents a challenge in terms of demand management;

- There is the need to be aware of incremental aspects: although these are not the first things that come to one's mind, they are not unimportant, and we have to know them if we want to look at them;
- Last but not least, there is the need for more tests in order to be as well prepared as possible before making the next step.

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