



Improving European Railways

retrack

An Integrated EU-Project

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EDITORIAL



RETRACK is now halfway to its destination. The first two years have focused on research activities supporting the corridor development. In the coming two years the focus will shift towards real demonstration. The project is undergoing a transition from research orientation towards realisation and changing theory into practice. The project progress is now concentrating on preparatory

activities for the pilot demonstration which is scheduled to be at the beginning of September 2009. Agreements with customers based on the revised operational plan are in their final stage.

The global financial and economic crisis has affected the rail freight market. Volumes have dropped on average by 20%, though certain market segments like steel and automotive have had considerably higher losses in volume. This of course has an impact on the business cases and profitability in the rail freight sector. Private operators are feeling the pressure from their investors and shareholders, taxpayers are anxious about the losses of state owned railway companies.

What I observe is a consolidation wave in the rail freight sector, where large incumbents like DB Schenker Rail acquire private rail freight companies in surrounding countries. The consequences of these consolidation battles will also impact on RETRACK.

Some relevant milestones for the project are reported in this newsletter. The EIM 2009 Conference in March was a good opportunity to spread out our vision and discuss with other stakeholders the future of European Railways. RETRACK actively contributed to a visit, organised by the Rotterdam Port Promotion Council, to Romania and to Railcargo Information Netherlands. And finally, several RETRACK partners were present at Transport Logistics in Munich in May.

I know you will be informed by this edition of our newsletter and use this opportunity to thank Arnaud Burgess for his inspiring role as project coordinator for RETRACK in the first two years.

Gerwin Zomer, TNO

RETRACK Government Advisory Board Meeting

Min Zhang, TNO

The annual RETRACK Governmental Advisory Board Meeting took place in Brussels in March. The meeting was chaired by Brigit Gijssbers (Dutch Ministry of Transport) and coordinated by Gerwin Zomer. The project officer Dr. Theodor Schlickmann from the European Commission together with a group of rail experts from the ministries, infrastructure managers, rail regulators and research institutes participated in the meeting.

The main objective of the meeting was to present the progress and initial results of the project to board members, and to solicit possible strategies and tactics for realisation of the pilot. The discussion covered three issues:

- 1) the history and the status of the pilot setting
- 2) the emerging corridor practices in the EU in both public and private arenas, and lessons to be drawn for the pilot setting
- 3) the EC initiative on giving priority to freight and its implications for the RETRACK project

The meeting was successful, constructive and informative. The board members discussed a strategy to make the pilot a reality and it is planned to take place in September 2009.



RETRACK Security Survey on Track

Marika Kolbenstvedt, TOI

RETRACK will not only foster new railway concepts and projects, but also new knowledge on crucial challenges of our time. RETRACK's WP7 deals with Security and Safety and our literature review clearly demonstrates that this is a small academic area and that most studies are American. The ongoing RETRACK Survey on Security will bring new European knowledge on experiences and give partners the possibility for an exchange of ideas on Mitigating Measures.

The questionnaire contains questions on the following themes: Security standards; Security assessment/checks; Personal

WHAT IS RETRACK?

The RETRACK project is applying an innovative rail freight service concept to the movement of rail freight across Europe. RETRACK is the "Reorganisation of Transport networks by advanced Rail freight Concepts". It is funded under the European Commission (EC) FP6 Programme. The project started in May 2007 and will run for four years.



RETRACK Newsletter 4 June 2009

training; Site security, inspections; Emergency preparedness; Customs control; Incident reporting; Security challenges

The RETRACK Security Survey is a new concept in that the rail partners take part in the research process, defining questions, carrying out interviews and analysing results, on equal terms with the researchers. Each partner had the responsibility for contacting stakeholders like ministries, railway inspectorates, infrastructure/terminal managers, rail operators, customs and police/emergency in one country. The research was carried out during March and April 2009 and the results are due out during the summer of 2009.

Pilots, Planning Logs and Runs (WP8) *Johannes Marg, Transpetrol*

In March members of WP8 met in Budapest to finalise the operative concept. The task was to define the technical parameters on each individual leg of the main route of the demonstrator and the alternatives (i.e. additional stopovers, feeder services for future enlargement), which will form the basis for a detailed calculation by the railways and – last but not least – the definition of retail prices. The railways involved are now tasked with the thorough and binding calculation of prices as well as the reservation of the necessary infrastructure slots.

A major issue that has been discussed is the composition of the train, thus determining the range of intermodal units the trains are able to accommodate. RETRACK will be designed to carry a minimum of 74 teu's (twenty foot equivalent units), of which a quarter will be suitable to carry extra large ("high cube") containers and swab bodies. Whilst a wide variety of intermodal units can be carried on the RETRACK demonstrator (i.e. ISO-Containers and a variety of continental swab bodies), the transport of trailers or complete sets of truck and trailer have been ruled out for the demonstrator.

It has been agreed that RETRACK will employ an environmentally friendly electric multisystem locomotive for more than 90% of the total distance covered, crossing up to four borders.

Main-Port Development Conference *Kees Verweij, TNO*

Michael Roggenkamp of TRANSPETROL presented the latest RETRACK project results at the first "Main-Port Development Conference - Bridging the Continental Logistics Corridor Constanta – Rotterdam" in Constanta, Romania. This Conference was held on board the Dutch navy vessel HNLMS Johan de Witt, moored in the port of Constanta, and was opened by His Excellency Mr. Traian Basescu, President of Romania. There were about 200 participants at the Conference, of whom many were from the five countries that form the corridor: Romania, Hungary, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.

The conference addressed all aspects related to the development of the continental logistics corridor between Constanta and Rotterdam and contained presentations from various organizations. The main conclusion of the conference was that

public and private partnerships like the RETRACK Consortium were regarded as key to practical freight corridor solutions in Europe, implemented in the shortest possible timeframe.



Traian Basescu, President of Romania, with Radu Berceanu, Romanian Minister of Transport and Infrastructure and Tineke Huizinga, Dutch Vice Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management

The RETRACK presentation showed that market parties and authorities are already working together to set up a rail freight corridor Constanta – Rotterdam, and this attracted much attention. The RETRACK Consortium is building further on contacts made at this Conference.

RETRACK at the EIM 2009 Conference *Gerwin Zomer, TNO*

At the EIM 2009 Conference on Structuring the Future of Europe's Railways in Brussels, Gerwin Zomer, TNO presented RETRACK in a session on the Freight Oriented Network. He argued that there are currently too many corridor approaches in Europe, each with a specific focus area: TEN-T corridors (infrastructure), ERTMS-corridors (interoperability), RNE-corridors (international trainpath application), ERIM and PERFN corridors (market potential). RETRACK brings these different focus areas together in an integrated approach for a rail freight corridor connecting industrial regions along the North Sea and the Black Sea.

He also highlighted how RETRACK addresses three crucial pillars in the European vision on freight oriented networks: reliability, performance and competitiveness. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion with Enrico Grillo-Pasquarelli, Director Inland Transport of the European Commission and Eric Fontanel, General Manager of UNIFE.

The discussion dealt with the role of Infrastructure Managers in the plans for a priority freight network according to draft regulations still to be accepted by the European Parliament. RETRACK fully supports the idea of a priority freight network. However, Gerwin Zomer stressed the importance of having full transparency in the rules for capacity allocation (train paths). Though rail liberalisation should have resulted in a complete distinction between infrastructure managers who run the network and the railway companies using them, the latest Rail Liberalisation Index (IBM, 2007) shows differences between theory and practice. This makes it even more important to insist on full transparency in the rules for allocating capacity and actual practice, in particular for private railway undertakings, like the ones cooperating in the RETRACK project.

RETRACK CONTACT DETAILS

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