

COSMOS Press Release

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Joint Meeting of the Bulgarian Cluster Green Freight Transport and the COSMOS Partners in Sofia on February 27, 2013

A delegation headed by the president of the Bulgarian Cluster Green Freight Transport, Simeon Ananiev, and the COSMOS project partners have jointly discussed the challenges for the intermodal sector in Bulgaria in the Higher Transport University " Todor Kableshkov " Sofia on February 27, 2013.

The meeting, that was moderated by COSMOS project manager Uwe Sondermann (KombiConsult, Frankfurt am Main) concluded that the prerequisites for establishing an intermodal sector in Bulgaria are:

- Access to the rail infrastructure and major ports for all licensed railway undertakings;
- Intermodal terminal with modern handling equipment and safety/security features;
- Access to intermodal equipment such as semi-trailers, swap bodies and containers;
- Container hinterland services for the ports of Burgas/Varna/Thessaloniki for domestic and neighbouring countries;
- Bundling of freight on long-distance continental trade lanes to establish intermodal block trains;
- Alliance with international operators to provide for a European wide network of services via gateway terminals.

The short statements of the participants demonstrated that the first steps have been done in the right direction: The number of private railway undertakings organized in the Association of Bulgarian Railway Carriers (ABRC) is increasing and also their market share in freight transport. With Yana a first new generation intermodal terminal was created in the vicinity of the capital of Sofia that could serve as a nucleus for further activities: transshipment, storage, trucking. The Cluster partners identified a lack of intermodal equipment and consider making appropriate type of semi-trailers, swap bodies or inland containers (45' units) available via purchase, leasing or pooling. That measure could lower the financial risk of small and medium forwarders and prepare their entry into the intermodal sector. The ports of Burgas and Varna, but traditionally also Thessaloniki, are the entry points for container traffic to and from Bulgaria and its neighbouring countries. Good practices from other countries, such as Koper/Slovenia have demonstrated that domestic block trains could be organised even on medium distances. The essential next step for the Bulgarian transport sector is to establish a platform or cluster of mutual trust where freight transports are bundled in order to form regular domestic or international block trains while the transport companies themselves remain responsible for the contact to shippers. In Slovenia and Croatia intermodal operators such as Adriakombi or Crokombi were created by road transport companies, forwarders, their trade organizations and railways for that purpose already several years ago. They are able to organize also European wide transports backed on the networks of their cooperation partners and gateway terminals such as Ljubljana, München (Kombiverkehr), Wels or Sopron (Gysev).

The respective project managers Stoyan Dinev and Uwe Sondermann were commissioned by the parties to organize a further exchange of ideas. Also the business partners among, them forwarders, transport operators, railway undertaking and terminal operators are confident to improve their relation.

Responsible:

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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.

Foto (free use with quoting the source):

Bulgarian Green Transport Cluster and COSMOS project partners team up in Sofia on 27.02.2013



Source: Ralitsa Russinova, Bulgarian Transport Press, LOGISTIKA magazine