United Nations ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2012/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 August 2012
English
Original: English and French

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Fifty-fifth session
Geneva, 6–7 November 2012
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
National policy measures to promote intermodal transport

Status report of 2012

Note by the secretariat

I. Mandate

1. In accordance with a decision of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC), the Working Party continues the work carried out by the former European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) in (a) monitoring and analysis of national measures to promote intermodal transport and (b) monitoring enforcement and review of the ECMT Consolidated Resolution on Combined Transport (ECE/TRANS/192, para. 90).

2. As decided by the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/129, para. 20), the secretariat reproduces below information updated by Switzerland.

3. Following review of the 2012 information at the present session of the Working Party, the secretariat will upload this information onto the WP.24 web site: http://apps.unece.org/NatPolWP249.

II. Questionnaire on national policy measures to promote intermodal transport

	Objectives and issues[1]	*Explanations*
1	Importance of intermodal transport in national transport policy	Combined transport is a key area of Swiss transport policy in view of its role as an instrument to promote the transfer of freight transport from road to rail. Combined transport operations in Switzerland started in 1968. Measures to support and promote combined transport include: • Introduction of a service-related charge for heavy goods road vehicles (RPLP) (redevance sur le trafic des poids lourds liée aux prestations) on 1 January 2001. This charge was increased on 1 January 2005, together with the maximum weight of heavy goods road vehicles which was set at 40 tonnes. Another change in the charge took place in 2008. In 2011, a heavy goods road vehicle of 40 tonnes travelling 300 km on Swiss territory is charged 288 Swiss francs[2] on average; • Construction of new transalpine rail crossings (at a total cost in 1998 prices of SwF 18.7 billion). The Lötschberg base tunnel was opened in June 2007. The Gotthard base tunnel (in the south prolonged by the Ceneri tunnel) will come into operation at the end of 2016; • Land transport agreement between the European Union and Switzerland: the promotion and financial support for combined transport are explicitly included in this agreement; The law on the shift of freight traffic, which entered into force on 1 January 2001 and was accompanied by a credit framework of SwF 2.85 billion until 2010, has allowed for a number of measures in the field of road and rail transport (particularly financial aid). Since 1 January 2010, it has been replaced by the law on the shift of freight transport. This law provides, in particular, that two years after the opening of the Gotthard base tunnel, the number of lorries transiting the Alps annually shall be limited to 650,000. In order to achieve this objective, the Swiss Parliament has adopted a general credit framework initially set at SwF 1.6 billion for the period 2011–2018 to facilitate freight traffic across the Alps. However, due to the adaptation of rail path prices (deletion of the coverage contribution related to freight traffic), this credit has been reduced by 105 million, to SwF 1.495 billion. From 2011, allowances for combined transport not crossing the Alps are deduced from the spending limit used to promote freight traffic not crossing the Alps, which also finances the allowances for rail transport with full wagon loads. The credit framework for rail freight transport not crossing the Alps is planned until 2015 and provides for resources of approximately SwF 30 million a year. Within the project « Global strategy to promote rail freight transport on Swiss territory », the Swiss Parliament will probably decide in 2014 if the development of rail freight transport not crossing the Alps should still be promoted in the form of allowances for operating costs after 2015.

[1] For a detailed description of the issues and objectives stipulated in the ECMT Consolidated Resolution, refer to ECMT document CEMT/CM(2002)3/FINAL. The objectives and issues contained in the Resolution have been consolidated by the secretariat (for example, the issues of “fair competition” and “transparent and competitive pricing” is mentioned in several indents in the ECMT Resolution).

[2] Swiss francs will be abbreviated as SwF in the remainder of the document.

	Objectives and issues[1]	*Explanations*
2	National and international bodies	
	2.1 Take measures to improve national policy coordination (environment, land use, transport)	No remarks.
	2.2 Take measures to improve international policy coordination (environment, land use, transport)	No remarks.
3	Costs and prices	
	3.1 Establish fair competition between modes	One of the objectives of the RPLP is to encourage the transfer of freight traffic from road to rail. By internalizing infrastructure and external costs, the RPLP has improved the framework conditions for rail transport.
	3.2 Develop cheaper and more efficient interfaces between modes of transport	No remarks.
4	Networks, terminals and logistics centres	
	4.1 Implement international standards (e.g. AGTC Agreement and its Protocol on inland waterways)	Switzerland ratified the AGTC Agreement on 11 February 1993 and its Protocol on inland waterways on 4 March 1998. The international standards enshrined in these international legal instruments are applied.
	4.2 Integrate terminal planning into national, regional or cross-border transport and land-use planning	No remarks.
	4.3 Take administrative measures to improve terminal access	No remarks.
	4.4 Take administrative measures to improve terminal operations and facilities	No remarks.
5	Interoperability	
	5.1 Ensure compatibility of railway information and signalling systems	In 2009, the Ministers of Transport of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland signed a joint Declaration that foresees implementation of the ETCS (European Train Control System) along the entire corridor 1 (Antwerp/Rotterdam-Genoa). Switzerland plays a pioneering role in the introduction of this standard system allowing for automatic signalling and control of trains. ETCS Level 2 has been introduced with success on the new railway line between Mattstetten and Rothrist and through the Lötschberg base tunnel. This system is also intended to be used for the Gotthard and Ceneri base tunnels. On other parts of the standard gauge rail network, the present systems are initially replaced by ECTS Level 1 (limited supervision).
	5.2 Introduce electronic information systems	No remarks.
	5.3 Other measures	No remarks.

	Objectives and issues[1]	*Explanations*
6	Financial and fiscal support measures	
	6.1 Financial support for investments (installations, rolling stock, systems, etc.)	Under the Ordinance on promotion of rail freight transport (OPTMa), the Swiss Government can award non-reimbursable investments or loans for: • construction, procurement, renovation or extension of structures, installations and equipment for transhipment between modes of transport; • development of rail installations for combined transport; • procurement of rail wagons for combined transport; • other investments that facilitate and promote combined transport. Contributions for investment are given only if the applicants also invest some of their own resources. According to legislation, which only provides for financial support for projects, the Swiss Government does not plan terminals. The applicants (owners or terminal operators) receive, if their project has been deemed worthy, a starting financial contribution, provided that each of them puts forward at least 20% of their own funding. The incentive contribution from the Swiss Government depends on the project interest from the transport policy point of view, its profitability and its evaluation by a cost-utility analysis. The available contribution is SwF 40 million a year, according to the multiannual programme for 2009-2013. Under certain conditions, financial support could also be provided for the construction of terminals outside Switzerland, particularly if it contributes to an increase in the share of rail traffic through Switzerland. Under the legislation regulating the connection of rail sidings, private companies may benefit from non-recoverable grants for construction of branch lines directly serving their sites. These funds amount to around SwF 20 million per year.
	6.2 Financial support for operations (specific, initial operations, etc.)	Under the OPTMa, the Swiss Government also contributes to operating costs (expenditure not covered in budget forecasts) linked to services that have been requested by the Swiss Government in the form of combined transport services. These allowances are calculated by the number of trains and consignments transported. In 2011, the Swiss Government allocated a total of SwF 243 million to rail freight, of which SwF 21 million were allocated in the framework of measures to mitigate the effects of the strong Swiss franc. SwF 162 million were assigned to transalpine non-accompanied combined transport, SwF 16 million to non-accompanied combined transport not crossing the Alps and SwF 36 million to rolling highways. Allowances of SwF 23 million were paid in 2011 for transport with full wagon loads not crossing the Alps and SwF 6 million were assigned to rail freight on narrow-gauge line. The Swiss Federal Office of Transport and RAlpin SA have agreed upon an arrangement which guarantees the company financing from the Swiss Government for the service operations of rolling highways on links from Freiburg i.B. to Novara and from Basel to Chiasso until 2018. As such, RAlpin SA receives operating allowances for the transport of heavy goods road vehicles. Thanks to this multiannual arrangement, RAlpin SA will ensure the necessary investments and is committed to operating these services until 2018. The current offer will be then maintained for the upcoming years.

	Objectives and issues[1]	*Explanations*
	6.2 Financial support for operations (specific, initial operations, etc.) (continued)	The Swiss Federal Office of Transport has noted that, as a result of the economic crisis, non-accompanied combined transport has decreased more rapidly than road transport. This is due to competition and the development of prices in the road sector. In order to counterbalance these divergent developments in road and non-accompanied combined transport, the Swiss Government has decided to increase considerably the maximum financial support per consignment in 2009. These additional financial support measures are expected to allow non-accompanied combined transport operators to offer their clients competitive prices vis-à-vis road transport.
	6.3 Fiscal support measures (vehicle tax, road user fee exemptions, etc.)	In accordance with the legal provisions of the RPLP, owners of road vehicles using non-accompanied combined transport benefit from a general reimbursement of the RPLP in the order of SwF 24 per loading unit or semi-trailer of a length between 18 and 20 feet and SwF 37 for loading units or semi-trailers longer than 20 feet. Through this measure around SwF 20 million are reimbursed annually to road transport operators.
7	Regulatory support measures	
	7.1 Exemption from restrictions and traffic bans	In accordance with the ordinance on drivers, the time spent by a lorry driver on a train in combined transport could be counted as a period of availability or may be added, under certain conditions, to the daily rest period.
	7.2 Liberalization of initial and terminal hauls	No remarks.
	7.3 Higher weight limits for road vehicles transporting intermodal loading units	While the maximum weight of lorries with more than four axes, of road trains and of articulated vehicles is limited to 40 tonnes, the maximum permissible weight of these vehicles is increased to 44 tonnes if used in non-accompanied combined transport (containers, swap-bodies, semi-trailers) for haulage towards or from a terminal or a Swiss port.
	7.4 Facilitation of documentary controls	No remarks.
	7.5 Bonus systems for using intermodal transport	No remarks.
	7.6 Strict enforcement of road haulage regulations	The improvement of heavy goods vehicle traffic checks is an auxiliary measure to promote the transfer of freight transport from road to rail. It aims at creating fair competition conditions between rail and road and further improving road traffic safety, in particular on transit routes, by better enforcing legislation (traffic forbidden to non-compliant vehicles). As a first step, mobile checks for heavy goods vehicle traffic were reinforced. Additional checks were put in place in new centres of competence as a secondary step. Checks on heavy goods vehicle traffic include the following topics: weight, dimensions and technical state of the vehicle (brakes, steering, general state), driving licence of the driver, respect of the driving and rest times. Moreover, the police enforce alcohol tests and drugs controls. In 2010, SwF 24 million were allocated to the improvement of heavy goods vehicle traffic checks. The necessary funds are taken from the RPLP.
	7.7 Other regulatory support measures	No remarks.

	Objectives and issues[1]	*Explanations*
8	Transport operations	
	8.1 Liberalize access to the rail networks	No remarks.
	8.2 Liberalize access to inland water transport	No remarks.
9	Market monitoring	
	9.1 Ensure availability of coherent and reliable data	The Swiss Federal Office of Transport has monthly statistics on the development of tonnage transported by accompanied (RoLa) and non-accompanied combined transport. As part of its analytical accompanying measures, the Swiss Federal Office of Transport has also developed qualitative criteria, such as a database on the development of delays at arrival of combined transport trains.
	9.2 Establish inventories of bottlenecks	No remarks.
	9.3 Establish short sea shipping information offices	No remarks.
10	Foster innovations covering all components of the transport chain	The Swiss Federal Office of Transport has carried out several studies on combined transport during the past years. They have addressed in particular the: • impact of non-accompanied combined transport on conventional rail freight; • consequences of the economic crisis for non-accompanied combined transport; • short-term consequences of the of Lötschberg base tunnel on the freight traffic.
11	Operators in intermodal transport chains	
	11.1 Promote cooperation and partnership agreements	No remarks.
	11.2 Promote use of intermodal transport for the transport of dangerous goods	No remarks.
	11.3 Promote use of international pools of rail wagons	No remarks.
	11.4 Promote operation of rail block trains between terminals	Virtually all services operated by Hupac SA are shuttle trains between main terminals.
	11.5 Promote use of effective and compatible EDI systems (e.g. tracking and tracing, etc.)	HUPAC has also introduced electronic systems that allow the booking of places, the tracking of trains and the provision of information for clients in case of delays.