

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION
QUESTIONS TO THE STAKEHOLDERS**

Please send your replies by 31 March 2005

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Answers from Transportes Ferroviarios Especiales, S.A. (TRANSFESA). Spain

Which are the major axes?

1. What are the main transport axes, including motorways of the sea, connecting the European Union to the neighbouring countries or broader regions today?

In our opinion, there are three major inland transport axes for connecting the EU with its neighbouring countries. This axes are:

- Connection with North Africa: Tanger – Algeciras – Cordoba – Madrid – Zaragoza – Barcelona – Perpignan – Toulouse – Limoges – Paris – Köln
- Connection with North East Europe: Berlin – Warszawa – Minsk – Moskva – Niznij Novgorod
- Connection with South East Europe – Turkey: Dresden – Praha – Bratislava/Wien – Budapest – Arad – Sofija (1) – Istanbul (1) – Bucuresti (2) – Constanta (2)

The three proposed axes are well connected through the current infrastructures:



2. What will these axes be with a time horizon of 2020?

These axes will be amongst the most important in 2020 by linking high potential growth regions (the Maghreb, East Europe & Turkey, and the former Russian republics) with its most important export market, the European Union.

With respect to the connection with the Maghreb, we propose the development of rail axes with priority for freight, considering there would be already a high speed rail line for passenger traffic: Algeciras – Cordoba – Madrid – Barcelona – Perpignan – Lyon – Paris.

From now onwards, the answers will be referred to the axe connecting the North of Africa, specifically for freight transportation. The detailed information about bottlenecks, improvements needed, etc. will be limited to the Iberian Peninsula.

3. What is the balance between the different transport modes?

Today, approximately 50% of freight exchanges between the North of Africa and the EU is done through sea transportation, while the rest, the other 50%, is done by road, being rail freight transport completely marginal.

At the same time, more than 90% of inland freight exchanges between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe are done by road, with rail transporting less than 10%.

4. What are the current traffic volumes, both passenger and freight, on the proposed axes?

There are three different kinds of traffic that uses this transport axe through the Iberian Peninsula:

- Freight traffic between Morocco and the EU: we estimate that every year there are more than 60,000 trucks crossing the Straits of Gibraltar in both directions with final destination beyond the Pyrenees.
- Freight traffic between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the EU: more than 1.5 million trucks cross the eastern border frontier between Spain and France every year.
- Internal traffic in the Iberian Peninsula through the axe: we estimate that more than 1.2 million trucks use this transport axe in intra-regional movements.

5. What is the amount and share of international traffic to/from the Union or between the neighbouring regions?

Around 50% of all inland transport crossing the Pyrenees is done through this transport axe. At the same time, around 50% of all traffic through the axe is international traffic.

6. How will these traffic volumes develop by 2020?

Exports/Imports of countries in the North of Africa evolve at a growth rate of more than 5% per year. International transport between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the EU has been growing at an average of 4% per year.

If there are no infrastructure capacity limitations pressing down this growth rate, current volumes will double by 2020.

7. Are there particularly environmentally sensitive areas that must be taken into account when identifying major axes?

We should consider that not only all the cities where the axe crosses by are sensitive areas from environmental point of view, even without considering congestion problems. With the

Kyoto protocol in place, the whole EU is a sensitive area. On the other hand, the Iberian Peninsula is one the biggest natural life reserves in Europe.

Which investments and how?

1. Which are the most pressing congestion, traffic safety or geographical bottlenecks on the major axes that could justify investments?

- The geographical conditions of the current rail connection between the Algeciras Port and Bobadilla are an important bottleneck that it is necessary to overcome.
- From there to the Spanish-French border (Port Bou / Cerbere), only the big cities are real bottlenecks for freight traffic: Cordoba, Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona.
- Another important bottleneck is the tunnel between Port Bou and Cerbere, with too much traffic, both passengers and freight, to be handled with its current configuration.
The reason for this is the passenger traffic between Port Bou and Cerbere, with too many trains with very low occupancy rate.

Beyond this point, we avoid the main rail axe in Southern France, and its bottlenecks, such as the Nimes-Montpellier corridor and the city of Lyon. The Limoges – Paris alternative would have as main bottleneck the Paris circumvallation.

2. What kind of improvements (rehabilitation, new construction) to the infrastructure would be needed to remove the bottlenecks?

We have identified the following main actions needed for the infrastructure improvement (all of them over the conventional rail network):

- Algeciras – Bobadilla: a study is needed to define the best option between rehabilitating the current infrastructure or constructing a new alternative corridor to allow freight transportation (big capacity is needed).
- Bobadilla – Spanish/French border:
 - Circumvallation of the cities of Cordoba, Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona. This implies the construction of a rail freight railway with a total length of no more than 150 Km for all cities (no electrification needed, diesel locomotives are much more performing for freight)
 - Modification of stations and railway shunting lines to allow trains of 750m long, for accepting trains of the same length as in Europe.

- Improvements in the interconnection tunnel between Port Bou and Cerbere, allowing an important increase in capacity.

3. What is the time horizon for the realisation of such a project?

All improvements proposed are minor actions over the infrastructure, and we consider they can be developed within the next five years. This would allow the EU to open at the same time, by 2010, two main rail corridors that connect with the North of Africa: the passenger one through the high speed network, and the freight one, over the conventional rail infrastructure.

4. What would the economic, environmental and safety benefits of such project be?

Estimating a modal change between 20% to 30%, from road into rail transportation, and considering only the part of the corridor inside the Iberian Peninsula, the external cost savings would amount to 275 million euros per year (according to the INFRAS/IWW study, October 2004 version). Migrated volume would surpass 4,500 million Tm-Km per year.

Additional benefits impossible to quantify are reduction of congestion in main motorways as well as in big cities, not included in the external costs of transport estimates, and increase in safety by migrating traffic from road to rail (much lower accident rate).

The intermodal platforms of the big cities, considered in this proposal (see annexed document), will increase the potential market for modal switch between road to rail, in 0.5 million trucks per year.

5. Are there alternative technical or modal options to remove or alleviate the bottleneck?

In this proposal, all bottlenecks between Algeciras and Perpignan are solved. On top of this, in the long term, achieving the networks interoperability will improve even more the capacity, and will allow a further migration from road to rail.

6. How can the project best be financed? What could be the role for private sector involvement and user charges?

Funds may come from the EU, the local authorities and even the private sector, through concessions or other formulas. Transport operators would be glad to pay for the use of an infrastructure that today they don't have. The sole requirement would be that as passengers would have a high speed alternative corridor, this one would be a preferred corridor for freight.

How to ensure seamless and efficient use of the axes?

1. What are the main technical and administrative bottlenecks on the axes?

The main technical and administrative bottlenecks are located at the frontiers between countries. We must differentiate two different points:

- When accessing the EU from the North of Africa. At this point the bottleneck is only administrative, with complicated and slow procedures related to toll, security, safety, immigration, etc. We need to study how we can simplify processes and procedures.
- When crossing borders in the EU, there are administrative and technical bottlenecks, derived from the lack of interoperability between rail networks.

Frontier administrative formalities for rail services in the European Union, as described in the Second Railway Package:

- Changing driver and crew
- Changing locomotive
- Filling out the composition form
- Inspecting the train
- Carrying out checks on dangerous materials
- Checking documents
- Making up the train
- Labelling the wagons
- Checking the rear light

Lack of interoperability between rail networks is derived from differences in several technical parameters, as described in the Second Railway Package:

- Signalling systems
- Electrification systems
- Pantograph head-widths
- Maximum permissible axle loads
- Direction of running
- Track gauge
- Etc.

Administrative and interoperability problems are being analysed at EU level and many of them will be solved for passengers in high speed lines in the near future. As stated in the railway packages, this know-how should be translated to the conventional network in the future.

2. Are there problems of interoperability when crossing borders or changing modes?

Interoperability problems when crossing borders have been described in the previous question.

When changing modes, and once all the infrastructure actions are developed, there won't be any additional problems.

3. Is safety or security a major concern along an axis?

It is, as always in freight transportation, and specially because it crosses several urban areas. Nevertheless, security and safety requirements needed are lower than those for high speed passenger trains, as freight shouldn't be travelling at more than a 100 Km per hour.

But at the same time, this concern about safety is one of the drivers behind the proposal: there are much more accidents in road transportation than in rail, and by switching traffic between modes, increasing the rail share, security and safety will be improved.

4. What could be done to solve the bottlenecks today and with a time horizon of 2020?

As it has been previously stated, all infrastructure actions can be developed in 5 years time, as there are no major ones, and investments are reasonable, if no small, when compared with most of the infrastructure projects in the European Union.

With respect to administrative and technical/interoperability bottlenecks, work should be done in simplifying procedures and processes, as well as bureaucracy when crossing borders. Interoperability problems are already a priority focus of various working groups in Europe, that have already several solutions to be implemented before 2020.

5. How can intermodal transport be facilitated?

The whole proposal is driven towards intermodal transportation.

6. What common market rules should be implemented to facilitate and speed up transport along an axis?

7. Which policies or administrative procedures should be better integrated?

For both 6 & 7.

EU authorities, as well as local ones should promote not only rail transport liberalisation, but also the development of new competitors in the market. To be able to do that it is mandatory to establish certain regulations during the transition period until there is a relevant competition. This has been done successfully in several industries such as telecommunications, gas, electricity, etc.

With respect to operations, and as well as in passengers, where certain exclusive corridors have been defined for them: high speed network, commuter networks, etc., rail freight transportation should have the same treatment. This means that those corridors where freight is much more important than passenger traffic, or as in this proposal, passengers have an alternative network/corridor, should be preferential for freight transport.

8. What could be the role of the private sector?

As it has been described, the private sector can participate in financing the investment from the very beginning. This is possible because the private sector believes that rail freight transportation can increase its market share substantially if the service is improved.

Reliability is the only thing needed for this improvement. And a preferential rail infrastructure for freight not only will allow to increase capacity but also to improve reliability, and under this scenario, the private sector is willing to pay for this infrastructure.