

## **Port-Net Project Meeting Alessandria, October 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

### **“Cargo Distribution Centre and Hinterland Networking”**

The workshop consisted of three main parts:

- 1 ½ days of presentations and discussions introducing the specific aspects of the topic in the piedmont region and Ligurian coast
- a long afternoon for an excursion throughout the logistics areas with final visit of Acqui Terme
- one day of political statements including a round table discussion outlining the regional problems and potentials

Alessandria regards itself as the natural dry port of Genova. Genova is the biggest North-Western Italian seaport which handled in 2005 approx. 56.5 m tons of cargo in total (-1.0 % to 2004) including 1.6 m. TEU (-0.1 % to 2004). Its geographical position is to be considered as its main development obstacle. Due to the Apennine Mountains which reach down to the coastline there is no space for a sufficient port extension. That is why logistics centres in the plane of the river Po around 70 km away from Genova present itself as natural appendix for missing logistic sites on the very narrow shore.

Since Northern Italy expects an increase of container throughput of about 10 m TEU in the short to midterm perspective mainly due to boosting Chinese cargo flows the provinces want to participate in the connected logistics industry to create jobs and welfare on its territories. Whereas the Po plane has access to a nearly perfect motorway network to attract logistics companies there is still a considerable development potential for the railway traffic system. In the Alessandria region for instance only 40 % of the railway network is currently used Mrs. Mazzarolli, SLALA, underlined. The upgrade approach of the railway system has to be vital because people suffer quite a lot by the high volume of heavy goods vehicle traffic the representatives of the provinces emphasized. The Genova port railway facilities and the Alessandria rail terminal are crucial nodes to be improved as well as the linking tunnels to the coast. But there is not enough funding as Mr. Filippi complained. It has been pointed out that an effective measure could be the centralisation of the operational management to reduce waiting time in Genova and to lead to a more intensified use of the existing railway network. Furthermore operations have to be supported by an efficient IT-system providing tracking and tracing online and the complete documentation of services.

The most important existing logistics centre established in 1966 is Rivalta Scrivia situated in the centre of the triangle Milano – Torino - Genova. With a total surface of 1.250.000 m<sup>2</sup> it is related to all Ligurian ports. The covered surface amounts to 300.000 m<sup>2</sup> including high bay warehouses, those for large scale distribution products and for services and goods processing and additional refrigerated warehouses for fresh and deep frozen goods. Seaborne traffic can reach Rivalta bonded due to the bonded fiscal warehouses and the customs clearance possibility within the site. Rivalta Scrivia is closely connected to the motorway network as well as to the dense railway network in the Piedmont region with allows access to the entire European network systems. A considerable share of cargo flow via Rivalta is performed by railway. The logistics centre Rivalta Scrivia will be expanded tremendously by the so called “Terminal Europa” project which is targeted on creating a platform for the development of intermodal trade operations on an

additional area of 800.000 m<sup>2</sup>. Rivalta Scrivia, a key component of the logistics infrastructure in North-Western Italy, can be regarded as a best practise example.

Italy is in a potential spatial marginality Mrs. Marta Vincenzi, member of the EU parliament, stated. But for state of the art logistics centres like Rivalta Scrivia a prosperous future is foreseeable if the Northern Italian port handling and the railway links to the hinterland which are relatively cost intensive nowadays are going to be further optimized. Modern logistics sites in the Po plane focus not only on the Italian market but also on Bayern and Baden-Württemberg in Southern Germany. As soon as viable transalpine links are operational these areas can be served faster and more cost saving by Italian seaports than via North-range-ports. Mr. Adriano Cavadini gave an interesting example of the financing issues of the Lötschberg AlpTransit. How a reliable transeuropean intermodal transport network even under the existing suboptimal conditions looks like can be studied by the Eurogate example which is a Hamburg and Bremerhaven based company operating together with its affiliate Contship Italia.

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