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Innovative Intermodal Rail Freight Opportunities for Sustainable Future Logistics

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The article is analysing the reasons for basic, in general not favourable, characteristics of the freight transport in the EU. The road freight transport is, in spite of all transport political measures and declarations, constantly gaining its market share and the railways are constantly losing it. The reason is mismatch between the freight market needs (just in time deliveries, small quantities of goods, flexibility and reliability of transport) and prevailing rail freight paradigm (large volume of goods, long distances, fixed timetables, relatively slow transport etc.). Market niches for the suggested new innovative rail freight concept can be found in the field of rail transport of smaller quantities of more valuable goods, on short distances, on feeder lines, in urban transport, especially in the new (small) EU member states (available abundant rail infrastructure) etc.

The challenge and need for the modern rail freight transport is to combine the advantages of the flexible freight technology offered by heavy duty trucks with the possibilities to gain economies of scale and environment friendly performance of the railways.

The ideal modern rail freight transport technology would be a combination of the truck on the rail. The transport units should be easily coupled, if necessary to a long train formations and/or uncoupled to single self-propelled fast moving "railway-truck(s)", equipped with the modern transshipment technology and with on line access to the vacant rail infrastructure.

Biographical information

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