

COST 340 Action

“Towards a European Intermodal Transport Network: Lessons From History”

(2000-2004)

MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the COST 340 Action is to provide a framework of analysis that can act as a decision aid in transport policies and a set of recommendations that will help, thanks to the lessons learnt from history, to establish the priorities to be given to different projects involving trans-European connections and intermodal transport.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The secondary objectives of the COST Action are the following :

- evaluating European and national projects and public decisions concerning transport networks;
- exploring the factors favourable to the establishment of transnational and intermodal infrastructures, and to the creation of transport networks integrated at all the European, national and regional European levels. When necessary, analysing the obstacles which hindered or even excluded these factors;
- analysing the actors' strategy in each country's private sector, and the strategy of professional organisations and interest groups representing the different modes of transport;
- showing the benefits of intermodality in a context characterised by a continuous growth of transport demand and by the current integration of the European area (East - West; North - South). Showing how these advantages will benefit the governments and international or national organisations in charge of representing the different modes of transport at the European level.

While it is true that history shapes the future the results of the Action are of obvious interest to tomorrow's world. Indeed, the data produced will help:

- on the one hand, to focus our action on irrefutable facts, since they have been established by a scientific method and presented according to their importance in developments through to the present situation;
- on the other, to provide examples of past and present situations that can point us towards the future: successes and failures of policy, administrative, economic, financial and management measures taken to solve the problems thrown up to date by the integration of transport networks.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

The various Working Groups will conduct their research tasks according to the scientific programme. The field covered is all transport in the territory of Europe and its partners, which is the only scale for studying European networks. It sets out the extent of research in time and space as a function of the priority attached by the Action to the analysis of trans-European links and intermodal transport in the XIX-st and XX-th centuries.

The method used is the historical method, as agreed by the members of the Management Committee who tested it in previous studies, and the methods of the different social science areas of the researchers involved in the Action. This means:

1. looking at the facts and taking account, away from any ideologies and theories, of the sequence of real developments in trans-European links and intermodal transport, these being major contributors to the integration of transport networks;
2. collecting texts and documents produced by the players certifying these facts -government archives, transport company files, legal texts, expert reports, statistics, etc. - so as to establish the exact type and sequence;
3. analysing earlier scientific work, not forgetting the changes in technical approach to transport;
4. defining scenarios and measuring their relevance to meet the challenges set by the Action's scientific programme.

It is structured on three main themes:

1. The technological, economic, legal and political framework defining the agendas of new transnational infrastructures and intermodal transportation networks.

The planning of trans-European connections and intermodal transport will be analysed from beginning to end. This will lead to:

1. the analysis of different projects conceived by the engineering community and to the different systems of financing thought of to implement the projects, bearing in mind the economic and financial climate at the time. Sources of capital, aid and guarantees and the roles of credit establishments and the various economic players will be put in perspective;
2. the study of public policies;

This approach cannot be completed without studying the role of European countries and institutions, namely:

- for Western Europe : the OECD's Inland Transport Committee, the ECSC's Transport Committee since 1952; the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) since 1953 ; the E.E.C. , then the European Union; and the Directorate-General for Transport (DG VII) which was set up in January 1959;
- regarding former Eastern Europe: C.O.M.E.C.O.N.

The recommendations and initiatives of these institutions concerning transnational and intermodal transport networks will be analysed, together with their consequences on each country's policy. The role of transport, its integration and its applications according to the basic texts of the European Union will also be dealt with (especially in Article 129 of the Maastricht Treaty).

3. Identification of economic and social actors and their role in the integration of networks. This research aims to restore the role of various economic and social actors directly concerned by the setting up of important transnational connections and intermodal transport chains.

It focuses mainly on transport supply, which leads to study the role of organisations representing the different modes of transport (i.e., national and international professional associations; business federations; organisations representing railway administrations directly supervised by the State). It is very important to examine their attitude and their influences on national or local public authorities, and on European governments and institutions as well.

Some questions should be answered, such as the following:

- does competition between the different transport modes explain the systematic hostility to any transnational or intermodal project by each operating and representing organisation that has not been included in such projects?
- how can these actors fight or, on the contrary, encourage the integration of transport networks?
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This approach is also based on analysing the lobbies' actions focusing on demand. These lobbies are mainly composed of clients of transport modes, and associations dedicated to the defence of territories and environment. All these studies will make possible to evaluate the various public policies already implemented and to highlight the criteria and the reasons for the choices, which were made.

2. Intermodal and Trans-European Infrastructures

The hopes and difficulties linked to transport integration in Europe are concentrated in these infrastructures. Resulting from decisions already studied in our approach, they can be singled out according to the nature of the examined networks (railway connections, major navigable or highway axes in the context of transnational connections) and to services offered by the various transport modes integrated in an intermodal terrestrial/ground chain, either *stricto sensu* (i.e. rail/road) or not (i.e. boat/rail/road; plane/train; plane/road).

In this context, the Action COST participants will be able to study, among others, examples proceeding from the following cases:

- the European high-speed railway network
- the highway system and its extensions towards Eastern Europe
- the important trans-European inland navigation connections
- the airport system (airports hierarchy; connections with other airports; metropolitan, railway and road networks)
- sea platforms: intermodal ports and terminals
- connections between junctions of the studied networks and the urban transport modes (including infrastructures such as cycle tracks and car parks)
- infrastructures or connections regarded as « missing links » in transport networks, like the connections between Denmark and Sweden, Alpine crossings and the Channel Tunnel, which is the very example of an infrastructure with an intermodal objective. The research will be concentrated on these infrastructures' financing, on the different types of partnership envisaged to obtain the financing and on the way they meet the hopes raised by their creation.

This list will increase as research workers join the initial Working Groups, in accordance with the COST Action's specificity, by proposing new case studies suitable to the above definition.

3. Managing Intermodality: Management, Results and Future Prospects

Results concerning mobility and the localisation of movement, the actors' involvement, the flexibility of the structures and the creation of infrastructures can also be examined as part of case studies, such as European tourism - a typical example of modal transfer, from train to car and to plane. Whatever the case, the operation of the networks involved in a transport chain will be analysed (i.e. rail/road; boat/rail/road; rail/urban transport). This will include the following:

- the operators' organisation and strategy (i.e. alliances between transport firms; tariff policies; adaptation to market conditions and producers' logistics);
- techniques of managing traffic;
- operation results and confrontation costs/benefits;
- applicable future solutions to get as much flexibility as possible for intermodality;

This research will single out the main problems of intermodal transport development, according to the point of view of each group of professional organisations and firms. It will thus make it possible to prepare solutions for the future.

Reference

1. COST 340 Action "Towards a European Intermodal Transport Network: Lessons From History" - www.cordis.lu/cost-transport/src/cost-340.htm