

Hupac carried approximately 660,000 road shipments by rail in 2014

Hupac presents the opportunities of Alptransit to European logistics

Chiasso, 30.1.2015 More than 100 road hauliers visited the construction site of the Gotthard Base Tunnel at the invitation of the Swiss combined transport operator Hupac. The 57 km tunnel will provide a flat rail route beneath the Alps, improving the production conditions for rail freight transport. The future modal shift effect depends on the competitiveness of the rail system compared to the road. Falling diesel prices and high train path prices as well as the appreciation of the Swiss franc jeopardize the development of combined transport through Switzerland.

Construction on schedule On 30 January, representatives of about 100 transport and logistics companies from all over Europe visited the construction site of the Gotthard Base Tunnel and were updated on the progress of the NEAT project. "The work is on schedule," confirmed Renzo Simoni, CEO of the constructor, AlpTransit AG. Construction of the "world's longest railway tunnel" is already complete, while more than 90% of the railway technology has been installed. "Test operation will begin after the opening on 2 June 2016, at which point the first freight and passenger trains will run through the base tunnel," says Simoni. "Scheduled commercial operations should then begin when the timetable changes in December 2016."

Farsighted infrastructure The Gotthard Base Tunnel is the centerpiece of the new transalpine rail link. This giant infrastructure project was started in the 1990s with the declared aim of improving the conditions for rail freight transport. Other elements include the Ceneri Base Tunnel, scheduled to open at the end of 2019, as well as the "4-meter corridor" project to expand the access routes in Switzerland and Italy, set for completion in 2020. Measures to increase capacity in Germany and France complete the overall project. "European logistics will be able to benefit from the new infrastructure in the foreseeable future," commented Bernhard Kunz, Managing Director of Hupac. The main advantages include the shorter journey time, the reduced risk of weather-related disruption and the facility to run longer and heavier trains.

New conditions on the Rotterdam-Genoa axis But the industry must adapt to changing conditions: the Swiss operating contributions for transalpine combined transport will be reduced two years after the Gotthard Base Tunnel opens, and eliminated completely by 2024. "We stand the best chance of overcoming this challenge if we massively increase the productivity of combined transport," said Kunz. In future, each train will need to carry more tonnage, which will be technically feasible on the flat railway. The many successful services on the West-East axis prove that combined transport can be competitive without subsidies, but train path prices are a key factor. "We need a harmonized track pricing system on the North-South axis through Switzerland with clear incentives in favour of heavier trains," says Kunz. Conversely, if the improvement in productivity is absorbed by the train path price, it will be impossible to compensate for the phase-out of operating contributions and the railways will lose out to the roads.

Traffic development In the past year, Hupac carried a total of 660,109 road shipments by rail. This corresponds to an increase of 0.5% compared with the previous year. The weak economic environment particularly in Italy, the main recipient of Hupac traffic, continued to affect market demand. Hupac was able to maintain traffic volume in the core business of transalpine transport through Switzerland. There was a reduction in traffic via Austria (-8.0%), while new connections made it possible to achieve an increase of 5.7% in non-transalpine traffic.

Outlook for 2015 Hupac expects demand for transport to remain stable in the current year. Elements of uncertainty include the falling diesel price that benefits road haulage, as well as the new parity between the euro and Swiss franc, which impairs the competitiveness of Swiss transport services. "We are concentrating on optimizing our Shuttle Net," announced Bernhard Kunz. The market segment of semi-trailers with a corner height of 4 meters will be expanded further in the current year. Thanks to a revamp of the Italy ⇄

Scandinavia operating concept, Hupac will be able to integrate new Novara ⇌ Malmö and Cologne ⇌ Malmö P400 connections into its network.

At the beginning of the year, the new “Company Shuttle” business unit began its work under the leadership of Renzo Capanni, offering customized modular solutions to customers with a large shipment volume. Hupac aims to develop this new business model to serve the company train market segment. “Customers who are prepared to bear the capacity utilization risk for their own trains find an experienced partner in Hupac to handle their business optimally,” promised Kunz.

Traffic development <i>Number of road shipments</i>	2014	2013	in %
Transalpine via CH	379,944	380,502	-0.1
Transalpine via A	48,091	52,288	-8.0
Transalpine via F	3,804	3,368	13.0
Total transalpine	431,839	436,158	-1.0
National CH	3,167	3,228	-1.9
Import/Export CH	65,826	66,808	-1.5
Non-transalpine	159,277	150,683	5.7
Total non-transalpine	228,270	220,719	3.4
Total traffic	660,109	656,877	0.5

Hupac's Profile Hupac is the leading intermodal transport operator through the Swiss Alps and one of the market leaders in Europe. The company works to ensure that an increasing volume of goods can be transported by rail and not by road, thus contributing to modal shift and environment protection. Hupac operates a network of more than 100 trains each day between Europe's main economic areas and between the harbours and the hinterlands. In 2014, Hupac's transport volume was 660,000 road shipments on rails. The Hupac Group comprises thirteen companies based in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Russia and has a workforce of 400 employees. Hupac Ltd. was founded in Chiasso in 1967 and has 100 shareholders. The share capital amounts to CHF 20 million; 72% of this belongs to logistics and transport companies, while 28% is held by rail companies, thus guaranteeing closeness to the market and independence from the railway companies.

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