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INFLUENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TRAFFIC POLICY ON TRAFFIC DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA

ABSTRACT

Joining the European Union is the strategic priority for the Republic of Croatia. Croatia has always been part of the European economic region. The success of adaptability of the Croatian industry, particularly of Croatian traffic, to the European Union, will greatly depend on the possibility of establishing contractual relations of the economic and traffic branches with the EU. Therefore, this paper considers in more detail the traffic aspects of integration.

It is a fact that the EU traffic policy is contained in the Roman Agreement (1957) whose aim was elimination of the barriers for the flows of goods, services and capital, and the integration of the European region. Thus, it requires equal treatment of all the traffic branches and all the carriers, freedom for the activities of transport companies, as well as freedom for the service users to choose the transport means and carriers. This naturally requires maximum rationality in freight flows reflected on the financial and commercial business activities of a company.

To converge maximally with the European Union is the strategic priority of the Republic of Croatia, and within the Croatian industry this will especially require the adaptation of the Croatian traffic. The basic precondition for the functioning of the traffic system on the European transport market is the compliance with the rules and standards determined by the international conventions.

KEY WORDS

EU traffic policy, integration, Croatian traffic development, European standards

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic and political integration cannot be completely separated from the industrial one. The success of adapting the Croatian industry, and particularly the Croatian traffic to the European Union, will greatly depend on the possibility of the contractual relations with the EU that will regulate the areas of commerce, traffic and other areas of industrial co-operation.

The basic principle of the EU traffic policy is to remove the barriers to the flow of goods, services and capital, and to integrate the European region. The

main principles of the mentioned traffic policy include: equal relationship to all the traffic branches and enterprises, freedom of activities of transport companies, financial and commercial corporate responsibility, users' free choice of transport means and carriers, and harmonisation of investing into traffic infrastructure.

It is necessary for the Croatian traffic, as component of the European traffic, to have significant influence on the overall economic development of Croatia, and wider. If considered in a wider sense, traffic requires also the manufacture of transport means, as well as means for manipulation in traffic, and the European Union employs about 3.5 million people for this purpose.

We are witnessing the increasing dependence of countries on the European market and an increase in mutual exchange, as one of the basic aims of traffic policy of the EU countries. Therefore, the necessity is particularly emphasised to establish connections with other European countries by a modern traffic routes network. Thus, Croatian traffic, as part of the European Union traffic policy has its place in the European traffic network.

2. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TRAFFIC POLICY

The elements of the European Union traffic policy are very significant. The European Union member countries are tending to achieve integration of transport means as well as integration of national traffic networks.

The characteristics of the EU traffic policy are:

- close relation of traffic policy to other policies,
- characteristics that are related to public transport, especially in densely inhabited urban and industrial zones,
- the role of public ownership in traffic sector which traditionally prevailed even up to the most recent times,

- very strong influence of technological changes in traffic development on the traffic policy design,
- especially emphasised political and social role of traffic in the life of the society,
- the attitude of the society towards the natural and human environment which tries to alleviate, and in some cases prevent the unfavourable effects of traffic,
- the meaning assigned to traffic social costs, although there is no denying of the necessity for economic efficiency in the movement of people and cargo.

Various national regulations on safety standards, travelling times, road tolls, fuel taxes, national legislative regulations, etc. are being harmonised at the very moment.

Of course, the EU traffic is at the same time the key factor of success of an integrated market, since it fulfils two to three basic aims of the European integration: free movement of goods and free movement of passengers (the third aim is free movement of capital). Traffic represents a significant activity in the European Union, because it participates in the overall EU national product.

A very important document that defines the infrastructure policy, and thus also the traffic policy of the European Union is the White Book (*White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, and Employment*). Furthermore, the document EU Traffic Policy (*Common Transport Policy – CTP*) solves concretely the issues of traffic standards.

The basic guidelines on the expansion of the European Union to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are listed in the Annex to the White Book, in the sixth section of the Annex, which includes development guidelines for the following branches: road traffic, railway traffic, river traffic, maritime traffic and air traffic.

Of course, regarding road traffic, the basic principle of operation of this type of traffic (transport of passengers and transport of goods) is the possibility of free services supply, i.e. supply of services devoid of discrimination on any grounds. The improvement in the process of market competition has been achieved by cancelling the quotas, which began in 1993, thus wanting to eliminate national barriers to offering international services in road traffic.

The railway development guidelines are contained in the Directive 91/440/EEC under the title: "Development of EU Railway Traffic" that defines the railway development in the EU. This directive has been supplemented by the Directive 95/19 that refers to the allocation of railway capacities and charging. According to the measures of group I the basic orientation of railway development and its relation to the state have been presented. The greatest change is related to the

implementation of independent railway management and separate management of railway infrastructure from management of railway transport.

It is indeed necessary in order to join the European Union regarding river transport to consider only waterways that are the backbone of the EU waterway network, and these are the rivers Rhine and Danube, together with their tributaries. The Directive 540/87 regulates the access to the European market. The requirements for technical regulation that refer to the condition of fleet and equipment, management and qualification structure of the crew, international recognition of diplomas, certificates and other qualification documents, have been regulated by the so-called Mannheim Convention.

Regarding sea traffic, the Directive 4055/86 regulates the access to the European market, i.e. supply of services in maritime transport. The Directive allows free flow of services between EU member countries, but also towards the third countries. The Directive 93/75, including the Directives 94/57 and 94/58, has defined the minimal technical requirements that have to be met for navigation safety and safe transport of dangerous goods which enter and leave the ports of the EU member countries.

Of course, air traffic development is oriented towards formation of free market, at the same time harmonising business conditions, management of business policy and implementation of protection principles, and elimination of incorrect business activities. The access to the EU market requires also administration capable of managing technical and economic activities. There are also three directives that determine air traffic policy in the European Union. A number of measures regulate the international verification of licences, air transport charges, access to air routes, harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures, reduction of the port and reservation system networking. Measures and relevant directives define the issues of domestic market, harmonisation of charges and tariffs for services in air traffic, consumer protection, system computerisation and package tours.

3. ACTIVITIES THAT ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT FOR FASTER INTEGRATION OF CROATIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION TRAFFIC SYSTEM

It needs to be emphasised that there are three key areas important for the Republic of Croatia and her faster integration regarding traffic into the European integration process, and these are:

- traffic infrastructure,
- activities of transport companies,
- other activities.

Long ago Croatia started to develop the programme and projects on development of traffic and traffic infrastructure. For integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European traffic system it needs to be mentioned that some important Croatian traffic routes were included in the European network of main traffic corridors – corridors V and X, and VII – the Danube corridor, at the European Conference in Helsinki in 1997.

3.1. Croatian traffic infrastructure

Indeed, the construction of Croatian roads, which is currently underway has the objective of improving the traffic connections within the Republic of Croatia, and of providing faster integration into the European road network. Until now, 122km of highway i.e. semi-highway have been constructed on the main European corridor V i.e. on the Rijeka-Zagreb-Čakovec-Goričan route, and further 63km of this significant road are under construction. On the branch of corridor V, i.e. on the Zagreb-Krapina-Macelj (Maribor) route, 40.6km of highway have been constructed, and 19.4km more are needed to reach the Slovenian border. The construction of the first phase of the so-called Istrian Y from Pazin to Kanfanar is being continued, and further to Pula in the length of 40.8km. Also the highway Bregana-Zagreb (13.7km) and (Sl.Brod) Oprisavci – Velika Kопanica (16.9km) on corridor X is also being constructed.

The particularly difficult financial situation of the Croatian Railways, caused by great damage during the Croatian War of Independence, and by great reduction in traffic and revenues, imposes restrictions on investment construction of railways, both in restoration and reconstruction of railway tracks, and in purchase of new transportation means.

Regarding river traffic, preparations for the construction of the Danube-Sava navigable canal are underway, and the programmes and plans to improve the navigation conditions on the rivers Sava and Drava have been developed. The European waterway network (the Danube corridor VII) includes the river Danube (on the Croatian side), the river Sava up to Sisak and the river Drava up to Osijek.

The situation in the ports of Rijeka, Split, and Ploče, has been improving regarding the coast infrastructure, and the works are being done in Zadar and Dubrovnik in maintaining the superstructure and shoring up. Twenty-two automated lighthouses have been restored, and 27 search, rescue and surveillance boats for navigation in the Croatian territorial waters were purchased.

In air traffic, new equipment for instrumental aircraft landing has been installed as well as new navigation devices in airports of Dubrovnik, Pula, Zadar and

Zagreb. Regarding organisation and technical equipment, air traffic control equals those in West European countries. There are seven major and minor airports in Croatia serving the needs of tourism and sport, on islands and on the mainland.

Of course, apart from the pipe network which is used to transport natural gas and oil from the domestic fields, there is also a gas pipeline for transporting gas from Russia into Croatia. An oil pipeline has also been built, transporting crude oil from the terminals in Omišalj to the oil refinery in Sisak, and to oil refineries in Slovenia (Donja Lendava) and in Hungary.

It needs to be emphasised that regarding the level of development of telecommunications, the Republic of Croatia belongs to the group of developed European countries. The biggest part of the network capacities has been digitised, and the Internet and data exchange network, as well as the digital mobile network have been established.

3.2. Croatian transportation companies and their activities

The Croatian transportation companies participate primarily in meeting domestic needs for transportation, and a part of their capacities is used also in transit. Here, there are significant differences among companies of individual transport branches, depending on the level of their development and on their business efficiency.

The potential air carrier "Croatia Airlines" is developing fast and successfully. Currently, six airbuses are being purchased, which are more sophisticated and economic than the current fleet. Thus, the Croatian national carrier will be capable, after the year 2000, of entering the European Union market.

The current national white fleet is investing efforts to completely meet the domestic demands. Up to now, 11 ships have been purchased for the needs of coastal maritime traffic. Considered in total, 22 newly constructed ships were purchased for the Croatian maritime fleet in the period from 1992 to 1998. Currently, 1,022 ships (with 890,585 GT) are registered under the Croatian flag.

Croatian Railways have obsolete equipment and transportation means and the traffic has been closed down on some major transit routes. Therefore, they fall short of reaching the pre-war transport volume and of accomplishing positive financial results. The biggest Croatian river navigation operator "Dunavski Lloyd" from Sisak is in a similar position.

Regarding road traffic, a substantial number of companies for transportation of passengers and goods is active, and their activities are mainly focused on meeting the demands of the domestic market.

Since 1996, the digital mobile network CRONET has been operating in Croatia, and since 1998 also the VIP NET consortium led by the Austrian firm Mobilkom and the North-American firm Western Wireless International.

3.3. Some major activities of the Croatian traffic system

Some types of activities that are important for the integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union traffic system, are related to the operation of forwarding and cargo handling companies, transport terminals and free zones, to the work of expert institutions and business associations, as well as the activities of the government administration bodies, particularly those that monitor the work and functioning of the transportation market.

Taking into consideration the mentioned activities, special emphasis is put on the transport terminals which occupy an extremely significant place in the whole of the traffic functions. The terminals represent a place of contact of the flows of goods in macro and micro distribution. Logistically considered, terminals represent the point of interface for various types of transport. The combined transport terminal network must be precisely and scientifically defined and organised. According to previous standards, the distance between the terminals depended on the size of the gravitation area and potential amount of goods for transportation, but it should not have been shorter than 250km. Because of sudden increase in the transportation volume, and the limit in accepting certain amounts of goods, time of delivery, price of delivery from terminals to users and vice versa, lack of space for terminal expansion, congestion of access traffic routes (road and railway), etc. this distance is recommended to be within 150km. However, the special-purpose terminals need to be specially treated. The terminals, either in quays, ports or on land, are usually distinguished technically only regarding their size that depends on the size of the gravitation area, i.e. the hinterland, and on the number of applied cargo handling facilities, whose number in turn depends on the previously mentioned conditions.

A cargo terminal, as the pillar of the combined transport system, has two basic subsystems and these are: the storage subsystem and the cargo handling subsystem. The multi-functionality also needs to be emphasised, and it is expressed through activities of operators (of all kinds), agencies, forwarders, customs and other necessary participants. All this needs to be scientifically monitored and synchronised, since these are activities that vary from day to day. Generally considered, the terminals represent an open system which together with the application of intermodal units di-

rectly influences the logistic subsystems in production, trade and other companies. The terminals cannot and should not be considered in isolation, but rather as parts of an integral network in the national and international traffic.

Considering other activities that are strictly functionally dependent on the overall transport, it should be mentioned that 11 Acts in the field of traffic were adopted in the period from 1990 till the end of 1995 in the Republic of Croatia, and from 1996 till the end of 1998 another 19. The opinion is that up to 1998 a lot was achieved in establishing a modern legislative frame in this field of industry, harmonised with the Statute of the Republic of Croatia, international conventions, and in accordance with the European legislative standards.

It should be mentioned that the Republic of Croatia has become a member of 15 international organisations in the fields of maritime affairs, traffic and communication, and party of 84 multi-party international conventions and protocols. The conditions and relations in performing single types of international traffic are regulated by 61 bilateral agreements signed between the Croatian government and the governments of European and other countries, and further 58 are currently in the process of being signed.

4. CONCLUSION

Considering from the traffic point of view, the Republic of Croatia is a small country, but with a very significant geo-traffic location for the European and world transport. This requires special attention to traffic policy after all the past war and post-war difficulties. Croatian traffic, as an element of integration activities in the European Union traffic policy is becoming our everyday obligation. Our projects and programmes as consequences of traffic policy aims have to satisfy the European standards and to fit into European programmes, since this is the only way in which high-quality transport at lowest possible costs will be provided. This is also the reason why the programmes of the European Union member countries is oriented towards improvement of the traffic system, taking into consideration the improvement of the market system in the countries outside the European Union (potential future European Union member countries).

In order to continue the co-operation, and for faster achievement of positive solutions in the development of Croatian traffic and its connections with the European Union traffic, real qualified personnel is required, i.e. personnel and institutions that are capable of coping with the mentioned problems.

SAŽETAK

UTJECAJ PROMETNE POLITIKE EUROPSKE UNIJE NA RAZVOJ PROMETA U HRVATSKOJ

Ulazak u Europsku uniju strateški je prioritet Republike Hrvatske. Hrvatska je oduvijek bila dio europskog gospodarskog prostora. Uspjeh prilagodbe hrvatskog gospodarstva, na-pose hrvatskog prometa Europskoj uniji, uvelike će ovisiti o mogućnosti uspostave ugovornih odnosa privrednih i prometnih grana s Unijom. Stoga ćemo u ovom radu detaljnije razmotriti prometne aspekte integriranja.

Činjenica je da je uspostava prometne politike Europske unije dana u Rimskom ugovoru (1957.), kojem je svrha ukinuti prepreke kretanja robe, usluga i kapitala, te integracija europskog prostora. Dakle, traži se jednak odnos prema svim prometnim granama i prijevoznicima, sloboda djelovanja prijevozničkih poduzeća, kao i slobodan izbor prijevozničkog sredstva i prijevoznika od strane korisnika usluga, ali što će svakako tražiti maksimalnu liniju racionalnosti robnih tokova, koja će se reflektirati na novčano i komercijalno poslovanje poduzeća.

Sve veće približavanje Europskoj uniji, strateški je prioritet Republike Hrvatske, koji će u sklopu hrvatskog gospodarstva tražiti posebno prilagodbu hrvatskog prometa. Temeljni i osnovni preduvjet za funkcioniranje prometnoga sustava na europskom transportnom tržištu jeste poštivanje pravila i normi utvrđenih međunarodnim konvencijama.

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