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Federal Office of Transport

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Official in charge: Reto Schletti
Berne, 8 June 2012

Total blockages on transit axes for transalpine rail freight traffic via Switzerland

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the light of recent events, we are writing to bring you up to date on the situation with regard to infrastructure availability for transalpine rail freight traffic. We would also like to tell you about the ad hoc changes that have been made to the procedure with regard to subsidies to operators and would ask you, in the spirit of Switzerland's modal shift policy, to work together to find solutions to the problem of keeping the number of heavy vehicles crossing the Alps as low as possible.

Line availability

On Tuesday 5 June 2012, part of the Gotthard line was buried under a landslide near Gurtellen, north of the Gotthard railway tunnel. The line is expected to remain blocked for a month. A more precise prognosis of the duration of the blockage will not be possible until further geological investigations have been conducted.

The rail transport companies (EVUs) that operate in the transalpine rail freight sector are currently devising a plan that would allow as much traffic as possible to be sent via the Lötschberg-Simplon axis. To the best of our knowledge, free lines on the Lötschberg-Simplon axis are allocated on the basis of the market shares of the EVUs - a market-internal solution negotiated under the lead of SBB Infrastruktur.

It will not be possible to meet the total line requirement of transalpine rail freight traffic via the Lötschberg-Simplon axis. Also, as a result of the works starting on the Brenner line on Monday 11 June 2012, there are no alternative routes along that axis. According to the latest information we have,

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there is still some free capacity via Tauern - Tarvisio and at a few places along the Modane/Mont Cenis axis.

Call for constructive cooperation among all the players

Given the current exceptional situation, we would ask you, in the spirit of Switzerland's modal shift policy, to work together constructively in the search for solutions. By this we mean that all avenues should be explored in order that best use can be made of the scant capacities for transit through Switzerland. Examples of such a solutions would be for free space on trains to be made available to the competition, technically possible train lengths and/or weights to be fully exploited, terminals for third party traffic to be opened in better locations and under-loaded trains to be cancelled in favour of those with more efficient loads.

The Federal Office for Transport (FOT) is confident that those operating in the market will be able to organise themselves and come to arrangements that will allow all the parties involved in this difficult situation to find viable solutions.

The Swiss Parliament will in the near future have to take some important decisions regarding transalpine rail freight traffic (e.g. on the widening of the Gotthard axis into a 4-metre corridor, or the extension of the operator subsidy scheme for CT to beyond 2018), and some clear evidence of innovativeness and flexibility within the sector is likely to create the goodwill needed in the current difficult situation.

Right to a subsidy

Gotthard axis

Trains that are diverted from the Gotthard axis onto another transit route are entitled to a subsidy under the existing agreements for 2012. The trains and consignments involved can be reported to FOT using the usual Excel file. In a separate communication, which you should send electronically, together with the report on quantities, you must submit a separate list of the quantities diverted per relation (number of trains and consignments by day and relation) The right to a subsidy derives from the fact that these trains are preventing transit journeys by road via a Swiss alpine transit route. Trains diverted outside Switzerland are expressly only entitled to a subsidy for the duration of the current blockage at the Gotthard.

Lötschberg-Simplon axis

The Lötschberg-Simplon axis will be totally blocked from 11 August to 2 September 2012 due to works on the Simplon South ramp. The Federal Government of Switzerland will pay no subsidies in respect of CT trains diverted outside Switzerland during this period.

Reduction rule

According to the 'General terms and conditions concerning the agreements on subsidies for transalpine UCT for 2012' the subsidy is reduced in the event of a 15% shortfall in relation to the figures contractually agreed for the scheme. Due to the massive limitations in infrastructure in 2012 and the uncertainty regarding economic growth in Europe, the "reduction rule" will not be applied in the current year. However, we would request that you still inform us of train cancellations or breakdowns resulting from 'force majeure', which the two infrastructure-induced line closures of course are. The number of train cancellations must be entered in the appropriate column in the Excel report file and reasons given for them on a separate list in an attachment. Please note that train cancellations due to delays caused by EVUs, or due to public holidays or lack of demand, are not considered to be due to 'force majeure'.



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Yours sincerely,

Federal Office for Transport

Dr. P. Füglistaler
Director

Pierre-André Meyrat
Deputy Director

Operators in the transalpine multimodal transport sector

- ACTS AG, Bollwerk 4, 3001 Berne, Switzerland
- Ambrogio Trasporti SpA, Via Tognasca 5, IT-21013 Gallarate
- Bulkhaul LTD, Brignell Road, Riverside Park Ind. Est., Middlesborough, England TS2 1PS
- CEMAT SpA, Via Valtellina 5-7, I-20159 Milano
- DB Schenker Rail (UK) Ltd, Lakeside Business Park, Carolina Way/Doncaster, DN 4 5 PN, UK
- DFDS Logistics, Felixstowe Road, IP10 0BF Ipswich, England
- ERS Railways BV, Waalhaven z.z. 2b, NL-3088 HH Rotterdam
- Ewals Intermodal nv, Henry Fordlaan 20, B-3600 Genk
- G.T.S. S.p.A. Via del Tesoro 15, I-70123 Bari
- Hangartner Terminal AG, Neumattstrasse 29, 5001 Aarau, Switzerland
- HUPAC Intermodal SA, Viale R. Manzoni 6, 6830 Chiasso, Switzerland
- Inter Ferry Boats (IFB), Houtdok 25A, 2030 Antwerp, Belgium
- Italccontainer S.p.A., Via Valtellina 7, 20159 Milan, Italy
- Kombiverkehr Deutsche Gesellschaft für kombinierten Güterverkehr mbH & Co KG, Zum Laurenburger Hof 76, D-60594 Frankfurt am Main
- LKW Walter, Zellerstrasse 1, 6330 Kufstein, Austria
- Lotras Srl., Zona ASI Incoronata, 71122 Foggia, Italy
- P&O Ferrymasters LTD, Leopold II Dam 13 (Havendam), 8380 Zeebrugge, Belgium
- RAlpin AG, Belchenstrasse 3, 4601 Olten, Switzerland
- Shuttlewise BV, Albert Plesmanweg 121-141, 3088 GC Rotterdam, Netherlands
- T.T.S. Belgium SA, 8 rue de l'aéropostale, 4460 Grâce-Hollogne, Belgium
- Timcal Ltd., Zona Industriale, 6743 Bodio, Switzerland
- TX Logistik AG, Rhöndorfer Strasse 85, D-53604 Bad Honnef

Rail transport companies (EVUs):

- BLS Cargo AG, Bollwerk 27, 3001 Berne, Switzerland
- Crossrail AG, Hofackerstrasse 1, 4132 Muttensz, Switzerland
- DB Schenker Rail Deutschland AG, Rheinstrasse 2a, 55116 Mainz, Germany
- DB Schenker Rail Schweiz GmbH, Sägereistrasse 21, 8152 Glattbrugg, Switzerland
- SBB Cargo AG, Centralbahnstrasse 4, 4065 Basle, Switzerland
- SBB Cargo International, Riggerbachstrasse 6, 4600 Olten, Switzerland
- Transalpin Eisenbahn AG, St. Jakobs-Strasse 200, 4020 Basle, Switzerland
- TX Logistik AG, Rhöndorfer Strasse 85, D-53604 Bad Honnef

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