WORKFRET

Working Cultures in the Face of Intermodal Freight Transport Systems

Funding: European (4th RTD Framework Programme)
Duration: Jan 1997 - Dec 1998
Status: Complete with results

Background & policy context:

Freight transport systems across Europe are characterised by a broad range of organisational and management contexts, the fairly diverse use of innovative technology, different working habits and inconsistent (national) policy priorities. In the light of emerging new technologies and initiatives to enhance intermodality in freight transport, the underlying factors need to be analysed and assessed.

Objectives:

WORKFRET aimed to contribute to the development of an efficient freight transport system in Europe, taking into account the interests and requirements of the work force. The main objectives have been to:

- identify the characteristics of existing working cultures in relation to intermodal transport systems, interfaces between the various transport systems, potential problems and conflict areas/barriers of any kind;
- identify organisational changes and barriers to be overcome;
- describe alternative 'desired structures' and their characteristics;
- define systems' strengths and weaknesses, propose and evaluate strategies for the exploitation of new opportunities such as creation of new jobs and better working conditions;
- propose measures for higher efficiency and enhanced safety in transport;
- propose strategies and methodologies for the appropriate control and monitoring of organisational and socio-economic changes under consideration;
- propose policies at European Union, national or trade union level, which will contribute to the creation of 'desired structures'.

Parent Programmes:
FP4-TRANSPORT - Specific research, technological development and demonstration programme in the field of transport, 1994-1998

Institute type: Public institution
Institute name: European Commission; Directorate-General for Energy and Transport (DG TREN; formerly DG VII)
Funding type: Public (EU)

Partners:

NA

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Key Results:
**Key Results:**

WORKFRET has:

- reviewed working cultures and organisational and management structures in current European (intermodal) freight transport;
- assessed the impacts of new technologies in freight transport on the number of employed workers, their working conditions, the quality of jobs (e.g. a shift to higher skilled jobs), the time pressure dictated by efficiency considerations and the membership to trade unions;
- highlighted new logistics and production systems - with respect to reliability, integration, flexibility and cost reduction - and their impacts on working cultures;
- produced a ranking of ten key issues in the development of freight transport systems;
- analysed five national case studies for the implementation of specific technological and/or organisational developments;
- identified twelve policy areas addressing the barriers faced by intermodal developments, namely: the size of the freight sector work force, labour regulations, payment; social security, education and training, health and work safety, recruiting, organisational structures, behavioural codes, bargaining, employee and trade union involvement, and the general promotion of intermodal transport;
- derived a set of ten policy suggestions based on the identified problem areas and policy fields.

**Policy implications**

Based on the outlined topics for policy action and the suggestions derived, the implementation of measures needs to be specified in further research studies, in particular focusing on the social impacts of organisational and operational changes in the freight transport sector.

**Related Projects:**

Related Transport RTD projects

- EUFRANET - European freight railway network.
- FANTASIE - Forecasting and assessment of new technologies and transport systems and their impacts on the environment.
- HINT - Human implications of new technologies.

Documents:

[workfret.pdf (Final report)](#)

**STRIA Roadmaps:** Network and traffic management systems

**Transport sectors:** Freight transport

**Transport policies:** Decarbonisation, Societal/Economic issues