

Press Release No. 42/2010

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Climate protection requires greater investment in rail freight transport sector!

Study calculates future demand for expansion of Germany's rail network

It requires some eleven billion (bn) euros to expand the German rail network over the next two decades so that twice the current freight volume could be transported. These are the results of a study done by KCW GmbH on behalf of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). UBA President Jochen Flasbarth comments, "Freight transport must be organised in a way that does justice to the requirements of climate protection, which is why there must be a greater shift to the rail network. The present concept for expansion lays the groundwork for more sustainable freight transport."

A swift and rigorous change of direction in rail infrastructure policy in favour of rail freight transport is of the essence, as far as protection of the environment is concerned. It is the only way, in addition to operational optimization of network capacity, to significantly increase the existing performance capacity of the rail network. "Future investment decisions should be made according to criteria based on an analysis of weak points and bottlenecks so as to be able to meet the demands of climate protection made on the freight transport sector," Jochen Flasbarth recommended. The yardstick in this regard should be a rail project suited to make clear gains in capacity at the projected bottlenecks in the German rail network. Short distance public transport also stands to benefit to a large extent from such measures as it would be propelled forward at a similar rate as the rail freight transport sector and displays high growth potential.

The study also takes a closer look at the *Stuttgart 21* rail project and puts forward the suggestion to abandon the project—as one of several options for action. "The experts' viewpoint is not that of UBA," clarified UBA President Jochen Flasbarth. "The study was commissioned on our own initiative, and not together with, say, the Federal Ministry for Environment. We were generally trying to find out if the recommendations made by UBA concerning sustainable freight transport are compatible with the existing railway infrastructure, or if there might be bottlenecks." The study reports which measures would need to be taken to increase rail freight transport performance to 213 bn tonne kilometres by the year 2025. This goal corresponds to calculations made by the Federal Environment Agency (see *Strategie für einen nachhaltigen Güterverkehr*, UBA-Texte 18/2009). The experts identify the need for either new construction or expansion on a total stretch of 725 kilometres; 817 kilometres would need to be electrified. In addition, there are a number of smaller-scale measures such as the construction of passing lane tracks and connection curves. At a cost of eleven bn euros, the proposed scheme for expansion is comparatively inexpensive.

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In the years prior to the global economic crisis rail freight transport had already proved its strengths. Transport performance rose steadily, from 85 bn tonne kilometres in 2003 (equivalent to 15.7 percent of freight transport performance of all modes of transport), to 116 bn tonne kilometres (17.3 percent) in 2008. The railways are currently recovering from crisis-related slumps to restore former growth trends.

The *Schienennetz 2025/2030 - Ausbaukonzeption für einen leistungsfähigen Schienengüterverkehr* study (in German) can be downloaded at <http://www.uba.de/uba-info-medien-e/4005.html>.

In its *Strategie für einen nachhaltigen Güterverkehr [Strategy for Sustainable Freight Transport]* (UBA-Texte 18/2009) publication, UBA suggests expansion of the rail network as one of seven bundles of measures to design freight transport more sustainably, and is available for download here: <http://www.uba.de/uba-info-medien-e/3857.html>.

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