



### WHAT IS BESTUFS?

BESTUFS (BEST Urban Freight Solutions) is a Thematic Network (TN) addressing all aspects of urban freight transport. The aim of BESTUFS is establishing and maintaining an open European network between urban freight transport experts, user groups/associations, ongoing projects, interested cities, the relevant European Commission Directorates and representatives of national transport administrations in order to identify, describe and disseminate best practices, success criteria and bottlenecks with respect to the movement of goods in urban areas. This Thematic Network is operated with and funded by the European Commission in the 5<sup>th</sup> FrameWork Programme under the Key Action "Competitive and Sustainable Growth". The BESTUFS project started in 2000 with a duration of 4 years.

### FIFTH BESTUFS WORKSHOP-THE ROLE OF RAIL IN URBAN FREIGHT.

This issue was the subject of a well-attended workshop held in Dresden in late August, including attendees from accession countries. Eight presentations covering various aspects of rail technology, operations, city planning and environmental issues were presented and generated considerable discussion on the applicability of some of the solutions outside their immediate places of use. This particularly applied to tram technologies that have been used in Dresden (building on the already well established and extensive passenger tramway network) for a specific application and have been examined for possible use in other cities. The possible use of metro systems for freight services in cities was also raised in two presentations as alternatives to surface (road) based systems in the face of rising traffic and congestion levels. Interaction with passengers and issues such as accessibility, security, handling and cost effectiveness compared to alternatives was debated.

The general consensus from the presentations was that rail had lost markets in the context of urban freight by failing to meet the rising expectations of shippers and receivers in relation to speed, products, service quality, cost, reliability, security and

availability at levels and standards which are routinely set by road transport operators. Changes in relation to products, service capability and infrastructure management were suggested as fundamental requirements to convince shippers/receivers and cargo interests to re-establish the use of rail services. The role of inter-modal options including containers, swap bodies, bi-modal and piggyback trailers was felt to be a more positive area of development than more traditional direct-load rail services, although the road traffic generation aspects of city terminals was identified as a potential constraint.



Presentations were also made regarding the use of existing rail infrastructure in cities where it may be surplus to present or envisaged operational and commercial needs. Longer-term requirements in relation to transport and logistics is only one consideration in relation to the disposal of sites, but there were concerns that once released for alternative uses such sites are effectively neutralised. Short-term income from the sale and disposal of sites may weaken any prospect of developing longer-term sustainable transport and logistics technologies and concepts.

The ability of city planners to appreciate and understand the medium and longer term nature of city logistics and their power over land use decisions was also raised. There was a concern that city planning decisions could be taken without a full recognition of the implications of city infrastructure or zoning policies. There was a consensus that there is no single technical solution to the role of rail in urban freight, but it does imply a more positive and proactive dialogue between the rail service providers, infrastructure owners/operators and city planners.





### **DRESDEN CARGO TRAM**

The workshop attendees had the opportunity to inspect the CarGo tram vehicle in detail and the central control room that oversees operations on the tram and bus networks. The CarGo tram has been developed and deployed to move car components between the main city logistics terminal and a new car assembly plant using the existing tram infrastructure for the final delivery to the site. Specific environmental and city planning requirements drove this application, which may not be feasible or appropriate in other cities.



The use of trams for more general applications generated debate over issues such as the most appropriate cargo module, passenger/freight priority assignment, scheduling. A generic point that was raised concerned the widely recognised difference in requirements and imperatives amongst the key players in the urban freight domain including service providers, shippers/receivers and the city authorities. Broadly differing views and a failure to recognise or compromise on requirements between these parties suggests that any rail related aspects are effectively a sub-set of a much wider debate.

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### **NEWS**

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The role of **e-commerce in the BESTUFS domain** continues to grow rapidly. TESCO, one of the largest UK retail food supermarket operators has agreed to deploy its systems with a major US retail operator to exploit the 'mouse to house' concept. The system uses in-store order picking and consolidation rather than any specialised or

purpose built facilities. A take up rate by users of 6-10% of total store transactions is being suggested. The profitability of home delivery services for operators remains unclear.

CITYFREIGHT, a new project partly funded by the EC will be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> November. CITYFREIGHT (Inter and intra city freight distribution network) will be addressing different aspects of the urban freight distribution issue. CITYFREIGHT is planned for 26 months. For more information, please contact STRATEC:

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### **NEXT ACTIVITIES**

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#### **6th BESTUFS Workshop**

The 6<sup>th</sup> BESTUFS workshop is planned to take place on 8 & 9 November 2001 in Genoa, Italy. This workshop will address the theme: "City access fees and urban road pricing: What are the consequences for urban freight transport?" More information about it will be available on the BESTUFS website [www.bestufs.net](http://www.bestufs.net)

#### **BESTUFS Best Practice Handbook.**

A draft version of the second Best Practice Handbook (2001) has been developed by RAPP, the Swiss BESTUFS Partner, for consultation and reinforces the earlier version (2000) which focused on statistical data, city access and parking, access time regulations and their enforcement. The new draft, which should be completed by the end of 2001, includes themes covering innovative vehicle technologies and e-commerce. A composite volume incorporating all of the work undertaken on Best Practice around the key themes will be produced by the end of BESTUFS.

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### **BESTUFS CONTACT DETAILS**

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For further information on the Thematic Network, please visit our website at [www.bestufs.net](http://www.bestufs.net)

