SPIN-TN Working Group 3

Intermodal Loading Units

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Paper is devoted to topical subject of current situation and to its future evelopment on European (in wide sense) transport market.

General opinion: paper covers all main aspects of discussed items; it is based on comprehensive analyses of existing situation and gives useful recommendations for coming years.

Chapter 1. Intermodal loading units (ILU) used in European Transport market.
Necessary basic definitions are presented. It gives possibility for clear classification and analysis of ILU in European Transport market regarding such main parameters characteristics as:

- basic dimensions
- weight (tare weight and gross weight)
- loading capacity
- transshipment operations
- stackability
- life-time costs and maintenance costs
- suitability for the different forms of intermodal transport and
- safety.

Presented analysis allowed to produce some kind of short-term forecast covering road transport, rail transport, inland waterway shipping and short sea shipping for near coming years. Main conclusions look well-grounded.

It is not clear enough whether used information and worked out conclusions cover also loading units and intermodal possibilities of new EU member states as well as other European countries outside of EU.

Chapter 2. Intermodal loading units and transshipment.

Detailed analysis of transshipment operations is presented for maritime containers, inland containers, swap bodies and semi-trailers pointing on optimal solutions from the point of view of reliability, strength and productivity.

Very interesting and prospective solutions regarding ILU transshipment bottlenecks are proposed. These solutions are based on two different approaches: (1) improved constructional design of the ILU and handling equipment and (2) information technology applications. Both approaches may be in use in the near future.

Chapter 3. Intermodal loading units and inland waterway shipping.

Main ILU "dimensions" problem are considered and analyzed: width, height and length limitations. Related problems (such as stackability and transshipment) are also considered and discussed.

It may be considered as advantage of this research that not only mentioned actual problems are clearly stated and determined but also possible solutions of these problems are proposed.

Chapter 4. Dissemination of the preferred intermodal loading unit

Possible measures for the dissemination of the preferred intermodal loading unit are discussed. Obviously one of the most important action in this direction is standardization. All main aspects of proposed standardization are considered in details. Among other recommended promotion activities we have to mention as useful working out of EC Directive on ILUs, use of different transport associations.

Chapter 5. Recommendations

As result of made research some important recommendations are presented. These recommendations are divided on two groups of actions: actions to be taken by the market parties and actions to be taken by the EU.

In the first case the main requirements to owners of ILUs are worked out; other recommendations relate to activity of inland waterway terminal operators and shipbuilders. These measures look quite reasonable and presented in time.

Regarding possible contribution of EU we may underline necessity of EU-Directive on harmonization of ILUs as well as increasing of efforts in R&D and education spheres.