

Woensdag 22 juni Hugo Thomassen – ProRail  
'UIC Global Rail Freight Conference 2016',  
'World class Rail for world class Ports'

Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Hugo Thomassen and I am Director Transport and Timetabling at ProRail. I am very grateful that UIC has invited me to this place of industrial heritage to tell you about rail freight, which is anything but history.

To start with, I would like to show you some of our achievements. This is where we, as the infrastructure management company for all traffic on the Dutch railways, share our network performance on a daily basis. As you can see, 90,6% of the passenger trains arrived on time yesterday, meaning they were delayed by 3 minutes at most. I sincerely hope you were not unfortunate enough to be on one of the other trains on your way to Rotterdam.

More importantly, for you as participants at the UIC Global Freight Conference, 80,7% of the freight trains also ran without delay at our network. Also measured at 3 minutes delay, because in our view we have to operate very precisely to offer a reliable line-haul into Europe. Yesterday, it was a relatively good day. In 2016 about 75 percent of the freight trains will run without delay. It is my personal ambition to improve this performance over the next few years.

At the same time, I am very aware that the dynamic nature of freight transport calls for more than just letting trains run without delay in pre-allocated time slots. What operators and their clients really appreciate is operational flexibility. For instance, when a next generation vessel with 22,000 containers arrives in the Port of Rotterdam, they are especially keen to get their goods into the European Hinterland in the shortest lead times.

Our motto for rail transport to our international mainports here in the Netherlands is the same: 'good on average isn't good enough'. We are committed to 'world-class rail for world-class ports'; from day to day and hour to hour.

Up to 2030, the Port of Rotterdam is expected to grow by 20 to 40 percent. This implies a tripling of the number of containers transiting the Port of Rotterdam and a seven-fold increase in containers processed in the Maasvlakte area, located on a newly created piece of Holland.

An excellent rail infrastructure has been essential for the realization of the Maasvlakte. Further improvements have to be added, supported by EU funding. One of the key projects is replacing the Caland bridge bottleneck by a new route in the port area.

Another significant example is the still fairly recent completion of the Betuwe route, a corridor connecting Europe's biggest and fourth biggest ports (Rotterdam and Amsterdam) with the main consumer markets in Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Eastern Europe. Last year, up to 700 trains a week used this 170 kilometres long dedicated freight railway.

2015 was a good year for rail freight: both train- and ton-kilometres grew by 6 percent, and the number of freight trains with an international destination was higher than ever. We pro-actively provide the required network capacity for freight traffic. And we have to, as our network is one of the busiest of the entire European Union.

We do this even when we are affected by capacity reductions beyond our borders, for example when our German neighbours are working on increasing capacity on their connection of the Betuwe route. Modernization of systems and additional investments are requirements for a successful future; not just on a national level, but taking a European perspective to cover entire corridors. The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis has recently published research that identifies the Dutch transport network as one of the most developed in the world. Adding long new tracks to the network is therefore not the top priority. Instead, we focus more and more on the 'last mile'; connecting feeder logistics to the line-haul operation with innovative collaboration models and smart logistics. These are the kinds of investments

that we, as part of broad coalitions of diverse stakeholders, are aiming for. Together with our partners, I think we are a driving force for rail innovation based on real business opportunities for operators and their clients; I'd like to show you why I think so. *(plaatjes Routelint met DB Cargo en serious gaming for synchromodality op scherm)*

As we speak, DB Cargo is rolling out a new application, called Routelint, that gives their drivers much better visibility of the track status ahead of them. Thus allowing them much more time, to anticipate any events they will need to respond to. It is another steady step towards this 'green wave' for freight traffic. A large group of Dutch Railway drivers has been using this application for a while, and two weeks ago we launched it as an app for freight carriers. The DB Cargo drivers run this app on their tablets.

In the Netherlands, seamless transport links increasingly require intermodal coordination: road, waterways and rail. The fancy term is Synchro-modal transport. For this reason, we launched a partnership with the port authorities in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, Rijkswaterstaat (the waterways manager), TNO (an independent research institute) and Delft University of Technology. We gave it the equally fancy title SynchroGaming. The objective is to develop simulation and gaming tools that will ultimately enable collaborating parties to synchronise

transport across various modalities more effectively. The first game has been developed already, modelling the consolidation of container flows from the extended Maasvlakte. It was played by parties representing many logistical enablers, such as port terminal managers, freight forwarders and supply chain service providers.

In order to direct freight traffic through our network efficiently, and to make optimal use of our infrastructure, we need to know the exact whereabouts and cargo of all our (mobile) assets. This information is also crucially important for network safety and emergency services. Tracking & tracing with sensor fusion is the name of the game here, and together with carriers and experts, we are trialing various types of sensor technology: GPS, RFID tags, radar, high speed and smart cameras, LORA sensors etcetera.

Of course I don't need to point out to an audience of logistics experts that a chain is as strong as its weakest link; so the strength also depends on coordinated investments on the rail freight corridors. In this light, we were particularly honoured to be invited to the opening ceremony of the new Gotthard tunnel in Switzerland. And I am also very pleased that our international colleagues are now getting on with major upgrades, for instance on the German continuation of the Betuwe route.

During the Dutch EU presidency, European institutions have made good progress in terms of policy. The fourth railway package enables us to make further progress on both the technical and operational aspects of rail unification, ultimately leading to the Single European Railway Area. In turn, this will make the rail industry a key driver of a more sustainable EU economy. We are very happy to contribute by providing world-class rail for world-class ports. I invite you cordially, to join us in these ambition.

Thank you very much.