



Railway station Ljubljana  
16.03.2009 at 8.30 a.m.



Serbian – Bulgarian borderstation Dimitrovgrad  
17.03.2009 at 3.00 a.m.



Terminal Halkali 17.03.2009 at 7.30 p.m.

## Project Laibach – Istanbul/Halkali “25”

The Railways included in the Pan-European Corridor no. 10 on the route from Ljubljana to Istanbul decided to realise the BAC Initiative for South-Eastern Europe, namely to shorten the railway travel time from the present approximately 60 hours to 25 hours.

On 16 March at 8:30 the container train named Bosphorus Europe Express set out on its journey for Istanbul, or more precisely for the Halkali Container Terminal. This product of the transport operators AdriaKombi and Kombiverkehr, offering their services to end-users from Slovenia, Germany and Turkey, started to operate on the route once a week a year ago. The transport performance includes the activities of railway undertakings as well as infrastructure managers of Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Turkish Railways.



According to the present time table, the train covers a distance of 1577 km in approximately 60 hours. On its way it crosses 5 states; due to different power supply systems (3 kV DC, 25 kV/50 Hz), and closed national railway systems (only two states are EU members), it changes its locomotives 8-times; the train stops at national borders also for the purpose of completing railway administrative and technical formalities (brake test performance, repeated drawing-up of documents), as well as for the purpose of carrying out the formalities required by state authorities (customs, phytopathological and veterinary inspections, etc.). The speed of the train must be adapted to different conditions of the infrastructures on the route, i.e. to bottlenecks on the infrastructure (260 km of non-electrified railway lines, 200 km of single-track lines where some sections have gradients up to 29 ‰).

Three months ago the Railways convened a meeting and started to analyse the possibilities for the train travel time reduction. They focused their efforts on the increase of open line speeds under the present infrastructure conditions, and on the optimisation of activities at border stations. A contribution to the travel time reduction of this train is made also by introducing an interoperable multi-system locomotive and diesel locomotive, which has been offered for a promotional run by MRCE Dispolok. Under these specific conditions the promotional train was expected to reach its destination within 37 hours. **Finally the promotional train reached its destination within 35 hours, 2 hours less than expected.**

The promotional run of the train, which has been given a priority along the entire route (as being a non-regular train), should prove that a creative cooperation and a joint will of various entities can lead to a success, while on the other side, tasks will become evident, which will require common solutions, in particular to realise the goals of agreements: European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) and European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) - according to which trains stops may be 30 minutes at the maximum. This means a development of joint border stations, at which border formalities are performed simultaneously by the railway and state authorities, in particular, acceptance of trains on trust, development of an electronic consignment note and electronic data transfer (announcement of consignments) between the Railways and Customs authorities (at present this is carried out by means of a fax or e-mail), introducing of interoperability of locomotives. A travel time saving will be achieved on the long-term also by the realisation of the envisaged restructuring projects on the railway infrastructure from Ljubljana to Halkali; it is estimated that on the long-term, these measures will result in a travel time saving over 6 hours.

The railways would like to improve the quality of their services in the Pan-European corridor no.10 and simultaneously, also its competitiveness against road transport. Transport flows between Turkey and EU countries are an opportunity and a challenge, which the railways must use. According to the statistical data on goods exchange between Turkey and some EU countries (France, Germany, Austria, and Italy), show that the goods exchange in 2006 reached 20 million tonnes, however, the railway market share in transport of these goods was only up to 2%.

Origin: Slovenske Železnice d.o.o.