

European Intermodal Research Advisory Council (EIRAC)

Several intermodal stakeholders stemming from national ministries, logistic platforms, port authorities, terminal operators and shippers gathered at the 6th EIRAC Plenary, kindly hosted by the Port authority of Valencia, assisted by Fundacion Valenciaport.

'Sustainable supply chain through collaborative business models' was the overall theme of the day. Procter & Gamble as representative of the manufacturing industry shared their vision regarding 'Consumer trends and sustainability' presenting the status of a new initiative 'Collaboration Contracts for Co-modality' (CO³). A Strategic Environmental Plan of Inditex/Zara and a Joint commitment to sustainability between Mercadona and Renfe was presented by ITENE. An innovative concept of European North-South Connection (Short-Sea-Shipping) in Fresh Logistics was evoked by Seabrex. ILOG presented Metrocargo, focused innovative railway technologies and logistics for port-inland connection, whereas the EIRAC Innovation Manager Dirk 't Hooft informed the members about high speed freight train projects. The ERRAC (European Rail Research Advisory Council) presented their Roadmap and common research priorities for intermodality.

Important procedures aiming at enhancing the works of the EIRAC have been introduced and approved by its President Wando Boevé and the members. These include the new EIRAC Terms of Reference; appointment of Vice-Chairman Leonardo Carbone and the introduction of new EIRAC Working Groups. The newly appointed Vice-Chairman, Leonardo Carbone, focused, in his speech, on the composition of EIRAC: a positive and open-minded club made up of real businesspeople representing the intermodal sector. The secretariat presented a selection of good practices in Intermodal and Logistics, the new EIRAC website (www.eirac.eu) has been introduced to the participants, while all guests have been handed over the EIRAC 'toolkit'.

The message from the EU Commission (DG RTD) included various opportunities for intermodal transport & logistics. The 3rd call for proposals (second half 2009) sizes € 120 MLN of funding. It will address topics like 'efficient interfaces between transport modes', rail freight transportation and eco-innovation in waterborne transport etc. The EC advised to establish alliances with other TP's to discuss EIRAC output, while also reaching out for business players aiming at setting up industrial projects related to carbon footprints of freight transport and innovative rail technologies to improve rail services.

Key note speeches from the Ministry of Transport of the Valencia Region, Mario Flores, the President of the Valencia Port Authority, Rafael Aznar, and the General Director of the Port Authority of Valencia, Ramón Gómez-Ferrer, were expressed, alongside a technical visit to the Port of Valencia and a cocktail reception offering various networking opportunities.