

### **Ban on night flights? – Alternatives!**

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The decision of the Hesse Higher Administrative Court (HessVGH) regarding the ban on night flights at Frankfurt Airport gives rise to the opportunity of pointing at the various possibilities of cooperation between air and rail. No matter how the German Federal Administrative Court (BVerwG) will finally decide in spring 2012, the rapid increase of global air cargo will sooner or later result in unsolvable conflicts between economic and ecological interests and needs of express service providers.

This development could have been foreseen for a long time. Several propositions have already been made concerning the mitigation of this imminent problem. They aim at connecting the steadily expanding rail high speed network to airports in such a way as to reach a relaxation of airports and road congestion for the disposition of cargo. It is planned to use HGV trains (high speed trains like TGV or ICE), which are suitable for taking in air freight containers. Worth mentioning as an example is the Post-TGV (TGV La Poste), which has been in use in France for several years.

Through a French initiative, an international plan for freight high speed train connections between the airports of Paris Charles de Gaulle, Lüttich (Liège), Amsterdam Schiphol and London under the name of EUROCAREX was developed ([www.eurocarex.com](http://www.eurocarex.com)). EUROCAREX works together with large logistic companies (freight integrators) like FEDEX, UPS, TNT etc. in order to create an European Business Case.

EUROCAREX and REX, which is a task force under the responsibility of the European Intermodal Association (EIA), signed a cooperation agreement. The EIA group took on the task of securing European standardization and interoperability. In cooperation with the International Railway Association (UIC) it also develops the necessary regulatory measures for the usage of rail high speed networks. The European Commission recently declared the connection of high speed lines and airports to be a desirable goal within their TEN-T network. Support, including financial aid as well, is however depending on the presentation of a promising business plan. The REX Group in this regard started negotiations with the Commission.

Still, the desired cooperation between EUROCAREX and German airports did not considerably improve. In the face of rapidly increasing difficulties in integrating airports and metropolitan areas in the long run, one would expect to see also heightened willingness in Germany, especially in Frankfurt and Cologne, to find alternatives.