

Expensive; and little space

The German economy is a-humming these days, without any sign that this state of affairs is set to change soon. According to a study of purchasing power, this parameter is set to rise by 2.8% for Germans this year, with even the notoriously parsimonious state able to spend a little more. An assessment by the federal audit office states that the new German government, when it is finally formed, will have an extra EUR 45 billion available to spend.

Diesel price ever less influential

These favourable economic developments naturally also influence the logistics industry, as the Transport Market Monitor for Q3/2017 shows. This analysis, compiled jointly by the transport platform Transporeon and Capgemini Consulting, has ascertained two extremes.

Freight costs are at their highest level since summer 2015. In the last twelve months the analysts have ascertained a 7% rise. The apparently obvious reason for this development is high demand. This results in chronically low truck capacities. The capacity index may have grown by 2.6% vis-à-vis the second quarter of 2017, but in comparison with the same quarter of the previous year it is 20.5% lower.

The Transport Market Monitor includes a diesel price index. When it falls, this usually leads to lower prices, but this has not been observed in the latest figures. The diesel price has been sinking since early last year, whilst overall prices have risen slightly. One of the reasons for this, besides high demand, is a lack of drivers. In 2016, 150,000 drivers quit their jobs in Germany, with only a limited proportion thereof being replaced. *mw*

Lifefair Forum

Debating the future

What does Switzerland's logistics future hold? A group of experts met at the Lifefair Forum in Zurich to try and answer the question. They may not have reached a consensus, but did formulate a range of wishes and demands for politicians and industry to think about.

No one denies the fact that transport volumes are increasing in Switzerland. The question of how to manage goods flows in future is a little more controversial. The Lifefair Forum, staged in Zurich recently, addressed this issue, seeking answers from experts with a broad range of backgrounds.

Frank Furrer of the Cargo Forum advocated reducing the privileges of passenger trains and improving the status of railfreight solutions. Peter Sutterlüti also raised his voice for rail, propagating a daring underground vision – the 'Cargo sous terrain' project.

More space for logistics

Transport industry entrepreneur Joseph Jäger (of Camion Transport) and Jürg Röthlisberger, director of the Swiss national roads authority, agreed that there is no way the roads are going to take a backseat, however.

Whilst Jäger called for more space near cities for goods-handling activities, Röthlisberger, in turn, advocated the

more intelligent utilisation of the road network, as well as its selective improvement. This prompted some disapproval from Matthias Müller, representing VCS, an association for the protection of the environment. Less construction projects, and higher road pricing are his recipe for success.

A noble goal – sustainable logistics – lies at the end of a long and challenging road.



Photo: Lifefair Forum

Herbert Ruile, a well-known professor for supply chain management, stated matter-of-factly that "Switzerland hasn't exactly shone so far as a driver of innovation in the transport and logistics sector." He believes that the sector's future is being fashioned elsewhere. *Marco Wölfli*



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