

*integrated transport systems,
competitiveness of transport companies,
problems of integration*

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THE PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEMS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The paper deals with problems of integrated transport systems and changes that are necessary for better functioning of ITS in the Czech Republic. We can see problems in some basic levels: activities of transporters are insufficient, there is a rivalry between road and railway transport and it is essential to change legislative in order to allow correct functioning of integrated transport systems.

PROBLEMY ZINTEGROWANYCH SYSTEMÓW TRANSPORTU W REPUBLICIE CZESKIEJ

Referat opisuje problemy zintegrowanych systemów transportu i zmiany, które są konieczne do lepszego funkcjonowania ITS w Republice Czeskiej. Widzimy problemy na pewnych poziomach podstawowych: działalność przewoźników nie jest wystarczająca, istnieje rywalizacja pomiędzy transportem kolejowym a drogowym i konieczne jest wprowadzenie zmian legislacyjnych w celu umożliwienia prawidłowego funkcjonowania zintegrowanych systemów transportu.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a period of development of integrated transport systems (ITS) in the Czech Republic. There are created new systems but the legislative for them is insufficient, because the Ministry of Transport has not been able to prepare legislation for ITS yet. The intentions of ITS development are fulfilled mostly in ticketing only, but the coordination of timetables falls behind and other intentions are not reached at all in most cases. One of big problems is the rivalry among partners in ITS, which cannot forget their competition, especially in case of road and rail transport and then they are not able to cooperate sufficiently. It naturally

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weakens the competitiveness of the project and leads to rise of market share of individual automobile transport (IAT).

2. LEGISLATIVE PROBLEMS

The main requirements for legislative changes are:

1. Compliance of law for public bus transport, railway transport and municipal public transport.
2. Recognition of ITS as the one transport system, which is financed (subsidized) by only one entity – it is district in case of the Czech Republic. At the same time the law, which gives full competency to district authority for allocation of district incomes, is necessary.
3. Declaration of integrated tariffs in the area of ITS – integrated tariffs for all modes of integrated transport and all transporters in the system is a condition for the integrated transport system. In addition there must be made an exception for transporters tariffs in ITS in the competition act.
4. Implementation of new terms, definitions and duties of particular ITS participants (esp. organizer).

Besides these legislative problems, there exists patriotism in each Czech district. And so we can find nine ITS (PID, IDP, JARIS, IDS Tábor, IDS České Budějovice, VYDIS, IDS JMK, IDS Zlín, ODIS) in the Czech Republic (the Czech Republic is divided into 14 districts). Each one of these systems is original. So it will be difficult to unify them and make a law, which could be used for all of them.

3. ITS GROWTH AND INTERCONNECTION

It is more than time to begin with solving the problem connected with the expansion of particular ITS's area of activity, which will touch or overlap in course of time.

It can not be forgotten that ITS is established for the purpose of competitiveness with individual automobile transportation (comparison of transport output of public transport and individual automobile transport could be seen at Fig.1, comparison of the number of passengers in public and individual automobile transport could be seen at Fig.2) and passengers will be interested only in a comfortable trip with one ticket.

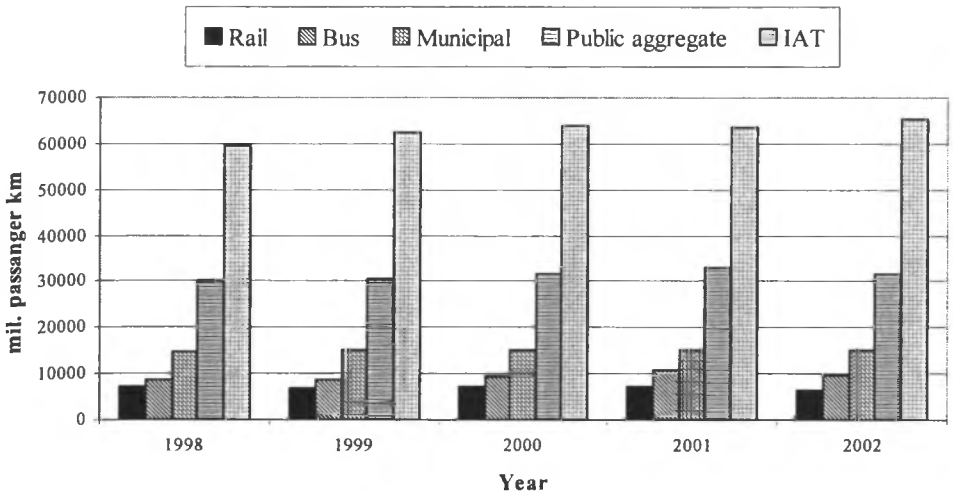


Fig.1. Transport output of passenger transport

The system unifying has to be solved not only at level of:

- price,
- quality,
- timetable,
- chip cards compatibility,

but especially by well-timed and good preparation of particular transport companies. This preparation will bring large financial savings in the future and so the possibility of competitive price preservation.

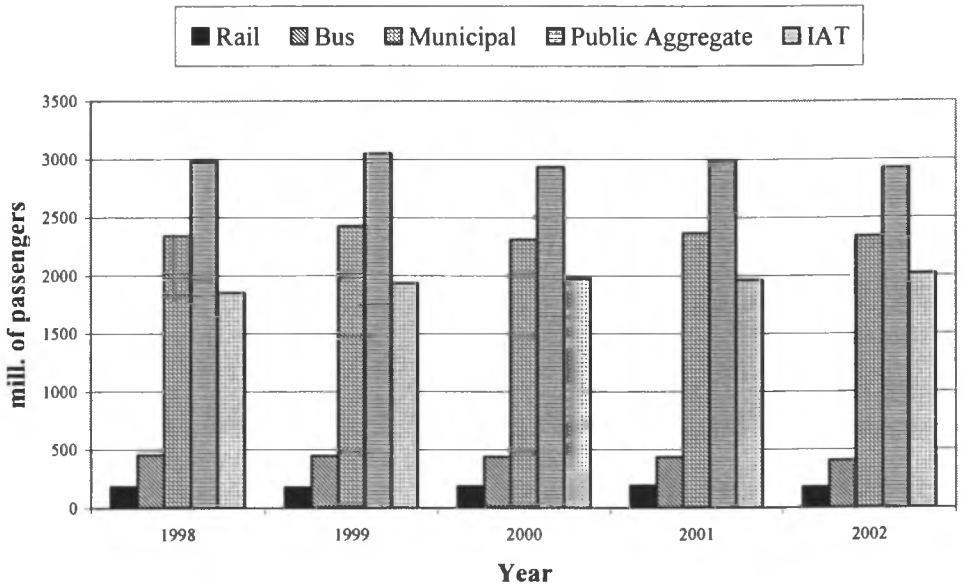


Fig 2. The number of passengers

4. ACTIVITIES OF TRANSPORT COMPANIES

Nowadays, when a majority of transport companies still operates on principles from past times, there is a necessity to change their strategy radically; otherwise there will be even bigger overload of the Czech Republic by cars. We are situated in knowledge society with turbulent influence of environment, where is only one certainty – everything will change – but a majority of transport companies does not realize it that could be fatal. It is essential for transporters, but also for their staff, to change the way of thinking. However transporters in most cases proceed with short-term point of view and only in their own concern. Therefore it is actually essential to begin fight together at once in favour of ITS and for improvement of competitiveness, preservation of reasonable incomes and not least for maintenance of market position.

5. PRINCIPLES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT IN COMPETITION WITH IAT

In the first instance the analysis of real situation is made.

The first advantage of IAT is the door to door transport without any loss of time originated from changes of transport vehicles. This advantage could be reduced by congestion or in the city zones with limited access for cars.

The method of solution:

- resolve changes and changing links in scope of ITS and rigidly keep timetables without delays
- raise an area accessibility of public transport
- appeal the municipal authorities to take certain measures contributing to preference of public transport and restriction of individual automobile transport

The second advantage of IAT is time flexibility.

The method of solution:

- increase a number of links
- offer alternative services (for example buses, which you can call to your evening train)

The third advantage of IAT is a social status.

The method of solution:

- advertise public transport as safer, more environmental and socially more considerable
- put the accent on quality (comfort, cleanness, speed)

The fourth advantage of IAT is the speed.

The method of solution:

- realize a faster renewal of fleet and reconstruction of infrastructure (with possibility to use funds of EU and state subsidies)
- create bus lanes
- implement the preference of public transport to intersection signal schedules
- segregate the infrastructure for public transport (e.g. for trams)
- shorten necessary walking paths in case of changing of transport vehicles in transfer stations and make the access to stations and vehicles easier (esp. for disabled people or people with luggage or baby carriages)

It is evident that it is not easy to weaken advantages of IAT. Especially it is necessary to have enough money (but it is mostly no problem with good will and good management of transport company). The change not only in thinking of transporters and in thinking of their staff but also in thinking of all of us is necessary too. But it seems to be a superhuman performance.

The transporters should also look at IAT as a factual competitor, which reduces their revenues, and „take on” very interesting competition advantage: individual approach. This theory sounds as a science – fiction, but putting of it into practise would become a very successful marketing measure in battle against IAT.

6. HOW TO IMPROVE THE COMPETITIVNESS OF ITS

We think that transporters should begin with these points:

- Termination of rivalry between road and railway transport – it means completely, not only outwardly.
- Consciousness of common objective, which is not only foolproof integrated transport system, but also a satisfied customer and mainly the sufficient incomes, which assure the prosperity of transport companies. Whole integrated transport system should be adapted to customers in so far as every customer will have feeling not to be only one of crowd. Respectively he should feel personal approach at each step. It is important to understand that passenger is the client, who is choosing his manner of transportation in the view of individual criteria, but basic requirements are the same. The obvious necessity is comprehensible tariff and integral information system, which carries passengers from the beginning to the end of their trip without difficulties. There could be possibility for passengers to choose optimal connection to the end of his journey at every moment, consequently there must not miss transparent maps of ITS network at stops and in vehicles of all transporters, the telephonic information centre and we must not forget possibilities of modern information technologies, e.g. a possibility of choosing the connection not only by stops, but also by addresses or important objects. At not least it is necessary to provide professional style of all employees of particular transporters participating in ITS, which must forget conflicts of individual modes of transport and also their feeling of superiority over passengers. Possible complaints and reclamations must be solved responsibly and quickly.
- Not to rely on seemingly certain subsidies for transport enterprises – the situation of public finance, the requirement of indebtedness lowering of Czech Republic in order to Euro implementation and EU effort to reduce subsidies for public transport to the least possible level leads to feeling that both operational and investment subsidies for public transport will not be guaranteed.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays the Czech Republic is in the period of big enthusiasm for integrated transport systems and of their development. However it is necessary to prefer quality before quantity. Legislative should correspond with reality also. Legislators, unfortunately, are not all at sea on this hardly comprehensible popular art in area of integrated transport systems and so they keep away of the necessary legislative confirmation, so this problem becomes to be more complicated.

The transporters must also do much more for the collective improvement of particular ITS and not to solve permanently their own problems only, because ITS does not mean only the possibility of changing of transport vehicles and using of one ticket

When the transporters cooperate and offer the service with sufficient quality, which is not in opposite with market behaviour – but quite the contrary – then they not only retain customers and obtain more of them, but they also realize another intentions of integrated transport systems as the mobility development, the accident rate decrease, the environmental conditions improvement etc.

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