

Statement by Matthias Raith

Opening Ceremony, European Bulls

January 13th 2005 in Rotterdam



Ladies and gentlemen,

The crucial question we need to consider is what advantages the alliance European Bulls offers European industry and the European economy in general. I'd like to make some brief and precise comments on this.

In recent years, the European economy has undoubtedly restructured: we have seen the networking of production plants, raw material sources and markets across the continent, with ports being used as transshipment hubs for global trade. This process is continuing systematically with the enlargement of the EU eastwards. The European economy is more than ever in need of high-quality transport links for moving large volumes of goods over ever longer distances and is thus dependent on efficient rail markets.

In recent years, however, rail transport has steadily lost market share, particularly for transporting top-quality goods fast, reliably and safely. The state railways have experienced difficulties in meeting the altered requirements of industry on account of their nationally oriented and egoistic structures.

On the other hand, efficient new rail companies have established themselves in several countries in recent years, gaining considerable shares of their national markets.. Their work has brought initial benefits to the economy on short and medium-distance routes with the provision of better services, faster round trips and reduced equipment deployment, lower prices and direct communications.

Five such rail companies from several European countries are now joining forces to form the Alliance of European Bulls. We are linking our services and operating areas to enable freight customers to use rail for their European long-haul transport requirements.

With joint planning, we deploy our locomotives and personnel to ensure optimal capacity utilization. Wherever technically and legally feasible, we no longer interrupt our transport services at national borders. In this context, the service that we already operate between Duisburg and Graz – with a feeder from Rotterdam – is exemplary, using LTE locomotives from Austria to Duisburg. Or take the service that has just begun between Brescia and Rotterdam, currently with rail4chem locos from the Italian border to Rotterdam and which will very soon be served by Ferrovie Nord locomotives all the way from Italy to Emmerich.

A key factor here is that one partner is responsible to the customer for handling the entire international service. Via European Bulls, this partner can guarantee that in all countries in which it does not operate itself it has partners ensuring under its responsibility the uniform quality of the transport services provided. European Bulls is not a combine or new big company. Every customer benefits from having its company acting on its own responsibility as local partner.

We use and develop integrated IT systems for quality assurance and for train and freight planning. They help to make our transport services as effective and safe as possible and offer customers optimal transparency. And we will purchase our equipment jointly everywhere where uniform standards and high volumes are involved.

The partners of European Bulls concentrate on traction services. We do not want to compete with freight organizers. We provide them with our haulage services and encourage them to

purchase train capacities for moving their consignments with us. Our new service orientation gives forwarders a real incentive to use rail and avoid road pricing.

The idea of an alliance like European Bulls is not new in the transport world. Alliances have proved highly successful in the shipping and aviation sectors. The Star Alliance, for example, today guarantees every long-haul air passenger high quality over the entire route even if he himself, his luggage or his freight is transported by several carriers.

We welcome the decision taken by Comsa in Barcelona to become a European Bull. The option of using public networks in Spain is now exactly 12 days old. We want to support Comsa with our experience. We need our Spanish friends when focusing on linking Spain with Germany, the UK and Eastern Europe.

It is no coincidence that EWS from the UK and Eurotunnel from France are represented here today. The Channel Tunnel has to be used for rail freight services, which means that there must soon be rail companies in France linking the UK with the rest of Europe with market-oriented services. We will be involved here on a joint basis.

We are open to accept further partners for European Bulls. We want to expand our alliance with good carriers from every European rail country, without disassociating ourselves in any way from state railways and their successor companies. Quite a few traditional railways are developing into forward-looking firms with European orientation and becoming new market entrants outside their former national territory. This is in line with the strategy we are jointly pursuing with European Bulls.

We deeply appreciate the hospitality provided by the Port of Rotterdam today and the sponsorship of the heads of the ports of Duisburg and Barcelona. Ports owe their development to shipping services, which have engaged in fierce global competition for centuries. We offer all port users the opportunity to utilize the free rail market optimally for their hinterland services.

In closing, I'd like to emphasize how much we are looking forward to working together in our market, cooperating with one another and indeed with all of you. We are confident that Europe will benefit very considerably from our initiative.