
Editorial

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Eurasia is a term and definition, which is relatively unknown for most people. However, in its geographical territory most of the population from the earth lives here, and in recent decades it has been a place of economical prosperity and growth, as well as holding a very significant position overall in the world's decisions whatever the matter may be. Even if Eurasia seems to be unified and easy to access within transportation logistics terms from the out of space perspective, it is rich culturally and is divided into a number of different trade areas as well as individual countries, therefore, unified from longer distance, but significantly fragmented in the reality. This is basically the reason, why we were interested to join our forces in having this special issue. For the sake of our competitiveness, we need to observe transportation logistics merely from an Eurasian perspective rather than being limited to some countries or smaller regions – sustaining our prosperity in the world depends greatly upon it. However, this special issue at hand is not a definite answer concerning Eurasian logistics, but is merely acting as a seminal discussion starting point and in realisation that Eurasian logistics do have a future, and we need to know about it more. Possibly, we still have some time left to modify Eurasian logistics as more environmentally friendly, flexible, quality driven, and price competitive.

Despite relatively unified land connection and access in Eurasia, it is a simple fact of life that sea transportation plays the most important role in the logistics flows of this territory. In the first manuscript, Goulielmos et al. approach from an interesting angle sea transportation of Eurasia – what kind of configuration we might have in shipping operations, and how deep outsourcing activity could really turn into these. However, as research illustrates, outsourcing activity in ship management does not lead necessarily into cost savings, but is merely driven by expertise and quality of operations. So, this research work is a good illustration that economic specialisation is merely a long-term strategical issue rather than a short-term cost management item. The outsourcing theme is continued in the second manuscript, where Hilletoft and Jäger discuss, to what extent logistics service providers need to change their service offerings in the new environment, where demand-based innovative and customer driven products take the space in markets. Thereafter, in the third manuscript we go back to transportation logistics, and particularly railways. This mode of transport is very popular and important for Eurasia. However, in European countries, rail has been on a constant modal share decline, despite all legislative, practical and political actions stimulating the sector into new growth. Most of the short-term potential of railway freight transports is located in the east borders of the EU – one is the Finnish-Russian border, and its different future scenarios. This issue is dealt with in the third manuscript by Mäkitalo. More theoretical, yet important, supply chain networks are discussed in the fourth manuscript by Arkhipov and Ivanov. Increased outsourcing activity in the forthcoming decade will ensure that this research area will blossom in Eurasia. Thereafter, in the fifth manuscript, in-transit strategy is being discussed by Claesson and Hilletoft. Due to long sea transportation distances between different parts of Eurasia, it seems to be the case that one arising distribution strategy is to utilise the 'transportation pipeline' as a warehouse. This option is again analysed through case company examples. The sixth manuscript deals with yet another important item of Eurasian logistics – further management training using e-learning. Laisi et al. provide interesting insights from the distance learning course arranged in Russia. Finally, our special issue ends with the up to date analysis of very long distance railway transportation volumes of the Trans-Siberian Railways (TSR). Panova provides very interesting and fresh data from the topic, and sheds some light on what sort of rearrangements and investments might be in the horizon in the Asian side of Russia.

Last, but not the least, we would like to express our gratitude to the *authors, referees* and the *Int. Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*. Without your pioneering spirit this issue would not have been a reality. We also do hope that our work does not only serve the research community, but also for-profit actors as well as international organisations working in the challenging area of Eurasian logistics.