

Looking at the **BIG PICTURE**

When the much anticipated HVTT11 conference convenes next March it will be an opportunity for government regulators dealing with trucks to interact with those stretching the boundaries of what is possible for the Road Transport Industry, such as Anders Lundstrom from Scania.

While the harsh economic times of the next 12 months are expected to dominate

discussions at the Heavy Vehicle Transport Technology Conference (HVTT11) to be held in Melbourne in March 2010, the need for innovation and development in the Transport Industry will not be ignored. The drive to improve productivity and efficiency will continue, as transport operators simply have no choice but to find better and smarter ways of getting the task done. A long-time member of the board of the International Forum for Road Transport Technology (IFRTT) and current President is Anders Lundstrom from Scania Trucks. The IFRTT was formed after the third Heavy Vehicle Weight and Dimension Symposium in 1992. Its purpose was to organise, on a regular basis, the HVTT conferences, where leaders in the field of truck technology could get together with others working in the same field alongside road regulators, to aid communication and improve outcomes.



Prime Mover took the opportunity to talk to Anders, to get the European perspective on future truck development and understand exactly how the current economic crisis may affect future developments.

From the lab to the streets

Since joining Scania in 1986, Anders has worked in a series of jobs in the Swedish truck maker's research and development department at their HQ in Sodertalje, near Stockholm. After starting work in the strength labs then the fatigue lab he went on to manage the chassis lab. His managerial responsibilities gradually grew over time to include the test track and the acoustics facility. To this was later added overseeing the Certification and Homologation Section of Scania. "A few years ago I left that management position and I am now a senior adviser,"

says Anders. "I am involved with the development of new technologies, especially when they become affected by political aspects, like the European Union. So I am in Brussels once or twice a month talking to them about transport policy and also the increasing issues of fuel consumption and the production of carbon dioxide from heavy-duty vehicles."

The truck manufacturers of Europe are represented by their umbrella association, ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers Association). This group represents the interests of all companies building vehicles throughout Europe but has a strong commercial vehicle section, chaired in 2009 by Anders's ultimate boss, Leif Ostling, Scania's CEO.

"I am an adviser for Scania but work mainly for ACEA when I am in Brussels,"



"Sometimes we do our own lobbying as Scania, like last autumn when we did some work with the European Parliament and some of the countries over road charging issues.

"It's an interesting career. Yes, there is some banging your head against a wall, but you should always try to influence developments. There are some politicians who are happy about it because they need to get to know details and opinions as well. Many politicians within the European Parliament are willing to meet you. You get your 20 minutes or 30 minutes and some of them are, actually, very knowledgeable and understand the details, while others are not. But that's democracy for you."

The issue most exercising Anders at the moment is how to develop a methodology to determine the fuel consumption and carbon dioxide

generation of trucks. This is difficult to assess for the EU because, unlike cars, trucks do not have their fuel consumption and carbon emissions certified in their initial emissions test. "Cars can be assessed on a dyno, but for heavy-duty vehicles it is only the engine being assessed in the emissions test. There is no complete vehicle methodology. It's more difficult because the complete vehicle is not in our hands; we don't do the superstructure, we don't do the trailers and we don't do the extra equipment," he says.

"My main task at the moment is to find a way of assessing the whole vehicle. Of course, this field is increasing rapidly – there is a method in Japan called Top Runner, there are developments going on in the USA, there are developments going on in China and I would guess that developments are going on in

Australia, as well.

"The question of where you go next is still open, but first of all you must have a method. Of course, you could say it is already there, as you have it in the form of a fuel tax. I would say that would be the most simple method, but for some politicians that is not enough, they don't want to rely on that. They want to have something more substantial, like a declaration of the amount of carbon dioxide a vehicle will produce."

Railroaded into compliance

In Europe, powerful lobby groups and non-government organisations are pressuring legislators in Brussels to move all freight onto rail rather than road. They are looking to use the methods of assessment of carbon dioxide production by vehicles to curb the growth of long-distance truck haulage. It is a fact

that in Europe one of the areas where the production of carbon dioxide is increasing the most is in the area of road freight.

The pressure is on the European Transport Industry to improve efficiency as a whole, to reduce costs but also carbon dioxide emissions. They also have to prove their credentials up against rail to a legislation with a tendency to favour the railways in terms of funding and assistance.

"Operators will have to be even more careful not to run empty," says Anders. "They will be doing their logistics homework better. We have seen just such a development in Switzerland, which is not a member of the European Union. They have had some extremely high road charging, distance-based, and what we are seeing is they have improved their logistics efficiency. As an example, a few years ago we planned to decrease the number of Scania workshops in what is such a small country, but that's turned out to be impossible because the truck owners don't like running empty to the workshop.

"The downside to this development is, I have heard, that the mid-size operators are hit worse than the rest of the industry. The very big operators have large logistics centres and teams of people planning routes. The very small operators are living from day to day and are dependent on the very large operators anyway. But the mid-size ones are having trouble; they haven't reached the stage where they can do the planning because they don't have the resources to do so. Every time you tax or charge someone there will be some effect on the system, some positive but also some negative."

Some countries within Europe are already using the 'Modular System', allowing vehicles up to 60 tonne in a B-Double type configuration or with a rigid truck using a dolly to pull a semi-trailer. This has been adopted in Scandinavia by Sweden and Finland for more than 10 years now and is undergoing a large trial in both Denmark and Holland.



Anders Lundstrom

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"Progress with the modular system is very slow. There is a debate going on, but it will take a long time because the top people within the European Union will not dare to be the ones to introduce them. If you go through the argument with them for the use of longer, heavier vehicles, it is very difficult.

"You go through the carbon dioxide argument and they will accept that. You then go through road safety advantages and yes, they understand that these vehicles aren't any worse than any other big truck. And then the bottom line is, 'How about the railways?', it is always the same. Then they get into an investigation of the viability of rail as an alternative. The railways in Europe are lobbying intensely against these larger trucks." The transport scene in Europe is also talking about Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) a lot in its planning

scenarios. The industry hopes to use information and communications technology as part of the transport infrastructure in an effort to manage factors such as vehicles, loads and routes, in order to improve safety and reduce vehicle wear, transportation times and fuel consumption.

"There is a lot of hope in Europe for this thing called ITS, which is a buzzword for a lot of things," says Anders. "A lot of this is already going on in terms of logistics and trip planning. The politicians have latched onto ITS and it is now a huge thing. They are hoping that with electronics and information systems they don't need to invest in physical infrastructure.

"This idea is supposed to solve productivity issues, road safety and environmental issues, it's the big hope for the politicians. It is probably powered



by suppliers to the industry who want to supply and sell their technical systems. In a way, I think it will succeed but not in the way they think. The expectations are way too high, in my view."

A wider scope

Over the years the scope of the HVTT conferences has widened, taking in new developments in truck technology while staying away from more specific technical issues like engine development, which has its own cutting edge development conference.

"We are trying to get a more holistic view on road freight, but there are still technical considerations. There are always new papers on things like suspension design, how to improve the vehicle dynamics and increased stability," Anders says.

"It was my suggestion last year to have the HVTT, once again, in Australia, in conjunction with the Melbourne ITTE Show. A local organising committee has been set up and I am very happy to see it has attracted the kind of engagement from people like VicRoads and the Victorian Transport Association. It is chaired by the CEO of the NTC and Terry Pennington

from the Truck Industry Council was very enthusiastic from the beginning.

"I am really looking forward to it. The only cloud on the horizon is the decline in business, let's hope there's been an upturn later this year. In Europe, the new money available for investment in infrastructure is likely to be spent on the railroads, however efficient that might be in the long-term. "I have no feeling from the politicians that, because of the global economic crisis, they will back down from road safety and environmental issues. That's the indication we get so far, but the more extensive and deeper the crisis, maybe the less they are likely to maintain this viewpoint. The car industry is already asking government to postpone some legislation, but so far in Europe for trucks, Euro 6 is still on schedule."

As well, the issues raised at the HVTT11 are less likely to be affected by the ongoing economic crisis because the developments on the cards and due to be discussed at the conference are much longer term in character, looking well into the future of road transport to a point beyond which the world's financial system is expected to be back on an even keel.