

More greetings from the wintery south, but from the other side of the world. First of all, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to my question regarding safety statistical reports on High Capacity Vehicles. Your efforts have not been in vain, as I was told they were discussed on top of the table of the transport authorities in Argentina, and may have tipped the scale towards the final implementation. The answers also reconnected me with an engineer from Uruguay working for the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, who came to the HVT13.



This year has seen some of the worst snowstorms in Patagonia in recent history. Flights were cancelled, roads closed for days at short notice and large towns without electricity. International mountain passes were closed or operated with very high travel restrictions. And all this, in the beginning of the winter holidays! So, although authorities are prepared for normal winter weather, nothing like this one. Could it be the new normal?



Of course, every problem may bring an opportunity. That opportunity was seized by the province of San Luis in Argentina at the end of last year, signing with Chile to provide a Buffer Zone, a safe truck parking spot for times when the Cristo Redentor Pass closes (this pass one of most used between Argentina and Chile to cross the Andes). In the past years, between 500 and 2000 trucks were stranded for up to two weeks, some up in the mountain, others wherever they can on the side of the road, but

of course with no proper conditions for the drivers nor the trucks. While the San Luis province is not a border one, the Buffer Zone is surely helping in decongesting traffic and providing those safer conditions while also reducing fuel consumption used in non value-added activities such as heating the cabin.

What else has been going on in South America? To begin with, in December last year Brazil jumped from 74tons gross weight to 91 tons/30mt for Combined Cargo Vehicles, through Resolution 640/2016 of CONTRAN (National Transport Council). Safety technologies are still up to the transport owner however.

Argentina is on the verge of finally implementing b-doubles nationally. For those who don't remember, the law allowing b-doubles in the country is from April 2014, and it was regulated in October 2015. The truck owners' association has been always against b-doubles, with very emotional and convincing arguments – who cares about boring technology-. But lately the shippers have started to speak out loud too, especially grains, forestry and automotive. They basically explained to the President and the Industry Minister that in order to be competitive and promote jobs, there are three issues to be dealt with: taxes, labour laws and logistics. And for the latter, they directly said “give us the bitrains, implement them now please”.

Both Argentina and Brazil are increasing their grain harvests, with 120 and 210 million tons respectively. While farm machinery has evolved greatly, with machines able to harvest up to 42tons, in Argentina trucks can only carry 29ton net, while bitrains carry 54tons net.



In Chile there have been meetings between stakeholders (government, shippers, transport companies). In Colombia, although the shippers have tried and have done all the trials with HCVs these years, they haven't been successful in achieving final legislation yet. But after last year's truck strike of 45 days, and with the threat of starting another one this year... no transport minister wants to sign anything

delicate right now.

But let's finish this newsletter with an upbeat. In May 2017, San Luis province launched the EMaBi, or School for Driving Bitrains. It is the first school of its type in South America. The drivers who attended were so thrilled, even though the evaluations -both theory and practice- were pretty tough! The Logistics Minister and the University Chancellor opened the course. And we were honoured to have Bob Pearson welcoming the drivers. Click on the link to see the video with Bob [Welcome to EMaBi video](#). And two of drivers had his book, the Spanish version!

San Luis was the first province which legislated and implemented successfully B-double circulation. The idea now with this school is to train drivers and control authorities, at a national level.



So, that's all for now folks! Preparing for HVTT15, October for handing in the abstracts is around the corner!

Cheers,

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