

SPENO: the capacity for state-of-art rail maintenance

Petar GALEV

At the end of the last year at a seminar in Sofia, the Head of Sales Department at SPENO International – dipl. eng. Rudolf Koller, presented the capacities of the company for rail diagnostics and overall maintenance.

SPENO International operates in countries from all continents and its activities encompass the whole scope of research, development, production and operation of machines for grinding and re-profiling of rails and switches, profile measurement and identification of faults on the rail surface as well as checking for internal faults in the railhead by means of ultrasound scanning and eddy current inspection.

SPENO continues to develop its know-how not only in the sphere of rail maintenance but as regards the machine development as well. Grinding machines and stones are being developed in close co-operation with the subcontractors Mecnafer (in Mestre, for grinding trains) and ASI (in Marcon, for the production of grinding stones) in Italy.

In the sphere of rail maintenance SPENO has deployed its activities over the five continents and renders rails reliable for all kinds of operational conditions. This includes underground railways as part of public transport as well as heavy-haul trains and high-speed trains.

SPENO is seated in Geneva, where it was founded in 1960, and today has over 600 employees all over the world. Customers of the company services amount to 196 from 47 countries. Currently the company capacity exceeds 40 000 km of finished grinding work per year.

In the course of its development, SPENO has introduced a great number of innovations in its sphere of activity. In 1980 the company produced the first road-rail (high-rail) grinding machine for urban networks. Three years later it introduced the first grinding machine for switches. In 1985 the



At a seminar in Sofia, dipl. eng. Rudolf Koller presented the capacities of the company for rail diagnostics and overall maintenance

company launched the first rail flaw detection vehicle providing real-time results. In 1987 SPENO introduced the first grinding machine with dust aspiration.

Today, SPENO remains committed to its activities in the services field, although

the sales of its machines have been expanding considerably. The company team continues to aspire to introduce further improvements and innovations and is ready to offer flexible solutions to the railways around the world. ■

Eng. Rudolf KOLLER, Head of Sales Department in SPENO, in an exclusive comment for "Railway transport" magazine:



Our strategy in Europe is not to sell machines but to offer services for rail flaw detection and rail maintenance by means of temporary assignment of machines and qualified personnel in the respective country. When quality rails are maintained well from the very beginning with the methods we apply, this can make their life-cycle up to twice as longer. The current condition of most rails in Bulgaria is such that it requires either replacement or emergency remedial work. Consequently they will have to be maintained in compliance with contemporary European requirements and technological achievements. Some 12 years ago SPENO sold a machine in Bulgaria but I am not convinced that Bulgarian railways managed to achieve the relevant results with it. This machine is neither used efficiently enough, nor is it maintained in the best possible way. This situation is mainly due to lack of funding. Rolling stock operations along bad quality rails results in serious safety risks and unforeseeable financial losses. As far back as fifty years ago Europe got convinced in the efficiency of rail maintenance and Bulgaria should make use of this experience.