

BY TRAIN TO SOUTH KOREA FOR THE 68TH UNICA 2006 FESTIVAL
IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL TRAVELLERS
 Franz SCHLAGER

This extraordinary journey by train across parts of two continents - Europe and Asia - as far as the remote country hosting the UNICA Congress will be, not only a unique experience, but also a one-time opportunity to promote and disseminate the grand idea of not-professional film-making. The purpose of the circular on the project is basically to "*identify potential travellers*" and set up a tentative list of participants. All suggestions and/or ideas about this project are welcome.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear film friends

In two years, in the summer of 2006, an international group of non-professional filmmakers will leave from Vienna, Austria to head for Seoul in South Korea and take part there in the World Meeting of member federations - travelling all this way by ... train. The "Korea train" project launched on the occasion of the Unica 2003 Congress in Warsaw, Poland by Franz Schlager is now submitted to you in more details. We also call on all non professional filmmakers as this project can materialise only many are prepared to cooperate and contribute. Most important is of course the problem of finding funds to make the long journey possible and thus give an unprecedented boost to the concept and values promoted by UNICA.

There are two solutions to travel to Korea by train: a "high-profile" and a "low-profile solution". In the latter case, only some 20 people would travel to Korea at their own expense by taking the "Transsiberian"; the participants would then pay the regular fare and could possibly book what is called a through carriage. However, experience shows that low-profile solutions can turn out to be more costly, less effective; in particular they offer much less room for publicity and possibilities for profitability are much more restrained. On the other hand, fund raising is easier for high-profile solutions. As a consequence, we bank on no less than a complete departing from Vienna, Austria as a starting point for the project. As this project is still in the planning phase, the detail of the route have not been finalised yet and the question of the outbound journey is at the moment separated from that of the return journey. The information provided below is just preliminary estimates.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE "HIGH -PROFILE SOLUTION":

00. Do you have to take the train if you want to go to the UNICA-Congress?

- No, there is no such obligation, but all can contribute to the project even if they do not travel that way. They can help because of their acquaintances and contacts ("opening doors", facilitating formalities, identifying possible sponsors offering material support), especially for the fund-raising campaign. If you cannot travel to Korea with this train, you can perhaps tell us about people in your close circle who would be interested in the project.

01. Why travel by train? - The "Korea Train" Project is designed as a publicity action having the effect of an exceptional promotional action for the 68th UNICA-2006 Congress. As it has become rather unusual to travel over such long distances with this means of transportation - rail - we can be sure that the event will rouse great interest in our values and tenets - what we may term the "UNICA-Idea", the idea of bringing peoples together through non-professional filmmaking.

02. What is the date and where is the venue? - The journey will probably take place in the course of the summer of 2006, i.e. in 2 years time. The venue for the 68th

UNICA Congress will be in South Korea, according to the organizers in two cities south of Seoul.

03. How to go to the Unica 2006 Congress in South Korea? - The participants will come from all parts of Europe and meet in Vienna - South station (*Südbahnhof*) and then travel to Korea in a special train. Because of the difference in railway gauge, only Russian carriages can be used. Next to function coaches for common activities, the train would have sleeping cars (*wagons lits*) with individual compartments.

04. What is the distance? - The distance to cover to East Asia is approximately 14.000 km (one way), the route runs through areas with very diverse cultures, climate conditions and nine time zones.

05. Will it be possible to leave the train sometimes? Some stopovers can be organised for sightseeing tours in cities selected in advance; however, we should accept that such stops will make the journey longer.

06. How long will the train trip be? - The time necessary for the journey will be at least 12 days (2 days from Vienna to Moscow, 8 days in the "Transsiberian" to Vladivostok, 2 days to Seoul). Stopovers for cultural visits could prolong the travelling time up to 2.5 weeks. If you send practical proposals and suggestions for stopovers in the next few weeks to the organisers, such places can be examined in a democratic way and taken up into the general programme and arrangements can be made.

07. How long will the UNICA Congress be? - The people attending the Festival have the possibility of prolonging their stay in Korea as they wish, bearing in mind that, in the case of Congresses held out of Europe, the organisers propose one-week programmes before or after the Congress and they can book such tourist packages. A UNICA-Congress out of Europe would include: one week as the pre-programme, the International Film Festival and the Congress with national Delegates for some 10 days, one week for the post-programme.

08. Will we also spend nights on board the train when having a stopover? - We could envisage to spend a night in the train on the occasion of the two-day stay in Moscow. Otherwise, all nights spent in the train are a way to shorten travelling time.

09. In the train across North-Korea? - It has been technically possible to travel across the country since 2002 and the obstacles that had existed until now can now be overcome, as the short section which has been blocked for half a century has now been opened again to the traffic (So far, it was necessary to take the China route and, from there, take a high-sea ferry to South Korea).

10. How will we finance such an ambitious project? - The means of transportation selected - rail - is likely to have an enormous media impact because of the originality of the event and the mode of travelling. We could then capitalise on this impact to raise funds for the project. For instance, allotting broadcasting rights to TV corporations or identifying companies prepared to be sponsors and, for instance, offer appropriate video equipment to be set up in the train. Another possibility to fund the initiative is round-the-clock internet broadcasting. It would be ideal to build a team of video reporters who would be in charge of collecting images for documentation on a non-stop basis that TV producers could then make good use of.

11. What does the journey cost? - The more people we can win to this project, the better the chances for success and the cheaper the fare and overheads for individuals.

12. How can travellers use all this spare time in the train? - Beside resting and enjoying film projections, a wide range of activities is possible. We have been thinking of setting up a small film studio offering seminars on filmmaking; successful participants would obtain a certificate at the end of the journey.

13. What can of mishaps could occur? Provision should be made to provide minimum medical care to the participants and take care of some basic needs (the so-called "ananconomy"). For the rest, dear readers, you are kindly requested to contribute to a list of possible mishaps and incidents and make suggestions about the way to prevent them.

14. How will we travel back home? - A return trip by train is of course feasible and this possibility and the corresponding arrangements will be examined only if you express interest in it. Please let us know as soon as possible. We could also think of customising the mode of transportation for the return trip, which obviously would impose extensive and accurate preparations (including the possibility of organising a Europe-Journey for Koreans for the return trip).

15. Which institutions are already involved in the project? - Preliminary talks have shown that some institutions are interested in the project, for instance the Austrian UNESCO-Committee. Other Austrian organisations have also been approached to obtain assistance, including the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Military Academy. We also got in touch with the *Bundesbahn* (Austrian railways) and the South Korean consul. These organisations are prepared to commit themselves if they have assurance that the number of would-be participants is high enough.

16. How many people should or will participate? - Our rough estimate is 200 people but this group could be by one quarter smaller or double that size; some people have already expressed their willingness to take part and are involved in the preparations.

17. Will people who do not belong to the UNICA-Film family be allowed to participate? - Sure, we are welcome to invite seasoned travellers among your close friends. There is no need to be a very active filmmakers; however, candidates should be open to the standards and values that UNICA promote as a film organisation.

18. How can we contribute to the Project as individuals? - Basically by turning to potential sponsors among your close friends and close acquaintances. You may also tell us about globetrotters whom you know well. At that stage, we definitely need numerous answers - even if only tentative - to enlarge the circle of would-be travellers. Each show of interest adds to the chances of seeing the Project materialise.

19. To what extent is a positive answer given now considered as committal? - At that stage we are just talking of a declaration of intent which is not binding but will contribute to the success of the Project and make an impression on the partners with whom we negotiate.

20. When can we commit ourselves to participating in the journey? - After this initial phase, all persons who showed an interest will receive a registration form.

Dear readers, I kindly request you to share your ideas and suggestions with us and offer assistance in relation to your activity or occupation. You may respond to this appeal by either giving a positive answer which, at that stage, is not binding, but contributes to the actualisation of the Project and/or giving the names of potential participants. Please take some time to give a thought to this proposal and tell us before the end of the month.

Many thanks for your co-operation and
kind regards from
Franz SCHLAGER
SALZBURG, AUSTRIA, autumn 2003

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Based on the Warsaw (*Warszawa*) decision, this message should be published and distributed by the UNICA-Comitee, the chairmen of the national organisations and their clubs, the magazine "*UNICA-NEWS*" and the Internet homepages of UNICA.

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