Summary

The low cost airlines, arisen after the liberalization of the skies of the European Union in 1997, actually win more money and clients that the traditional companies. The data obtained after the realization of this minor thesis reflect a growth near the twenty percent annual, even in the number of routes operated as in the number of users, also verifying a half slope of prices around the sixty percent (60%) on the part of the companies of low cost regarding the traditional companies.

This situation has taken to think about the possibility that the relationship between the air transport and the high-speed rail transport in distances under the eight hundred (800) kilometres substantially vary in next years. The current rail way hegemony in those distances, based on the high frequency of daily services, in the smallest times of access to the exit place, in the smallest times of billing and waits, in the biggest comfort on board and in the smallest rates, can change after the appearance of the low cost airlines. These airlines, with values of daily frequency services, comfort on board, access’ times to the airports and times for billing similar than those of the traditional companies, have in the reduced rates offered to their users their main advantage.

To reach these conclusions it has been necessary to begin the minor thesis with a small introduction to the concept of transport, and subsequently a more exhaustive study of the air transport has been developed, making special effort to the aviation history, the current situation of the air transport in the world and the future tendencies, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Later it has begun a more particular study of the twelve European low cost companies recognized by the ETN (European Travel Network) as such. These are Air lib Express, Basiq Air, Bmibaby, Buzz, Ciaofly, Easyjet, Slang, Go fly, Goodjet, Ryan Air, Sky Europe and Virgin.

Of these air companies their main advantages and inconveniences have settled down regarding the traditional companies, and were mentioned the routes and the airports used, besides the costs for the user in this routes and in the accesses to those airports. This way, the total cost could settle down for the user of each one of the routes.

To be able to compare this low cost airlines with the traditional companies and with the high-speed rail services, it has been necessary to develop a similar study for each one. At first, the main differences between the traditional air companies and the low cost airlines were described, and then the total cost for the users has been determined when travelling in those routes also operated by the low cost airlines. This way it was possible to verify the great cost difference that exists when carrying out the same routes varying so alone the air company used.

Lastly the study of the high-speed rail transports in Europe started, reflecting as much the current net as the future projected net. The important bet made by the European governments to upgrade this type of transport inside each country has been verified. In this context it was determined, the same as in the previous cases, the cost that supposed for the user to carry out the routes operated by the transports studied previously.

Therefore, established one itemized comparative in the studied transports we has been able to verify that the appearance of the low cost airlines will suppose an important change in the competitive scene of the high-speed railroad, in the sense that this way of transport will lose a part of the market quota that at the moment possesses.