

Closing of Combined Transport's business year

On 15 May the General Assembly of UIRR has drawn the balance of the business year of European Combined Transport and its industry association, UIRR. Three new members were also admitted into the association: Far East Land Bridge, Lugo Terminal and Trans Eurasia Logistics. Retiring Director General, Martin Burkhardt's 26-years of service to the association and to the cause of Combined Transport was thanked by the General Assembly.

European Combined Transport Operators and Terminal Managers belonging to UIRR concluded a successful year in 2013 delivering 3.84% growth in terms of consignments and 4.25% in tonne-kilometres in a difficult business environment.

This performance, however, still does not mean that European Combined Transport would have overcome the negative consequences of the second contraction caused by the economic crisis a year before. Depressed freight rates, attributable to price cuts by fiercely competing road hauliers, posed the main challenge of the year. CT Operators are not capitalised to the extent that would enable them to match these price cuts driven by extensive unused trucking capacities.

UIRR admitted new members into the association for the first time in 7 years, and there were immediately three companies joining at once:

- **Far East Land Bridge** (FELB - <http://www.fareastlandbridge.com/>): The Vienna based company organises and operates CT trains between Europe and China since 2007 along the Trans-Siberian Route.
- **Lugo Terminal** (<http://www.lugoterminal.com/>): The Transshipment Terminal and logistics centre managed by the company is located near Bologna in Italy, forming an integral part of Europe's dominant North-South CT route.
- **Trans Eurasia Logistics** (TEL- <http://www.trans-eurasia-logistics.com/>): The company headquartered in Berlin was founded in 2008. TEL operates CT trains connecting Europe with Central- and Eastern Asia on both the Kazakh and the Trans-Siberian Routes.

Members of UIRR, colleagues and friends of retiring Director General Martin Burkhardt were present during the gala dinner, which followed the General Assembly, in great numbers, to express their recognition of his life-long service to Combined Transport and his achievements. Mr Burkhardt will continue in his capacity representing rail freight customers in the Administrative Board of the European Railway Agency until the end of his mandate later this year.

The 2013-14 UIRR Report can be found here: <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/annual-reports/annual-reports/mediacentre/651-annual-report-2013-2014.html>

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Ralf-Charley Schultze

"After only four and a half months at UIRR, I am pleased to greet the three new members joining UIRR since 2006: Lugo Terminal in Italy as a Terminal Manager member, furthermore FELB and TEL, two prominent Transcontinental CT Operators with whom UIRR's eastern orientation is reinforced." - remarked Director General Ralf-Charley Schultze on the occasion.

Who is UIRR?

Founded in 1970, the **International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport** (UIRR) represents the interests of European road-rail Combined Transport Operators and Transshipment Terminal Managers.

Road-Rail Combined Transport (CT) is a system of freight forwarding which is based on efficiently and economically inserting electric rail into long-distance (road) transport-chains through the use of intermodal loading units (ILU).

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