

Rail freight in the spotlight

A series of important communications were published lately, which drive the attention of not only policymakers, but also the public at large towards the challenges and problems of European rail freight:

- **20 May:** Sector Statement on Rail Freight Corridors / Boosting International Rail Freight¹
- **24 May:** European Court of Auditors' Special Report N°8/2016 on "Rail freight transport in the EU"²
- **27 May:** European Commission Public Consultation on a European rail network for competitive freight³
- **13 June:** Association of American Railroads (AAR) Report on Freight Railroads impacting national and local economies⁴
- **21 June:** Ministerial Declaration on Rail Freight Corridors to boost international rail freight¹

Operational, regulatory, investment and legislative changes would be needed to enable European rail freight to deliver on the expectations of society: this has been demonstrated in the various communications released recently by important stakeholders of the issue.

- **The sector** should organise itself more efficiently, simplify operational procedures, transparently publish traffic management rules and create transparency toward their implementation, as well as allocate better quality and higher quantity of train paths to freight trains - as permitted and supported by their public sector owners, the Member States.
- **Rail regulators** should simplify and harmonise (national) rules, while enforce existing law within the Member States.
- **Infrastructure investments** should adhere more closely to the needs of rail freight and a framework to enable genuine private capital inflow to the funding of investments into the rail infrastructure should also be created.
- **Legislators** should create a level playing field between the various competing modes of transport with regards to both the accessing of infrastructure and the internalisation of external costs.

UIRR, whose CT Operator members realised over 84% of their performance in 2015 along cross-border relations, is especially interested in and committed to contribute to the success of European rail freight, which is attested to by the position paper titled The Issues of Rail Freight - released today: <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2016/mediacentre/796-position-paper-issues-of-rail-freight.html>

¹ <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2016/mediacentre/792-ministerial-declaration-and-sector-statement-concerning-international-rail-freight.html>

² <http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=36398>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/consultations/2016-european-rail-network-for-competitive-freight_en.htm

⁴ <https://www.aar.org/newsandevents/Press-Releases/Pages/New-Report-Finds-Freight-Railroads-Greatly-Impact-National-Local-Economies.aspx>



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"It seems transport politicians found the right policy mix to boost rail freight in the USA over 36 years ago, where the Staggers Act, which unlocked \$600 billion worth of investment, was coupled with a fair and equal regulatory framework from a modal perspective. This policy mix substantially contributed to the emergence of a healthy modal mix in longer distance freight transport, which continues to support the economy and competitiveness." - pointed out UIRR President Ralf-Charley Schultze.

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).