

Saturday, 9 May 2020

Combined Transport and the European Common Market

The 70th Anniversary of the signing of the Schuman Declaration, which laid the foundation of the European Common Market and the European Union, is celebrated today. The first European Combined Transport Operators, who organize the technique that enables the efficient insertion of non-road modes of transport into longer distance transport chains, were founded not long after.

Combined Transport serves the Common Market and the European citizens by providing a superior response to the challenges that our community of European nations and our economy faced over the decades:

- Containerisation was invented to facilitate efficient military logistics – initially between continents – that contributed to the post-World War II reconstruction;
- The geopolitical risk of increased dependence on cheap oil that was largely imported into Europe has been made obvious during the oil crises, when Combined Transport stood ready to shift trucks to trains using huckepack (piggyback) transport – which is today known as rolling motorways (RoLa);
- Increased trade due to the robust economic growth attributable to the success of the European Project required ever greater and more efficient transport capacities that were able to bridge longer distances; unaccompanied Combined Transport stood behind the economic growth, the enlargement and ultimately the globalization of supply chains.
- Society's demands to curb pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases pose an increasing challenge to our economy and the transporters of freight. The superior attributes of electric rail and waterborne modes of transport in this field are – to a large extent – opened up by Combined Transport.
- The difficulty to attract young people to the arduous profession of long-distance truck driving presents the latest challenge, where Combined Transport again comes to help Europe with the high productivity and dominantly local jobs that the facilitation of Combined Transport requires.

The industry association of European Combined Transport, UIRR, will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of its founding in October this year, while several of our founding members have begun their operations during the decade before. The use of ever more efficient intermodal loading units coupled with advances in railway technology, the enhancements to the railway infrastructure and increased levels of digitalization will ensure that Combined Transport will continue to present a superior alternative in terms of both economic and ecological efficiency when it comes to fulfil the needs of Europe to move cargo over longer distances within the continent and beyond.

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Ralf-Charley Schultze

"Combined Transport and the European Project go hand in hand. The intermodal technique produced efficient answers to the challenges of Europe during the decades that are behind us – proven by Combined Transport's unabated growth. We will continue to deliver solutions to the benefit of the European society and to contribute to building a resilient and competitive European economy." - declared 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 Transhipment 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).