



Recast of the First Railway Package

The International Union of combined Road-Rail transport companies (UIRR) **speaking for Europe's road-rail Combined Transport operators – customers of quality rail freight services** – expressed its opinion about the European Commission's proposal to recast the Directives¹ making up the First Railway Package in a Position Paper² issued today.

The decade-long experience with implementing and creatively interpreting these rules by Member States, as uncovered during the currently ongoing infringement procedure, as well as the need to adapt the legislation to the 'railway reality' in the new Member States, which joined the European Union in 2004 and 2006, adequately justify such a thorough revision.

Considering the less-than-perfect implementation and functioning of the existing law, UIRR evaluated the proposal from three aspects: (i) will it create the needed **stable financing for rail infrastructure managers**, (ii) will it improve the **fairness and transparency of competition within the rail sector**, and (iii) will it contribute to **reducing the inequality between the competitive framework conditions of the competing modes of transport**.

In this spirit UIRR calls on the European Parliament and Council to

(i) Require Member States to prepare **long-term projections on the year-on-year changes of the track access charges** so that this important cost factor of rail freight becomes predictable in business planning. Adequate State funding should be provided to allow for these projections to be maintained.

(ii) Privileged (ownership-type) relationships between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers should not be allowed.

¹ FRP Directives: 2001/12, 2001/13 and 2001/14

² <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2011/mediacentre/414-pospap-recast-first-rail-package.html>

(iii) Internalisation of rail externalities should not happen faster and on a broader scale for rail than required for the road sector (Re: ongoing Eurovignette amendment).

(iv) UIRR rejects the concept of "market segmentation" and thinks that increased track access charges (mark-ups) can only be accepted if higher levels of service are promised alongside (guaranteed faster average speed and much improved rates of punctuality). Moreover, a charging scheme can only be considered "efficient" from the viewpoint of the customer/operator.

(v) Discounted track access charges should apply when using degraded lines with (permanent) speed and axle weight limitations. Performance schemes should be enhanced by additional transparency measures (reporting obligations).



Executive Chairman, Mr Rudy Colle said: "UIRR trusts that, especially in case the proposal is enhanced during the legislative procedure by embracing the opinions contained in the Position Paper revealed today, **the new Directive can become an accelerator of improving the efficiency of not only Europe's railways, but the EU's entire transport sector as well.**"

Who is UIRR: Founded 40 years ago, in 1970, the International Union of Road-Rail combined transport companies (UIRR) represents the interests of a unique system of transport: through utilising Intermodal Loading Units (ILUs), or special wagons capable of carrying unmodified ordinary trucks⁵, Combined Transport operators catalyse the effective insertion of (electric) rail technology into the longer distance sections of continental freight transport-chains.

It is estimated that 17% of continental long-distance freight transport in Europe uses road-rail Combined Transport today. Already one in four European freight trains transport intermodal loading units. This unique system of transport – thanks to the involvement of electrified railways – emits 75% less GHG as pure road transport and uses considerably less energy.