



# COMBINED TRANSPORT IN BRIEF

## Megatrucks—State of play

If there is one political subject that takes centre stage in transport today, then it is undoubtedly the question of whether or not heavy vehicles exceeding the standards currently authorised by Directive 96/53 should be allowed onto European roads. With the aid of TIM Consult, the UIRR and its German member company Kombiverkehr were the first to quantify one of the foreseeable consequences of bringing longer, heavier road units into service, i.e. that goods traffic would go back from the railways to the roads, as logically these units become roughly 20 to 25% cheaper per available TKm.

A detailed assessment of almost 800 O & D traffic streams currently handled using combined transport and all or part of whose routes touch Germany showed that in 55% of cases the cost comparison which is currently in favour of CT compared to a conventional lorry would swing back in favour of the megatrucks. The concomitant switching of traffic would lead to a 24% increase in truck circulations instead of the reduction mentioned by the industrial and commercial promoters of oversized lorries.

Consultants and renowned academic institutes have been asked to carry out various other analyses

(including those on the initiative of the German Ministry of Transport, the Community of European Railways and the International Union of Railways) designed to also verify the effects of this modal transfer

on congestion, pollution and safety.

The conclusions all point in the same direction, be it with some variation in the orders of magnitude: there would be a severe deterioration of all of these parameters which would make it even more difficult to justify the adaptation or building of road infrastructures even when seen solely from the point of view of their financing by the States.

In the face of the wide range of position taken on the subject of these megatrucks, the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr J. Barrot, has taken the praiseworthy decision to ask a consortium of consultants to undertake a comprehensive examination of the question.

As was to be expected, their first meeting with the interested stakeholders in Brussels on 4<sup>th</sup> March merely confirmed the differences of opinion, some of which were not supported.

The Commission specified on this occasion that the scope of the analysis does not cover megatrucks alone but also other forms of liberalisation under Dir 96/53, such as a possible higher weight limit on road transport within current road dimensions. A change of this kind designed to facilitate road transport should also be looked at within the wider context of its effect on modal split, which can only develop unfavourably for the modes which are known to be safer and less polluting such as rail. Figures have been produced recently showing that, on a representative pan-European network, with the same route length, CT consumes on average almost 30% less non-renewable energy than single mode road transport and emits up to 55% less CO<sub>2</sub>.

Generally speaking, changing in any way whatsoever the current limits set in Dir 96/53 to the detriment of modal shift would not fit in with the European Commission's co-modality policy which consists of building mobility on the predominant economic and environmental assets of each mode and combination of these.

**Mega-Trucks versus Rail Freight ?**

What the admission of Mega-Trucks would really mean for Europe  
Facts and arguments



## Conférence on « Internalising external transport costs »

On 31<sup>st</sup> January, the European Commission published the results of the consultation on this subject launched at an event allowing a wide-ranging exchange of views between authorities, consultants and representatives of all transport sectors. It emerged that there is strong support for the idea of internalising external costs. At the meeting the UIRR underlined the fact that a development of this kind is likely not only to place the various modes on an equal footing in terms of access to the transport market, but also to support CT given that it aims to handle a major part of the total route for modes that generate fewer external costs, which is fully in line with European comodality and intermodality policy. In an committed speech, Mr Jacques Barrot, the Vice-President and European Commissioner with responsibility for Transport, said that internalising will start by affecting road transport which is firstly the most

pollutant mode and secondly the one for which we have for the time being the most reliable data on external costs. So a packet of measures was announced for no later than 10<sup>th</sup> June this year. Amongst other things, it would have to include a proposed methodology designed to insource the external costs of road transport, a proposed directive amending the Eurovignette directive and two strategies; one covering internalising in the longer term for other modes of transport, the other the reduction of the noise pollution caused by the railways. In his speech, Mr Paolo Costa, the President of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, emphasised the need to invest in the infrastructure used by the greenest modes, and to use the part of the price paid by the user to encourage modal shift and the financing of said infrastructure. Both these ideas have been supported for years already by the UIRR.

## The European Commission's communications on « Towards a rail network giving priority to freight » and « Freight logistics action plan »

The UIRR is delighted with the common denominator of these documents which shows the community authorities' desire to support the development of rail freight against a growing background of paralysis of mobility. As the UIRR traditionally aims to make a constructive contribution, it has identified a number of measures which would be more likely to help the "rail network giving priority to freight" to absorb the growth in rail freight which is estimated at approximately 40% by 2015. So, in terms of quality, the UIRR is proposing that the increase in rail capacities should be accompanied by stimuli, or even obligations to be laid upon the railway undertakings and infrastructure managers, designed to benefit customers, i.e. the market. To illustrate its commitment towards achieving progress in that field, the UIRR itself prepares with the UIC a project of labelling and monitoring of CT services on given axes, with the goal of generalising this system in the end. Furthermore, the establishing of fair, innovative priority rules of access to rail for those services should be logically at the heart of joint thinking if we want to succeed in building a network which will be fit for the stated purpose. On the key subject of liberalisation, the UIRR

supports any measure likely to revitalise the rail freight market, and especially giving bodies other than railway undertakings (RUs) the opportunity to obtain train paths anywhere in Europe, or at least see these train paths recognised as belonging to those who take on the commercial responsibility for the train (e.g. CT operators) even if booking them is carried out by an RU; this would support freedom of choice of the rail operator.

Both the terminals and the marshalling yards attached to them are rightly acknowledged to be major components of the modern chain. However the UIRR notes that intermodal terminals are not expressly mentioned in the Commission's communication. As a result of the considerable role they have to play in the prospects of better logistics in Europe, their development should also be supported.

Overall the proposals contained in the action plan on logistics are heading in the right direction. However, as mentioned on the front page, the possibility of an amendment to directive 96/53/EC, which would allow the widespread introduction of longer and heavier lorries, is a justified cause for concern. Please visit [www.uirr.com](http://www.uirr.com) to read the UIRR's official position paper.

## RNE annual conference



The annual conference of infrastructure managers (IMs), European Rail-Net Europe, was held in Vienna at the end of November 2007 and attended by

almost 180 experts, including Messrs E. Muzio and M. Burkhardt, who are Chairman and Director General of the UIRR respectively.

As a result of the presentation of the Europtirails software, they were able to note that train traffic can be monitored to within a few minutes. This program is of great interest to CT operators because, using their own data on the wagons of which the train is made up and on the loading units they are carrying, they could derive all the data they need for tracking and tracing their customers. At the moment Europtirails is being used by six European railway undertakings (RUs), and others are gradually coming on board.

In his presentation, Mr Burkhardt hoped that CT operators would be able to obtain direct access to the data about their trains, including situations

where the train paths are not reserved directly by the operators as "authorised candidates", but from the IMs via the RUs, which is currently the rule. These IMs would have to keep a list of customers/operators for whom the RUs have reserved train paths. It is important for this feature to be built into the development of the software in time.

Another major subject for the conference was the tariff system for train paths according to the services, which is due to be introduced in accordance with Directive 2001/14. However, so far, this has only been applied in a few EU Member States. However, it is the basis for the quality agreements to be reached between RUs, operators and end customers. The aim should be the optimisation of the whole of the logistics chain. We need information on delays to be fed back to the people responsible for them, who must then meet the financial consequences. This would offer an incentive with a view to reducing the wasting of resources involved in inadequate quality. A UIC task force is working on drawing up a system of compensation, although it is not due to be launched until 2009.

The UIRR regrets the fact that in the beginning it will only deal with limited compensation which will not cover the additional costs to operators and customers.

## Wagon noise – Options for retrofitting

On 8<sup>th</sup> February, the European Commission invited the parties involved to give their opinions about a study carried out by Price Waterhouse Coopers on the noise made by wagons when braking, and proposing two separate solutions to deal with this issue:

- subsidies for wagon owners which would go hand-in-hand with operational restrictions after a few years for noisy wagons and voluntary agreement to equip the fleet of current wagons with K or LL brake blocks which generate less noise (action called 'retrofitting')
- differentiated tariffs to be set for train paths along with a "noise" budget for the routes and a voluntary agreement for retrofitting

It would appear that at the moment the European Commission is inclining more towards the second solution. Subsequently there would for a few years be a bonus for wagons which have been converted to be less noisy.

The communication on this subject which the Commission plans to publish in June should answer questions from the sector, and amongst other things it should specify the procedures relating to the retrofitting.

The UIRR has regularly highlighted the fact that although these measures are indeed likely to reinforce the appeal of rail freight, they must not bring about costs which are so significant that they would affect the competitiveness of the railways.



## Programme Marco Polo II

Since the start of 2008, the UIRR has been actively involved in two new projects which fall within the framework of the Marco Polo 2 programme. It is mainly handling the administrative co-ordination of these projects pursuing a modal transfer in south-eastern Europe.

### Rolling Motorways Network Through Eastern Europe (RoMo-Net)

By successively extending the existing service between Szeged (HU) and Wels (AT), the UIRR member companies Hungarokombi (HU, project manager) and Ökombi (AT) will be creating a rolling road (Ro-Ro) chain between Bucharest (RO) and Regensburg (DE) in the space of 3 years.

In addition to the environmental advantages it offers, this network will help to save a considerable amount of time for the lorries involved in long distance transport. Indeed, after spending several hours on the road, the road haulage driver will be able to rest in the sleeper berths fitted out for this purpose on the Rolling Road whilst at the same time the goods being carried will still be moving towards their final destination.

Technical innovation will lie at the heart of the project as, amongst other things, the partners intend to develop a tracking and tracing system so that the lorries carried by the Ro-Ros can be located in real time, and to develop an online reservation system.

This project aims to shift more than 1 thousand million TKMs from road to rail.



### South East European Intermodal Services (SEEIS)

The CT operators Adria Kombi (operational coordinator, SI), Cemat (IT), Kombiverkehr (DE) and Rocombi (RO) will be introducing five new CT trains from Slovenia (Ljubljana as nodal point) to countries of south-eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Turkey).

The new ranges of services will be incorporated into the existing CT network set up at the time of the fruitful SINGER project (direct trains connecting Ljubljana to important economic regions such as Munich, Budapest and Verona).

The partners also intend to improve their information systems in order to let their customers know about the locations of their loading units during transport from one worksite to another by incorporating these trains into the CESAR system, which is the monitoring interface used every day by more than 500 CT customers.

They further aim to increase the overall level of safety by taking stronger measures with regard to access to and exit from the worksites. The results of the INSECTT project will be used and tested.

The SEEIS project has set itself the target of transferring more than 504 million TKMs from the road to the railways in two years.

### Agenda

DIOMIS Conference  
UIRR General Assembly and Congress

17<sup>th</sup> April 2008  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Paris (F)  
Portoroz (Koper, Slovenia)



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