

## Misleading picture in EUROSTAT's freight transport report

Taking 21 months after the end of the reporting period, the European Union statistics services (EUROSTAT) published its report concerning 2012 Inland Freight Transport in the European Union<sup>1</sup> last week. UIRR regrets the numerous questions that are to be raised with regards to the report, and pledges its collaboration to help revise the EU's statistics practice in a way, which will serve the needs and fulfil the purpose of accurately informing European transport politicians.

Every reader of the aforementioned Report<sup>1</sup> should be conscious about the following questions and shortcomings, when considering this EUROSTAT communication:

- It is unclear, and even confusing, why has EUROSTAT chosen 2007 as the basis year of comparison (in its analysis) of the 2012 data, as it conducts a data collection every year. Should 2009 have been chosen, the title could have read: **market share of road declined 2,5 percentage points in five years.**
- EUROSTAT defines "inland freight transport" as "road, rail and inland waterways", whereas the **coastal shipping variation of short-sea navigation** is a direct competitor to the aforementioned transport modes; subsequently its performance data should have been included if desiring to provide an accurate picture.
- Considering that the road mode is three-times as large as all other modes of transport, it is regrettable that EUROSTAT did not make an effort to split this huge slice of the pie, especially since there are two distinctively different business models in road haulage: **day-trucking**, or local distribution within a radius of 300km, and **long-distance trucking**, which takes place on distances longer than 300km requiring that the driver spends the night away from his home when performing the journey. [DG MOVE was capable of doing this distance-based breakdown as early as in 2010 within its Road Vademecum Report<sup>2</sup>.] Moreover, only this differentiation could have enabled accurate gauging of the progress towards the 2011 EC Transport White Paper's modal-shift aims of trucking over distances longer than 300km to sustainable modes<sup>3</sup>.
- It is surprising that EUROSTAT requires **21 months to produce a report**, which should be published at least a year sooner to be useful and effective. In case it took this long, much deeper and well considered analysis should have accompanied it

UIRR has been engaged in the collection of statistical data from its members concerning the rail portion of the Road-Rail transport-chains that they operate. These UIRR statistics<sup>4</sup> are included in the EUROSTAT transport statistics handbook, and show an almost linear growth of 80% over 23 years (1990-2013).

It is UIRR's desire to assist in transforming EUROSTAT's transport data collection and reporting practice to better support European transport politics in the future.

\* \* \*



Ralf-Charley Schultze

*"EUROSTAT released its latest report on inland freight transport with a clumsy analysis and accompanying press release. Had it chosen 2009 for its data comparison analysis - and not 2007 - the title could have been: **modal share of road declined 2,5 percentage points in five years.**" - 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).

31, rue Montoyer - bte 11 | B-1000 | Brussels  
[www.uirr.com](http://www.uirr.com) | [headoffice.brussels@uirr.com](mailto:headoffice.brussels@uirr.com)  
 Tel. : +32 (0)2 548 78 90 | Fax : +32 (0)2 512 63 93

<sup>1</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/7-01102014-AP/EN/7-01102014-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/7-01102014-AP/EN/7-01102014-AP-EN.PDF)

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/doc/2010-road-freight-vademecum.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The 2010 transport White Paper's modal shift aim for long-distance trucking to sustainable modes: "30% by 2030 and 50% by 2050".

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/annual-reports/annual-reports.html>