



UIRR calls for a European transport policy which would more actively resolve bottlenecks in railway infrastructure, improve interoperability and internalise the external costs of transport. During a luncheon event today, hosted by Transport Committee member Mr Dirk Sterckx at the European Parliament, the potential contribution of Road-Rail Combined Transport to making Europe's transport system sustainable was highlighted, as well as the policy actions needed to encourage it.

Mr Dirk Sterckx, member of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee since 1999 hosted the luncheon, organised by UIRR. Mr. Sterckx noted the excellent timing of the opportunity to discuss the outlook for Combined Transport, the most promising segment of rail freight, since parliamentary discussion of several relevant dossiers is coming up, such as the Future of Transport and the new transport white paper, the amendment of the Eurovignette directive and the proposal for a priority freight network.



From left to right: Messrs Casteletti (DG MOVE), Sterckx (MEP) and Colle (UIRR)

Development of traffic 1999-2008

Road-Rail Combined Transport grew by 5.5% p.a. over the past 10 years (between 1999-2008), well outperforming the 3% annual growth-rate of rail freight and 2.85% annual expansion of total land transport¹ volumes in Europe.

Mr Rudy Colle, Chairman of UIRR pointed out that through this dynamic development a mode of long-distance freight transport gained market share, which uses 20-30% less energy and has up to 60% smaller carbon footprint when compared with pure road transport.

Mr Colle stressed that performance enhancement efforts of both freight railway operators and

infrastructure managers will be needed, besides legislative intervention, to return Combined Transport to its dynamic growth rate experienced before the crisis.

The outlook until 2018

The future of Road-Rail Combined Transport is forecast to be even brighter, when looking at the results derived from the DIOMIS study², which foresees an average growth rate of over 8% p.a. until 2018.

Mr Eric Peetermans of UIC noted that this rate of dynamism can only be achieved, however, if investments, political and management decisions are much more closely coordinated than in the past.

European policies

Mr Maurizio Castelletti, speaking on behalf of the newly formed Directorate General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), detailed the policy actions planned by the European Commission, which aim at returning Combined Transport to its robust growth experienced before the crisis.

The recast of the First Railway Package – presently under consideration – could provide a good opportunity to compel Member States to implement a marginal cost based infrastructure access charging scheme. Responding to a question by MEP Mr Cramer, Mr Castelletti described this solution as the most effective in levelling out the differences in the cost of infrastructure access experienced across Member States today.

UIRR in brief

The International Union of Combined Road-Rail Combined Transport Companies (UIRR) represents the interests of 18 European combined transport operators in Brussels since 1970. The association has been successful in collaborating on the development of proactive European policies such as rail liberalisation and the Marco Polo program³.

Presentations delivered during the luncheon may be downloaded from www.uirr.com.

¹ Source: Eurostat

² DIOMIS: Developing Infrastructure use and Operating Models for Intermodal Shift (see: www.uic.org/diomis)

³ Marco Polo program: an EC program to encourage modal shift from road to sustainable modes of transport