

Preemptive government action should not undermine CT in Denmark

The Danish government decided¹ to suspend the equivalence between cross-border (long distance) trucking and its equivalent Combined Transport (CT) operation – enshrined in Article 4 of the CT Directive² since 1975. The measure will take effect on 21 February 2022.



Transportminister Benny Engelbrecht (S)
Foto: Jens Dresling/Ritzau Scanpix

Transport Minister Benny Engelbrecht was tasked to balance social considerations, alleged abuse of the cabotage-free running of domestic road legs linked to border-crossing CT operations, and environmental considerations focused on the need to decarbonise transport. His choice was to go for a measure that has been proven destructive to Combined Transport in two recent studies³ – one ordered by the European intermodal sector and another one drafted for the European Commission.

The decision was taken despite openly admitting that

- Data is not very good today concerning the existence of major problems in the area of Combined Transport,
- The government's decision is about "preventing a potential problem",
- The perceived regulatory loophole would only need to be addressed until the technologies for more effective enforcement – e.g. the smart tachograph and a register for foreign road hauliers in Denmark – are introduced.

Combined Transport has a carbon footprint that is up to 70% lower than road-only long-distance transport. This is due to the energy efficiency of electric rail and waterborne modes employed on the longest section of the carriage. Moreover, Combined Transport has the easiest path to becoming a zero-carbon freight transport solution by 2030.

The government of Denmark nevertheless took a decision that will most certainly result in higher carbon emissions through more trucking within Denmark and its neighbouring countries.

While UIRR strongly supports efficient and consequential enforcement practices, we also believe that the decarbonisation task ahead of the European transport sector cannot be overcome without much more electric railway transport – made possible by intermodal transshipment techniques. Therefore, the measure taken by the Danish government should be accompanied by a transparent list of conditions, upon fulfilment of which the adherence to Article 4 of the CTD can be restored in Denmark, as well as a robust monitoring scheme that regularly collects the empirical evidence on the developments in the surface freight transport sector.

UIRR requests that the Danish government introduce a Combined Transport development and support programme, which includes a cost compensation to the organisers of Combined Transport to counterbalance the damage its decision to suspend Article 4 of the CT Directive will cause.



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"Combined Transport must play a major role in the decarbonisation of surface freight transport in Europe, as the benefits that it delivers to society cannot be economically achieved through other means. The government of Denmark is strongly encouraged to take note of this and suitably adjust its policies towards intermodality in cargo transportation." - stated 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 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).

¹ <https://mobilitywatch.dk/nyheder/politik/article12929031.ece>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0106&from=EN>

³ <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2021/mediacentre/1772-commission-study-confirms-sector-ct-will-suffer-under-the-new-eu-road-haulage-rules.html>