

Intermodal freight should be a transport mode in its own right

30 November 2021: The European Intermodal Summit 2021¹ took place, with more than 300 participants, to discuss the state of the art in European intermodal transport in three sections:

- energy and labour efficiency,
- decarbonisation, and
- standardisation and digitalisation.



DG MOVE Director General, Henrik Hololei, declared that intermodal transport has a key role to play in the plans of the European Union. In order to achieve this, the European Commission proposes to upgrade existing as well as to build new intermodal-specific infrastructure (transshipment terminals), and to improve the intermodal compatibility of the rail infrastructure - especially when considering the P400 loading gauge. Several digitalisation and standardisation initiatives will contribute to enhancing Combined Transport's productivity, while the

European Union will provide vital funding through its programmes: the Connecting Europe Transport 2 (CEF-Transport) programme, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the InvestEU and the Horizon Europe programmes.

Denis Choumert, President of the European Shippers Council voiced the expectations of shippers for more intermodal transport services, while Tyrolean Member of the European Parliament and TRAN Committee member Barbara Thaler encouraged the sector to be bold, and based on its growth performance, let its voice to be heard towards policymakers.

The results of the UIRR commissioned study on the carbon footprint and energy efficiency performance of door-to-door Combined Transport, done by Frankfurt-based *d-fine Consultants*, have been presented by Mobility and Transport Leader Dr Thorsten Sickenberger. Accordingly, today's door-to-door intermodal transport chains use 40-70% less energy per tonne-kilometre than their unimodal trucking alternatives, while emitting 60-90% fewer carbon dioxide in the process. And zero-carbon door-to-door Combined Transport is around the corner, as it does not depend on scientific breakthroughs.

Standardisation and digitalisation initiatives, coming from the sector as well as initiated by the European Commission, will be a critical success factor of Combined Transport's future competitiveness. With a near doubling of Combined Transport performance since the 2009 financial and economic crisis, intermodal rail is now the most important and only growing production system of European rail freight.

A dozen intermodal CEOs and two Commission heads of unit made up the three panels, which provided practical examples and listed the achievements of the past decade.

UIRR President Ralf-Charley Schultze announced the CT for Europe (CT4EU) campaign² initiative as the final act of the European Intermodal Summit 2021. This communication exercise will highlight the capabilities and performance of Combined Transport, how it can contribute to solving the dilemmas of our times: the energy crisis, the truck driver shortage and the decarbonisation of transport. CT4EU will accompany the legislation process and bring together intermodal stakeholders to address the Brussels bubble as well as Member States, regional and local policymakers.



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"Combined Transport is the low hanging fruit by which to achieve the shared objectives of the European Union, as well as to solve the challenges of energy scarcity and truck driver shortage. Intermodality has been tried and the robust growth of the past decade is evidence of its capabilities, which do not require scientific breakthroughs. Combined Transport is ready to be put to the test to serve our common good." - pointed out 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).

31, rue Montoyer - bte 11 | B-1000 | Brussels
www.uirr.com | headoffice.brussels@uirr.com
 Tel. : +32 2 548 78 90

¹ <https://www.uirr.com/en/component/content/article/53-homepage-banners/77-european-intermodal-summit-30112021.html>

² www.ct4eu.eu