



Joint Statement on Combined Transport

29 April 2025, Brussels: The signatories of this Statement representing the railway, inland waterway, maritime and intermodal sectors, welcome the Political Agenda presented by the Commission's President and translated into the mission letters of the College of Commissioners. We particularly welcome the need to **enhance Europe's competitiveness through a clean industry and through strengthening the single market, while pursuing the objectives and goals set in place to promote increased energy efficiency and lower dependence of the EU on imported fossil fuels**. We also welcome the aim to enhance the resilience of the EU in light of the external threats, ranging from geopolitical to those rooted in climate change.

Proposals to **improve the performance of freight transport in Europe require a holistic approach** and need to consider the important objectives and standards that modern societies pursue, ranging from **safety standards, social standards, energy efficiency, resilience and the transformation to a low carbon economy**. Combined Transport has the unique, proven capability of contributing to all of these objectives, while advancing the EU's competitiveness at the same time.

The proposal to revise the **Combined Transport Directive (CTD)**, was presented in the **Greening Freight Transport Package together with the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive (WDD)**, the latter with the explicit objective of – among others – enhancing interoperability and boosting intermodal freight transport. **These two legal acts are interdependent**, since changing parameters in WDD may have an impact on compatibility and thus the operational conditions required by Combined Transport. Consequently, these two legislative proposals must be considered in parallel.

We call on the European legislators, specifically the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to:

- a) **Recognise the substantial cost savings Combined Transport offers to society as a whole**, notably through increased energy efficiency, safety performance and enhanced resilience through better interconnected networks, while decreasing pollution, congestion (already costing over 1% of the EU's GDP annually) and the EU's reliance on imported fossil fuels.
- b) **Launch the first reading of the Combined Transport Directive** in the European Parliament, while continuing with discussions in the Council Land Transport Working Party – in parallel with the Weights and Dimensions Directive.
- c) **Avoid solutions that backtrack on the current status quo**, by putting in place incentives or omitting provisions in force, leading to longer road legs or a reverse modal shift at the expense of rail freight, short sea shipping and inland waterway transport.

The collaboration between rail, inland waterways, and short sea shipping including the EU's maritime ports, has to be strengthened in order to improve the resilience of the EU's transport system, to ensure it is prepared to **underpin enhanced civilian and military mobility services**, where these modes have an exceptional role to play. This is another singular co-benefit Combined Transport can deliver very much in line with the EU's policy objectives.

In light of the intention of the Co-legislators to advance the Weights and Dimensions Directive, and for all the reasons listed above, the plea of the signatories of this document is: **“Don't leave Combined Transport behind”**

Moving ahead without Combined Transport will **deepen the already significantly imbalanced playing field between transport modes**, at the cost of the policy objectives the EU has committed to pursue.

The signatories:

CER: Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (www.cer.be)

CT4EU: Combined Transport for Europe (www.ct4eu.eu)

EBU: European Barge Union(www.ebu-uenf.org)

EFIP: Federation of European Inland Ports (<https://www.inlandports.eu/>)

ERFA: European Rail Freight Association (www.erfarail.eu)

ESPO: European Sea Ports Organisation (www.espo.be)

FEPORT: Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals (www.feport.eu)

RFF: Rail Freight Forward (www.railfreightforward.eu)

UIP: International Union of Wagon Keepers (www.uiprail.org)

UIRR: International union for Road-Rail Combined Transport (www.uirr.com)

UNIFE: The European Rail Industry (www.unife.org)