



The International Union of combined Road-Rail transport companies (UIRR) **celebrated the 40th Anniversary of its founding at a Conference on 21 October 2010**. The event brought together 200 representatives of every stakeholder-group of road-rail Combined Transport, and was followed by a gala dinner in the exceptional Atrium of the Brussels Stock Exchange.

European road-rail Combined Transport traces its roots back to the first road congestions, realisation of pollution and the rapidly growing number of accidents in the late 1960s followed by the first oil shock. This unique system of freight transport **effectively inserts (electric) rail into contemporary transport-chains** by carrying goods in either the shape of laden trucks, or packed into containers, semitrailers or swap-bodies (collectively *intermodal loading units*) over a longer section of their journey.

Combined Transport operators were the companies which began organising the link between road and rail by designing services (booking block train capacities to then be sold on a wagon basis to road hauliers or logistics companies), extending administrative services and sometimes even operating terminals and such trains themselves.

Eight Combined Transport operators came together in Munich in October 1970 to found the International Union of combined Road-Rail companies, or UIRR, with the mission to aid the development of this – then infant – industry. Since 1988 the mission of this Brussels-based liaison office is to lobby for a favourable legislative environment, and to organise services, such as tracking and tracing or uniform data messages, which help daily operations.

Today UIRR has 18 members, who operate a network that spans the entire continent. **Combined Transport is responsible for 1 in every 4 freight trains**. The growth rate of this system of freight transport averaged 7 percent annually during the last decade.

While the economic and financial crisis of the last years shook Combined Transport as well, wiping out roughly three years of development, **traffic shows dynamic growth since the beginning of 2010** once again. Thanks to the low-carbon footprint of electric rail traction **Combined Transport stands in the frontline of modal shift**, transferring road tonne-

kilometres onto rail, thereby reducing pro-rata CO₂ emissions by up to 60%!

Road-rail Combined Transport is indispensable considering the European Union's CO₂ reduction goals for 2020, and the fact that these goals cannot be attained without a major reduction in transport-related emissions.



Etienne Schoupe, Belgium's State Secretary for Mobility and Transport and Chairman of the European Council of Transport Ministers said at the conference: "I strongly hope that the landmark decision of the Transport Council on 15 October, when we adopted the amendment of the Eurovignette Directive will mark

the beginning of the process of creating a fair competitive environment between the various modes of transport."

"If the proper conditions are there", remarked **Rudy Colle, UIRR's Executive Chairman**, "by which I mean that terminal capacities are expanded, the rail infrastructure is enhanced, and interoperability achieved, Combined Transport is certainly capable of a 7 percent annual growth over an extended period of time."

About half of European road tonne-kilometres cover distances of 300km or more, which is a ripe source for Combined Transport's future growth. In the theoretical case if Combined Transport would be involved in transferring these consignments, this alone would **reduce the CO₂ emissions of road transport by as much as 30%**.

For more information visit <http://www.uirr.com/en/mediacentre/agenda/2010/mediacentre/365-uirr-40-years.html>, or contact PR & Research Officer, Mr Ákos Érsek (aersek@uirr.com).

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