UIRR catalyses digitalisation in the CT sector

Digitalisation is a high-profile buzzword. In the world of freight transport, it is especially critical to the intermodal sector. Combined Transport uses a range of different assets and requires the collaboration of several actors to facilitate a unit movement. The processes are inherently more complex than the unimodal competition in the form of a single truck used end-to-end. Digitalisation is an efficient tool to mitigate this complexity.

In May 2018, the European Commission unveiled its Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation proposal[1]. The proposed new Regulation was one of the outputs of the Digital Transport Logistics Forum (DTLF: www.dtlf.eu), founded by Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc and actively attended by UIRR over the years. Since that time UIRR has started to work on the "UIRR Roadmap for an Effective Digital Transformation to advance Combined Transport in Europe"[2].

The DTLF will be the platform through which transport sector stakeholders have the possibility to interact with the Commission to support the four implementing and delegated regulations that will facilitate the execution of the eFTI Regulation. If everything runs well, this regulation should reinforce the return-on-investment potential of digitalisation projects.

On 26 September 2019, managers of digitalisation from numerous intermodal stakeholders attended the UIRR Digital Forum in Brussels to discuss the future of digitalisation topics such as:

1) The interoperability of increasingly open platforms, open for new users, but also the interoperability between platforms – adopting a clear statement on the needs for a network of networks.

2) The importance of secure data exchange (data ownership/privacy) and data standardization (e.g. unique train ID, EDIGES format) to avoid inefficiencies

3) The alignment of roadmaps of sector players, where there are several potentially overlapping roadmaps on the table

4) The asset digitalisation and the connected objects: wagon-to-wagon, wagon-to-train, TiS handbook on the intelligent freight train

5) The UIRR Digital Forum will function as an Advisory Committee for the implementation of the CT Digitalisation Roadmap

UIRR members will discuss in the 'UIRR Digitalisation & Innovation Interest Group' – with the mentorship of RCO – the positions to be taken in the ongoing legislative work, as well as the concrete digitalisation projects such as ELETA, the development of the Rail Service Facilities Portal, the ILU-register, EDIGES, TAF TSI Unique Train ID. The digitalisation roadmaps produced by partner organisations and associations will also be reviewed within this important Interest Group of UIRR.

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Ralf-Charley Schultze

"The complexity of producing Combined Transport, which requires several different types of assets and the collaboration of multiple actors to facilitate a cargo movement, should be efficiently mitigated by digitalisation. UIRR as the industry association of intermodal transport in Europe must play a crucial role to catalyse digitalisation and to propose vital input systems that enable it." – 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 Transhipment 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] http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2018/mediacentre/998-uirr-press-release-efti-regulation-a-proposal-to-be-endorsed.html
[2] http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2019/mediacentre/1279-roadmap-for-an-effective-digital-transformation-in-ct.html