

Withdrawal of the CT Directive amendment

Yesterday, on 29 January, the European Commission announced its work programme for 2020¹ and, within it, the withdrawal of the amendment proposal of the Combined Transport Directive. The resulting delay to the modernisation of the Directive can only be justified, if the withdrawal results in the re-tabling of an amendment with an improved, more effective content.

The European intermodal sector greeted the amendment proposal when it was originally introduced by the Commission in November 2017². Several formulations and solutions of the existing Directive 92/106, dating back 28 years, became obsolete, while the changing realities and ambitions require new measures. The original proposal of the Commission, and as it was improved through the legislative process in the European Parliament, already addressed these challenges in a satisfactory manner.

UIRR expressed concerns that the Combined Transport Directive amendment was tabled as part of Mobility Package 2. Intermodality is not a form of road haulage, but an interconnector of the various modes of surface transport. The collaboration between the modes of transport, referred to as intermodal/combined transport, results in a better performing long(er) distance freight transport solution, when compared to its unimodal road alternative.

The climate emergency declaration of the European Parliament³ and the European Green Deal⁴ are evidence of how the broader external circumstances of long(er) distance surface freight transport changed in Europe. On the contrary, the triologue deal reached in relation to Mobility Package 1 affecting the road legs of Combined Transport⁵ regrettably threatens to move the status quo backwards, not forward.

Under such circumstances, the decision of the Commission yesterday to withdraw and then resubmit the CT Directive amendment a year later might be an opportunity. UIRR is hopeful that the removal of the CT Directive from among the transport dossiers currently debated and its re-tabling within a year's time will ultimately enable the progressive changes that the European intermodal sector needs to perform as expected, to continue as an attractive alternative to unimodal long(er) distance trucking.

The sector will continue with its constructive support of the legislative process, while upholding its arguments against the disastrous Mobility Package 1 triologue deal: alternative regulatory means exist to achieve the underlying policy objectives, which should be used instead.

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¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2020-commission-work-programme-key-documents_en

² <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2017/mediacentre/907-uirr-press-release-commission-proposes-new-rules-for-ct-dir-92106.html>

³ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20191121IPR67110/the-european-parliament-declares-climate-emergency>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

⁵ <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2020/mediacentre/1369-uirr-press-release-reclassification-of-ct-road-legs-should-not-be-accepted.html>



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"The struggle to get the Combined Transport Directive progressively updated began in 2012. Thereafter the intermodal sector had to wait 5 years for the proposal itself. "Withdrawal" is clearly not the best outcome after so much effort being put into anything that otherwise enjoys such broad political support. UIRR encourages the Commission to re-table a proposal to enhance the CT Directive as soon as possible and to keep the fundamentals." - 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 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).