



Annus horribilis

The sharp decline of European Combined Transport performance accelerated between July and September of this year to -16,85%. The decline exceeds the 14,67% historic quarterly contraction suffered during Q2.2020 with the worst COVID lockdowns in Europe.

2023 is rapidly becoming an annus horribilis for rail freight, pulling down Combined Transport with it. Strikes, natural disasters, a major derailment, extensive works throughout the network, extreme weather impacts exacerbated by the collapse of intercontinental intermodal railway transport due to the Ukraine war, as well as a generally weak

economic achievement, while cost increases being fuelled by persistently high traction electricity prices and inflation have contributed to the overall weak performance.

The UIRR Sentiment Index on the other hand shows a slightly less pessimistic expectation of sector decisionmakers as business sentiment for the coming 12 months improved to 'slightly negative'. Slowly improving economic performance, gradually implemented improvements to the regulatory framework and a belief that the misfortunes of 2023 cannot repeat themselves two years in a row provide a glimpse of hope.

The European Commission published 3 legislative proposals of the 4 to be contained in the Greening Freight Transport Package on 11 July:

- 1) The Weights and Dimensions Directive amendment aims to improve the operational efficiency of trucking, while also to boost intermodal transport. UIRR concluded that the proposal delivers so strongly on the first that it borders protectionism of low-density cargo carried in trucks, while the measures proposed for intermodal fall far short of ideal.
- 2) The new CountEmissionsEU Regulation goes much more in the right direction. A boost in confidence is needed, however, as the mandatory and all-inclusive application of the Regulation is not only justified but needed in freight transportation.
- 3) The new Rail Infrastructure Capacity Management Regulation should similarly be viewed in a positive light. Amendments will be needed so that it can deliver the increased quantity and improved quality train paths that freight trains need.

The fourth proposal of the Greening Freight Transport Package, the long-awaited amendment of the Combined Transport Directive has been adopted on 7 November. The 4 legislative proposals of the Greening Freight Transport Package have the potential to transpose European Combined Transport from the rollercoaster it has been on since 2008 onto an upward climbing escalator similar to the one enjoyed by the sector after the adoption of the current Combined Transport Directive in 1992. Combined Transport offers the most effective, the most affordable and the lowest risk path to achieving European policy objectives that concern longer distance inland freight transportation.

Dry Port Terminals of Belgrade became the first UIRR member from Serbia, while a memorandum of understanding was signed with Transportindustriförbundet of Sweden making it the 30th MoU Peer.

Ralf-Charley Schultze – President

CONTENTS

Belgium: +7,4 new passenger trains	2
Spain: new rail freight tracking system	2
Italy: €125 million of state aid for freight wagons and locomotives	2
Germany: per capita rail infrastructure investment slows in 2022	2
Channel Tunnel freight traffic declines	2
France: SNCF Fret to stop providing traction services to intermodal trains	2
Spain to upgrade Zaragoza-Barcelona line for 740m-long freight trains	2
Works-related losses must be compensated. 2	
Gotthard tunnel repair to last until 09/2024 . 2	
Italy: lines to be upgraded for 740m trains.... 2	
UIRR Capacity Regulation position paper	3
EDICT Project brings cQMS for freight trains 3	
UIRR Greening Freight Transport Package position paper.....	3
UIRR Weights & Dimensions position paper ..	3
Port of Valencia to get new CT terminal.....	3
Europe wants to go intermodal but the process is held back	3
Netherlands: TLN endorses intermodal freight transportation	3
Personnel News.....	4
Members' News.....	4
Key Dates & Events.....	4

UIRR Quarterly CT Performance Gauge



Business outlook for the 12 months between 1 October 2023 - 30 September 2024



**4th European
Intermodal Summit**
- an online event

at 14:00 on 28 November 2023



**Combined Transport Delivers
Exhibition - Brussels, Belgium**

6-10 November 2023

Performance of Rail Freight

Belgium: 7,4% additional passenger trains to burden infrastructure

July 2023

The 2023-26 strategic plan of SNCB calls for increasing the number of passenger trains in Belgium by 7,4%. The additional trains will fall on the otherwise overloaded Belgian railway infrastructure.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2655-belgium-braces-for-74-more-passenger-trains.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2655-belgium-braces-for-74-more-passenger-trains.html)

Spain: rail freight tracking system to be introduced in 2024

July 2023

ADIF, the Spanish infrastructure manager, announced the introduction of SIMPLE, its rail freight tracking system from the beginning of 2024.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2654-spain-1st-ever-tracking-system-for-freight-on-rail-in-2024.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2654-spain-1st-ever-tracking-system-for-freight-on-rail-in-2024.html)

Italy: €125 million state aid for freight wagons and locomotives

July 2023

20-30% of the acquisition price of freight wagons and locomotives will be offered from Italy's Recovery and Resilience Fund budget to the total amount of €125 million.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2654-spain-1st-ever-tracking-system-for-freight-on-rail-in-2024.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2654-spain-1st-ever-tracking-system-for-freight-on-rail-in-2024.html)

Germany: per capita rail infrastructure investment declines in 2022

July 2023

Per capita investment into the German railway infrastructure declined from €124 in 2021 to €114 in 2022, however the prioritisation of rail over road remains.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2662-germany-per-capita-rail-investments-slightly-decrease-but-the-path-is-right.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2662-germany-per-capita-rail-investments-slightly-decrease-but-the-path-is-right.html)

Channel Tunnel freight volumes decline during H1.2023

July 2023

Conventional freight train crossings declined by 3% during the first six months of 2023, the number of intermodal shuttle services carrying lorries contracted by 19%.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2663-channel-tunnel-freight-traffic-does-not-avoid-ongoing-volume-slump.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2663-channel-tunnel-freight-traffic-does-not-avoid-ongoing-volume-slump.html)

France: SNCF Fret to stop providing intermodal rail traction services

August 2023

As part of its restructuring under an illegal EU state aid deal, SNCF Fret is to stop offering most traction services to intermodal trains from 2024. Locomotives and drivers will be made available to newcomer railways to continue supplying Combined Transport.

[Link: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2667-sncf-fret-to-leave-intermodal-freight.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2667-sncf-fret-to-leave-intermodal-freight.html)

Spain: to expand the Barcelona-Zaragoza line for 740m trains

August 2023

The line connecting Zaragoza to Barcelona is to be upgraded by ADIF to enable the circulation of 740-metre-long freight trains using the Recovery and Resilience Fund budget.

[Links: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2666-750-m-program-for-standard-gauge-corridor.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2666-750-m-program-for-standard-gauge-corridor.html)

Compensation for losses suffered by freight operators due to works

August 2023

The EU or Member States should compensate the losses suffered by freight operators due to works on the infrastructure. There is no budget planned for covering such losses.

[Links: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2676-should-the-eu-compensate-companies-losses-due-to-infrastructure-works.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2676-should-the-eu-compensate-companies-losses-due-to-infrastructure-works.html)

Switzerland: Gotthard Base Tunnel repairs to last until 09/2024

August 2023

SBB Infrastructure announced that the repairs of the western tube of the Gotthard Base Tunnel will last until September 2024. Until then freight trains occupy the eastern tube of the Tunnel.

[Links: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2686-gotthard-basistunnel-derailment-tunnel-repairs-to-take-several-months.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2686-gotthard-basistunnel-derailment-tunnel-repairs-to-take-several-months.html)

Italy: southern railway lines to be upgraded for 750m freight trains

August 2023

Works commenced in the Puglia Region of Italy to enable 750-metre-long freight trains to approach the Port of Brindisi. Construction will start in 2024 and be completed by 2026.

[Links: https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2688-port-in-southern-italy-sets-out-to-handle-750-metre-freight-trains.html](https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2688-port-in-southern-italy-sets-out-to-handle-750-metre-freight-trains.html)

UIRR: Railway Capacity Regulation Position Paper published

October 2023

The position paper calls for changes in the proposed new Regulation that will ensure more and better-quality train paths for freight trains.

Links: <https://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2023/mediacentre/2692-press-release-rail-infrastructure-capacity-regulation.html>

EDICT Project: Collaborative Quality Management System

October 2023

The EU-funded EDICT project will deliver a cQMS system that will enable effective operational quality management for regularly running freight trains. The system will consist of a manual and an IT system to support the functioning of Quality Roundtables, which bring together every actor of the production process.

Link:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7120680491602558976>

Fair, Mode-neutral Regulatory Framework

UIRR: position on the Greening Freight Transport Package

September / October 2023

UIRR and its peer associations published a joint plea to keep the various components of the Greening Freight Transport Package together. In a position paper UIRR later pointed out the particular reasons for the plea from a Combined Transport perspective: the desire to improve the operational efficiency of road transport should not happen at the expense of Combined Transport.

Link: <https://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2023/mediacentre/2660-joint-press-release-the-greening-freight-transport-package-should-be-kept-together.html> and <https://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2023/mediacentre/2681-press-release-greening-freight-transport-protectionism-or-rebalancing.html>

UIRR: Weights and Dimensions position paper

October 2023

UIRR calls for a strict no to the Weights and Dimensions Directive amendment as in its current form the proposed changes would only act to protect the dominant position of road transport in the large market segment of low-density long-distance cargo.

Link: <https://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2023/mediacentre/2679-position-paper-amendment-of-weights-and-dimensions-directive.html>

UIRR: position paper on new CountEmissionsEU Regulation

October 2023

The well-to-wheel calculation of every freight transport chain should be mandatory in the EU – states UIRR – and no entity should be exempt from this obligation. The Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation must ensure that this will not pose an administrative burden on any service provider.

Link: <https://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2023/mediacentre/2690-press-release-countemissioneu-regulation-must-be-mandatory.html>

Enhancement of Intermodal Transport

Spain: Port of Valencia to get new intermodal terminal

July 2023

Rail freight will be allowed to play a greater role in providing hinterland connections to the Port of Valencia once the new transshipment facility opens by the end of 2024.

Links: <https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2651-spanish-port-embraces-rail-with-new-intermodal-facility.html>

Europe wants to go intermodal but the process is held back

August 2023

Several recent studies, including that of the European Court of Auditors, points out that while there is a general interest in shifting from road transport to intermodal throughout Europe, the process is held back by a number of factors.

Link: <https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2668-europe-wants-to-go-intermodal-but-the-shift-is-being-held-back-.html>

Netherlands: TLN endorses intermodal freight transport

September 2023

The powerful haulage association, TLN of the Netherlands, calls for intermodal freight transport to be ranked much more prominently on the EU political agenda.

Link: <https://www.uirr.com/en/news/mediacentre/2677-hans-kanters-tln-about-intermodal-transport.html>

