

Europe needs more Combined Transport

The 5th **European Intermodal Summit** was opened by UIRR Chairman, Michail Stahlhut on Wednesday, 22 January. UIRR's annual online conference brought together CEOs from the sector, representatives of the European Commission and members of the European Parliament.

Pierpaolo Settembri, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Transport Commissioner Apostolos Tzitzikostas, opened the conference with the message that the **Strategy for Smart and Sustainable transport remains the main guiding document of European transport policymaking**. Capacity rules being the software, while TEN-T the hardware, the Commission remains committed to implementing the needed updates to enable the hoped development of rail freight and an improved performance of Combined Transport.

Separate panels discussed the new Railway Infrastructure Capacity Management Regulation – currently in the trilogue phase – and the revision of the Combined Transport Directive with the moderation of UIRR Director General, Ralf-Charley Schultze.

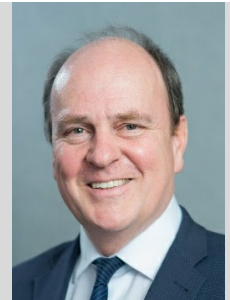
Tilly Metz (MEP, Greens/EFA), rapporteur of the Capacity Regulation expressed her desire that Member State focus on railway passenger transport will not come at the expense of the freight sector. Shadow Rapporteur, **Ondřej Kovařík** (MEP, P/E) consented to the objective of an increased rail freight market share as a result of the new Capacity Regulation.



METRANS and **T3M** agreed in the need for fewer infrastructure bottlenecks and better cross-border coordination between infrastructure managers to ensure the availability of train paths for running intermodal freight trains.

Sandro Santamato, Head of Unit at DG MOVE, in charge of the Capacity Regulation, admitted that the new Regulation should be most important from a rail freight perspective, which increasingly suffers from the lack of cross-border coordination. The new TEN-T Regulation and the Capacity Regulation should help place rail freight on a different footing.

The Parliamentary rapporteur of the Combined Transport Directive revision, **Flavio Tosi** (MEP, EPP) committed to bringing the currently running third attempt at amending the Combined Transport Directive to a successful conclusion.



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"The Combined Transport Community of UIRR strongly supports the Capacity Regulation in the hope of securing more and better-quality train paths for freight trains and calls for the rapid conclusion of the legislative process of the Combined Transport Directive revision." – declared UIRR Director General 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).

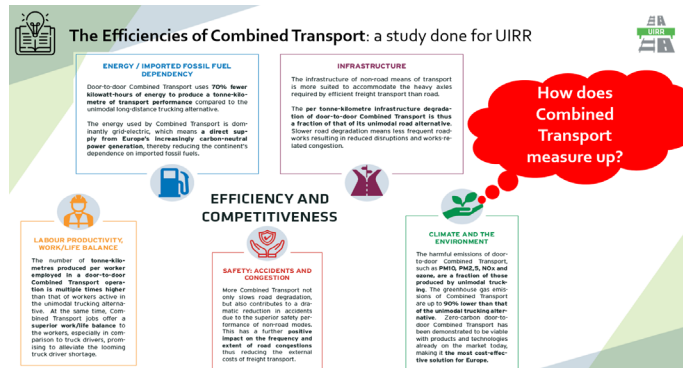
31, rue Montoyer - bte 11 | B-1000 | Brussels
www.uirr.com | headoffice.brussels@uirr.com
Tel. : +32 2 548 78 90

Contargo, Duisport and Combinant sounded the position of the UIRR Combined Transport Community and called for a rapid resolution with a unified voice. Harmonised European rules are indispensable to enable Combined Transport to effectively compete with unimodal truck transport.

The European Commission Head of Unit in charge of Combined Transport, **Annika Kroon** (DG MOVE), confirmed that work on the implementation of the Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation (eFTI) and the updating of the Commission Handbook on Transport Externalities is actively progressing. Cracking the dilemma that emerged around the **definition of combined transport operation** is key to advancing the legislative task.

The audience of the conference was reminded of the **2024 UIC-UIRR Study on Combined Transport¹**, which found that intermodal rail freight became the most dynamic production system of rail freight. According to the study, Combined Transport performance is predicted to grow by over 3% annually. The study did not foresee any policy preference inspired by **competitiveness and resilience**, the main policy themes of the recently confirmed European Commission headed by Ursula von der Leyen.

A study on the **Efficiencies of Combined Transport²** was also unveiled during the conference. The study quantifies the contribution that Combined Transport could deliver to Europe's competitiveness and resilience should it become **the backbone of land freight logistics of the continent on distances longer than 300km**.



Assuming a shifting of 1000 billion tonne-kilometres of transport performance to Combined Transport was to take place until 2050, **the annual net savings of the European economic actors and the public budgets would reach as high as €220 billion**. This contribution should offer sufficient motivation to introduce a decisive policy preference to pursue the path that would transform Combined Transport into the backbone of European land transport.

Hupac Group CEO and UIRR Chairman, **Michail Stahlhut** formulated the conclusions: intermodal freight transport has told a story, which now it will have to deliver on. The Combined Transport Community must take advantage for the tailwind and make Combined Transport happen. Administrative burden must be reduced, where a good example of the RFC1 and RFC2 merger was mentioned. Transport modes need to be treated the same. Reducing complexity and creating connectivity are the missions of the Combined Transport Community.



¹ <https://www.uirr.com/en/component/downloads/downloads/1886.html>

² <https://www.uirr.com/en/component/downloads/downloads/1893.html>