



The Statutory General Assembly (SGA) of the International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) took place on 16 June 2005 in Brussels. The annual accounts in balance, the composition of its Board of Directors, as well as the development of traffic and quality of rail services were among the subjects dealt with at this annual meeting.

#### UIRR Board of Directors

Mr. Stefan Hofer, Director General of Ökombi, having resigned from his mandate of member of the Board of the UIRR, the SGA elected Mr. Wilhelm Patzner as his successor.

#### Speech of Mr. Barrot

At the gala dinner preceding the SGA, the Vice-President of the European Commission and Transport Commissioner Mr. Jacques Barrot emphasised the importance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rail Package in establishing more favourable conditions for revitalising rail, essentially in terms of competitiveness and quality of services. He also recalled the determination of the Commission to support CT in the face of the structural problems with which it is confronted, particularly through harmonisations and the Marco Polo programme in which the UIRR is participating actively. In his welcoming address, Mr. Eugenio Muzio, Chairman of the UIRR's Board of Directors, had, after having described the state of traffic and the trends, recalled the conditions necessary for a sustained and desirable development of CT. These two interventions are available on the [www.uirr.com](http://www.uirr.com) web site.

#### UIRR 2004 Report

On this same occasion, the UIRR published its 2004 Report, on the theme of the promotion of rail-road CT under its various aspects: promotion by the Brussels Office on the one hand, in the context of Association coordination projects or activities, and on the other hand marketing promotion, through high performance services offered by the member operators. In addition a brochure giving detailed UIRR statistics was also published. These two publications are available on the [www.uirr.com](http://www.uirr.com) web site; the Annual Report for its part, can be obtained in a printed version from the Brussels office and member companies.

#### Development of traffic

In 2004, the total traffic of UIRR companies expressed in number of consignments recorded a global increase of 5%. The new UIRR members, namely Alpe Adria (I), Conliner (NL) and RAlpin (CH) were included for the first time in the 2004

statistics, so contributing to this result. International non-accompanied CT increased by 14% compared to 2003, with a particularly marked increase for transalpine traffic. International accompanied CT for its part experienced a difficult year, with a decline of 17% in consignments, and this because of the less favourable framework conditions for the rolling road constituted by the suppression of the ecopoints in Austria as well as of the authorisations previously applied to pure road transport between the old and new member States of the European Union.

#### Relations with the RU's and quality of services

The SGA dealt with the essential question of the quality of rail freight services. The long discussions conducted since June 2004 with the railway undertakings (RU) have led to the drawing up of a draft framework agreement containing a series of provisions and reciprocal commitments, the broad lines of which were accepted at the INTERUNIT Annual Meeting. It is planned to have this document ratified in the near future and signed by the two parties. Once signed, it will represent an important step in the pursuit of a better quality of CT services, which is in the interests of the freight transport market in Europe at the same time as that of the RU's and of the operators, and will be the framework of reference for axis-specific contracts and modalities in the matter of quality, covering complete trains. Better quality will enable the potential for increasing productivity on the one hand and reducing costs for all the players of the CT chain on the other hand to be generated, to the ultimate advantage of the forwarders and of the EU policy of a better mobility.

#### INTERUNIT

In the same context the General Assembly of INTERUNIT, association of RU's members of the CTG/UIC and UIRR operators was held. In the framework of the alternation foreseen by the statutes, Dr. Janos Berenyi, Vice-Chairman of the UIRR Board of Directors, was appointed Chairman of INTERUNIT for the period June 2005-2007 replacing Mr. Eric Peetermans, Chairman of the G.TC. Dr. Berenyi will seek by all means to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the Association, among which he mentioned its opening to infrastructure managers, all the RU's and all the operators wishing to adhere.