



A warm welcome to the newly founded Rail Forum Europe

The International Union of combined Road-Rail transport companies (UIRR) speaking for Europe's road-rail Combined Transport operators – customers of quality rail freight services – **welcomes the founding of Rail Forum Europe**, as announced in a press release yesterday.

Rail Forum Europe brings together key Members of the European Parliament from every Committee, who, understanding the potential contribution of the railway mode to Europe as well as the sector's complex problems, aim to launch a constructive dialogue, which will lead to the development of joint strategies and initiatives to enable **the rail sector to play a more pivotal role in EU transport policy**.

Since its founding in 1970, UIRR has been vocal to promote (road-rail) Combined Transport, which brings the European concept of *co-modality* to success through effectively **inserting environmentally sustainable modes of transport, like electrified railways, into previously pure road transport-chains**. This allows each mode to contribute to the overall aim of efficiently forwarding freight to the best of its capabilities.

From this basis UIRR applauds the initiative which led to the founding of Rail Forum Europe and hereby offers every support to its efficient functioning. While rail freight had periods in the past when it struggled for the attention of the European public, it is UIRR's conviction that neither the issues of reducing road congestion improving road safety, nor resolving transport-related climate change issues can be solved without Combined Transport's contribution. Hence UIRR wishes to encourage that **Rail Forum Europe share its attention equally between issues of rail passenger services and the problems and potential of rail freight**, while not neglecting the ever important issues of infrastructure such as interoperability.

Finally, Rail Forum Europe promises to be an organisation with a focus on the rail sector, nevertheless UIRR would like to point out that several issues of railways can not be comprehensively understood without considering alongside it the practice and circumstances of its peer transport modes: primarily road, but also inland navigation and short-sea shipping.



Executive Chairman, Mr Rudy Colle said: "UIRR trusts that Rail Forum Europe will develop into an efficient means to achieve **improved public understanding of the potential contribution the rail sector can offer to make Europe a more**

liveable place, but also a Forum where **political views can be efficiently harmonised** to engineer a unified position in transport policy decisions."

***Who is UIRR:** Founded 40 years ago, in 1970, the International Union of Road-Rail combined transport companies (UIRR) represents the interests of a unique system of transport: through utilising Intermodal Loading Units (ILUs), or special wagons capable of carrying unmodified ordinary trucks, Combined Transport operators catalyse the effective insertion of (electric) rail technology into the longer distance sections of continental freight transport-chains.*

It is estimated that 17% of continental long-distance freight transport in Europe uses road-rail Combined Transport today. Already one in four European freight trains transport intermodal loading units. This unique system of transport – thanks to the involvement of electrified railways – emits 75% less GHG as pure road transport and uses considerably less energy.