

FERRMED 12.01.2011 (European Parliament)
Contribution by Rudy COLLE, Executive Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My angle of incidence into this panel session is Combined Transport which, in the Road to Rail combination, is organised for the majority of such traffic in Europe by our member companies.

As you are all aware of, this transport technique of ours has remarkable capabilities in terms of

- environment-friendliness thanks to its
 - = energy efficiency (30% less energy needed) and
 - = cleanness: 75% fewer GHG emissions than pure road transport chains and a 0% emissions potential
- safety and security
 - = safety: one rail accident for every 40 road accidents
 - = security: closed rail infrastructure offering much less opportunities for security breaches than the open road network

There are two particulars to keep in mind:

- compared to unimodal transport, CT has specific costs to bear (transshipment, administrative handling) which call for longer distance journeys. Because the critical distance lies at 300/350 km, CT's potential is essentially transborder. Not by coincidence, roughly 80% of UIRR's TKm are indeed international.
- CT is in constant competition with road of which over 50% of the TKm are actually carried out on segments over the above mentioned distance of 300 km and which benefits since decades of a generalised interoperability.

This means that every effort must lead to enabling harmonised, streamlined operations on rail from end to end, or in other words lead to eliminating any need to comply 'en route' with different network parameters.

Standards are thus a key word in our business because any disparity operators have to cope with underway, such as changing the train length or adapting the number or type of the wagons means

- an additional cost
- a risk of delay
- a loss of overall productivity and thus competitiveness

More recent history in rail is scattered with standardisation initiatives and attempts to which we have always given support:

- UIC leaflets
- UN/ECE General Agreements
- CEN normation
- ERA "TSI" legislation;

they have all proven, and generally continue to prove, their added value.

So will the FERRMED standards which are interesting because they are "user initiated", and show a considerable number of similarities with constant demands of UIRR in this respect.

Needless to underline that, apart from promoting interoperability, they are very ambitious, but so are we with our expectation of doubling CT scores over the next 10 years to further disseminate this concept's benefits across our continent and help the railway undertakings (re)gain a stronger position in the freight transportation market.

With parallel ambitions going into the same direction, we are certainly heading towards a rewarding future for rail freight.

As a final word, let me say that we will follow the FERRMED project's next developments with due interest, and that we congratulate its promoters and partners with their academic work achieved to date.