Welcoming the Transport White Paper

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 issuance of the European Commission's Transport White Paper[1].

Ten years after the last Transport White Paper of 2001 it was time to review the development of the transport sector in the European Union. The new Transport White Paper should contain the measures needed to adopt Europe's transport to the changes of the environment in which transport services are created, to facilitate the mobility needed for the European way of life, and to **place transport on a sustainable path both ecologically and economically**.

Based on an initial review, UIRR believes that the Transport White Paper unveiled today prescribes measures that – **if implemented properly** – will enable the achievement of the desired quality improvements and at the same time help to considerably reduce the environmental footprint of transport.

UIRR nevertheless identified the following shortcomings of the proposal, which are hoped to be addressed during the scrutiny of the proposal in the European Parliament and the Council during the coming weeks:

(i) The draft foresees an "87 percent growth for rail freight" (Paragraph 95[1]), which appears attractive at first sight, however not when considering that it is to be realised over 45 years! Road-rail Combined Transport's 'natural' growth rate alone can deliver this result without an outside intervention. Moreover, if the climate change goals spelled out in the draft ("60% GHG reduction by 2050" and "50% of longer-distance road freight transport diverted to rail and other sustainable modes") is to be earnestly realised, **twice as much rail freight growth will be needed**.

(ii) The draft details in great extent the various technologies that are to contribute to improving (road) transport; in this context UIRR believes that much more could have been said of **technologies to be used for enforcing existing rules on road transport to improve its significant social and safety shortcomings** (Paragraph 171[1]).

(iii) While it is the unfortunate state of the art today in most of Europe that "freight trains must give way to passenger trains" (Paragraph 397[1]), in some parts of Scandinavia this principle is already not fully applied. UIRR proposed in relation to the Recast of the First Railway Package[2] that **a clear set of European train categories and their hierarchy be defined**[3] enabling in some cases the unhindered travel of priority freight trains.

Executive Chairman, Rudy Colle said: **"**UIRR trusts that the Commission will achieve the expressed commitment of the European Parliament and the Council to **collectively execute the roadmap contained in this White Paper aiming to improve Europe's transport system**.

* * *

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 trucks5, 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.

---

[1] COM(2011) 144 White Paper and SEC(2011) 391 Commission Staff Working Document

[2] http://uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2011/mediacentre/414-pospap-recast-first-rail-package.html
[3] http://uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2010/mediacentre/287-position-paper-on-issues-of-rail-infrastructure.html