

How to get more out of Rail Freight Corridors

The Rail Freight Corridor (RFC) concept is the only productive tool that has been invented so far to meaningfully address the issue of quality in long(er) distance cross-border rail freight in Europe. Several measures could be implemented to further enhance the way the nine RFCs¹ - created along Regulation 913/2010 - function today, which UIRR presented in a position paper² published today.

The suggested measures have been grouped into three categories as follows:

1. **Transparency:** (i) harmonised web-addresses and site-maps; (ii) a single European RFC news-portal to convey all news and developments in a concentrated and comparable manner; (iii) regular reporting of actual developments and changes; and (iv) adoption of harmonised KPIs to allow efficient performance monitoring and benchmarking.
2. **Organisation and governance:** (i) make the RFC Managing Director position a career assignment filled from the labour market; (ii) enhance RAGs by open attendance and the inclusion of non-RU (authorised) applicants; (iii) require written RAG/TAG opinion to all major proposals on the agenda of Management and Executive boards and allow their speakers to participate as a non-voting member in Board meetings; and (iv) organise annual or biannual public meetings for each Corridor to enhance understanding and accountability.
3. **Tasks and competences:** (i) ensure adequate capacities are in place at PMOs; (ii) create corridor fund for small-scale projects identified by PMOs; (iii) enable and authorise PMOs to classify train paths; and (iv) develop traffic management supporting capabilities.

UIRR is hopeful that the Member State governments and their rail infrastructure managers, who are behind the RFCs and make up their Management and Executive Boards, will embrace the suggestions of the position papers unveiled, as most of them can be implemented on their goodwill and desire for continuous improvement.

4 out of every 5 Combined Transport trains are cross-border services, while the average distance travelled by a CT train is nearly 800 kilometres, hence UIRR remains committed to finding effective and practical solutions that can improve the quality of services offered by the railway sector.

Combined Transport is the most dynamically growing production system of rail freight, which is best positioned to shift transport assignments from long(er) haul trucking to rail. Consequently, CT is the form of rail freight which is most often compared with road haulage. At a time when cheap oil gives a tremendous price advantage to truckers, the rail sector should do its utmost to identify the areas where it can contribute to enhancing CT's productivity and ultimate competitiveness.

¹ <http://www.rne.eu/rfc-corridors.html>

² <http://www.uirr.com/en/media-centre/press-releases-and-position-papers/2016/mediacentre/772-rail-freight-corridors-how-to-get-more-out-of-them.html>



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"Boosting the functioning of Rail Freight Corridors through the measures proposed by UIRR should reinforce the business case for rail freight in Europe, which is suffering from an overwhelming preference for (public service) passenger transport throughout most Member States." - pointed out UIRR President 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).