

ILU-Code: boosting the competitiveness of CT since 5 years

Exactly 5 years ago today, UIRR, the Administrator of the ILU-Code (www.ilu-code.eu), issued the first ILU-Code owner-key - thus bringing to life the standardised identifier of European intermodal loading units (ILU)¹ identical to the global BIC-Code mandatory for maritime containers. According to the latest reports, the two identifiers together were used to book nearly 98% of the consignments forwarded by unaccompanied Combined Transport in Europe.

The EN13044 standard - developed within the framework of CEN on the initiative of the Combined Transport sector - defined the ILU-Code, this indispensable prerequisite for digitalisation, which enables easy booking, efficient terminal processing and tracking and tracing, as well as easy control by public security authorities.

Whereas the regulator had no role in its development, the proliferation of the ILU-Code was materially aided through the EU funded DESTINY Project. By today this led to the issuance of more than 850 outstanding ILU-Code owner-keys to loading unit owners across 26 European countries - including Turkey and Russia as well.

UIRR collaborates with the Bureau International de Containers (BIC), the Paris-based caretaker of the globally used container ISO prefix (also known as the "BIC-Code"), and develops applications and value added services to further aid the stakeholders of intermodal transport.

- BIC launched its Technical Characteristics Database (TCD) today². This digital register contains easily retrievable container tare weight data essential to determine the verified gross mass (VGM), prescribed recently by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

UIRR, together with its members, is progressing to develop the electronic ILU Register that will streamline train load planning for intermodal terminals and clearance verification by railway undertakings by offering all codification parameters of intermodal loading units in a single and easy-to-use system.

- Both BIC and UIRR offer web-based control solution to enable the automated checking of the validity of the BIC-and ILU-Code during the booking process and within the terminal operating systems (TOS).

The new European Customs Code, that came into effect on 14 May 2016, mandates that every loading unit entering or leaving the EU via unaccompanied Combined Transport shall be identifiable by a BIC - or an ILU- Code. UIRR advocates - in collaboration with its stakeholder allies - that the same obligation is defined during the revision of Directive 92/106 for unaccompanied intermodal transport that takes place within the EU's borders. Finally, the TAF TSI Regulation also defines the BIC- and ILU-Code as the unique identification parameter for intermodal loading units.

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¹ non-ISO containers, swap bodies, semi-trailers

² <https://www.bic-code.org/images/pdf/bic%20launches%20database%20to%20simplify%20compliance%20with%20solas%20container%20weight%20requirements.pdf>



Ralf-Charley Schultze

"Thanks to the implementation of the ILU-Code, the competitiveness of Combined Transport has been enhanced through a more efficient and simple booking process, an improved data exchange between the CT stakeholders and far more reliable tracking and tracing. The entire transport chain benefits from the simplification and rationalization enabled by this standardised identifier, which is an important step towards digitalisation of Combined Transport." - noted 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).

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