



EU/US alliance: 'intermodal transport vital for competition'

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A concerted effort to promote intermodality is key to increasing competitiveness and cutting carbon emissions, says a new transatlantic rail and road alliance.



The International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport (UIRR) joined forces with its stateside partner, the Intermodal Association of North America (IANA), to deliver a powerful message at a special exhibition at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Led by Wim van de Camp, the EP's Transport and Tourism coordinator, the event marked the first freight event of the European Commission's [Multimodal Year 2018](#) initiative. It was opened by EU Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc, supported by a delegation from the Belgian Ministry of Transport.

Support

In his keynote address, Mr van de Camp declared the 'strong preference' of all of the stakeholders for more intermodality, while emphasising his own personal support for the passing of a series of proposed legislative amendments to the Combined Transport Directive. The directive is a European Union policy initiative designed to reduce the negative effects of freight transport on the environment, such as reduced emissions, and on society in general, including congestion, accidents and noise pollution.

"Efficient insertion of non-road modes of transport, such as rail, inland waterways and short sea shipping, into land transport is strongly desired by the European Parliament as this can materially contribute to EU competitiveness," van de Camp told delegates.

Collaboration

Commissioner Bulc used her opening speech to highlight the role intermodal will have to play in the drive to decarbonise and drastically reduce the pollution and congestion caused primarily by road transport. She underlined the need for regulatory solutions that require many stakeholders to work together to deliver a single transport assignment. These solutions will focus on digitalisation and are expected to be part of the third phase of the EU's 'green' Clean Mobility Package due to be unveiled in May.

Phil Shook, Leader of the IANA delegation, emphasised the need for intermodal partners on both sides of the Atlantic to exchange their best practice and learn from one another: "The relentless pursuit of ever improved services are the only guarantee for the continued success of intermodal in both North America and Europe," he said. "IANA is ready to strengthen the exchange with UIRR that started with this exhibition in the European Parliament."

Catalyst

His views were echoed by Ralf-Charley, the President of UIRR, who said that the need for 'learning from each other in a globalised world' had been the catalyst for them to join up with IANA.

"It is the responsibility of every sector of the economy to do its best and improve its productivity and competitiveness," said Charley. "In European transport however, regulation and the states continue to play an accentuated role. Therefore, the sector alone cannot master the challenges that it faces.

"Until the dismantling of government involvement in the daily affairs of transport does not happen, we must resort to what is second best: to inform politicians as thoroughly as we can about what goes on, so as to get the most rational decisions from them. The exhibition that we put on sets exactly this aim, besides attesting to the desire to learn from each other."

Prosperity

Also speaking was Dirk Verdickt, Senior Advisor to Belgian Transport Minister François Bellot. He conveyed the 'firm support' of his Government to intermodality, saying it was seen as the solution to solving Belgium's significant road congestion and transport-related air pollution problems: "Intermodal transport is viewed as a major pillar of Belgium's competitiveness and prosperity, while a significant contributor to the wellbeing of its people," added Verdickt.

The official opening was followed by discussions on multimodal transport at a special lunch debate organised by the European Logistics Platform, a collection of policymakers and industry stakeholders.

Tags: [Clean Mobility Package](#), [EU](#), [European Commissioner](#), [European Parliament](#), [European Union](#), [IANA](#), [intermodal rail](#), [International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport](#), [The Intermodal Association of North America](#), [UIRR](#)



Author: Simon Weedy

Simon is a journalist for RailFreight.com - a dedicated online platform for all the news about the rail freight sector



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