

## Combined Transport: resilience and greening at the same time

UIRR recommends an increased role for Combined Transport in the post-crisis economic recovery efforts, to be carried out by the Member States of the European Union following the blueprint to be drafted by the European Commission. Combined Transport can reliably transport any type of cargo not only between but also within a continent. Through an increased emphasis on intermodality, Member States can also deliver on their decarbonization and pollution reduction objectives.

During the past weeks UIRR has joined several statements with associations of rail freight to call for crisis mitigation measures for rail freight operators. Besides these, our association representing the intermodal sector has sent letters to European transport policymakers

- to highlight the properties of Combined Transport, based on which it should be declared a pillar of the European Union's economic recovery, with an emphasis on resilience and greening;
- to advocate for a unique measure that would correct the imbalance that emerged in the European surface freight transport market due to the pandemic-related collapse of the oil price and because of several easings in the rules of the road haulage profession. Under the proposed scheme, Member States would extend a financial compensation to shippers and consignors committing to use Combined Transport in place of longer distance trucking;
- to encourage a high-level reconsideration of the principle of the mode-specific approach to the formulation of transport policy with a view to replace it by a holistic, mode-neutral approach that could generate the market signals to guide the rearrangement of global supply chains. Transport rates that reflect the totality of resources used to produce freight transport services should serve as the basis of choosing what level of sourcing to faraway producers makes sense when designing a supply chain from the perspectives of resilience and greening.

Intermodal transport functions optimally if no potentially distorting, mode-specific regulatory conditions exist in the freight transport marketplace. Regrettably, that is not the case today. UIRR has been tasked by its members to bring to the attention of decisionmakers the market anomalies that have emerged and to advocate for a more robust, fair, mode-neutral regulatory framework.

The post-coronavirus restart of the European economy and the subsequent rethinking of global supply chains, that were proven far too easy to disrupt, present the proper environment to a fundamental rethink of how the freight transport market is regulated in the European Union. The European Green Deal should serve as the compass for the direction to follow, and the Green Cargo Initiative of DG Move – expected in 2021 – should deliver the first solutions.

\* \* \*



Ralf-Charley Schultze

*"Fair competition is based on the principles of technical merit and management excellence. Regulatory advantages should not be allowed to distort the most fundamental market signal: prices charged to users. The current undesirably heterogeneous, mode-specific regulatory framework of European transport produces distorting market imbalances far too often." - stated 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).