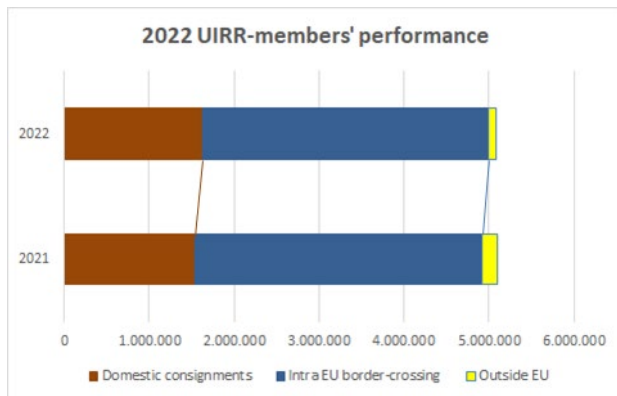


Closing of Combined Transport's 2022 business year

On 31 May, the General Assembly of UIRR oversaw in Brussels the closing of the European Combined Transport sector's 2022 business year.



An overall reduction by 0,3% of consignments transported emerged on the back of a historic high domestic performance (3,26 million TEU +5,6% y-o-y), a moderately declining intra-EU volume (6,74 million TEU -0,5% y-o-y) and a whopping contraction of extra-EU – mostly intercontinental – traffic (-4,8%).

In tonne-kilometre terms a historic high has been achieved in both the domestic (16,9 billion tkm +9,5% y-o-y) and the intra-EU border-crossing (68,5 billion tkm +1,7% y-o-y) segments, whereas extra-EU traffic suffered a reduction of unimaginable proportions (3,1 billion tkm -82,2% y-o-y). The result is a reflection of the war in Ukraine, which clearly dealt a blow to the extra-EU intermodal traffic that could not be counterbalanced by additional volumes to/from Ukraine – utilising the solidarity lanes.

The framework conditions of Combined Transport deteriorated throughout the year. Several Member States failed to adequately compensate for the traction electricity price increase by not using the EU energy toolbox adopted under the Czech Presidency to its full extent. This forced intermodal operators to impose energy surcharges at a time when long-distance truckers faced declining diesel prices from a much better functioning fossil fuel market.

The pricing trend that undermined relative competitiveness was further exacerbated by the unprecedented weak performance of rail freight, where both poor punctuality and infrastructure capacity shortages affected intermodal freight trains adversely. Operational disturbances caused by excessive works, strikes and increasing passenger traffic disappointed freight customers, while causing losses of efficiency and capacity to operators. The economic slowdown observed since the second half of 2022 came on top of the compromised capacity and competitiveness of the intermodal sector.

Nevertheless, a strong performance was achieved by domestic Combined Transport, while the most important intra-EU border-crossing segment stagnated.

During the General Assembly of UIRR European Combined Transport leaders discussed possible countermeasures to the multiple crises affecting the sector, especially since the impact has worsened during the first 5 months of 2023. Confidence in the long-term outlook and the conviction of the shippers that Combined Transport is part of the solution, continued to motivate investments into intermodal assets by the sector. New terminals, terminal upgrades, intermodal wagons and loading units are emerging, while significant efforts were made in the introduction of digitalisation solutions too.



Ralf-Charley Schultze

“Combined Transport is the most affordable, the most effective and the lowest risk solution to achieving a wide range of policy objectives of the European Union from climate change, energy efficiency and import dependency, air pollution, and safety. Combined Transport has earned a role to be part of the solution and policymakers need to acknowledge this through their actions.” – commented 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).

Two senior EU Commission officers provided personal consultation on the EU initiatives to the participants of the General Assembly:



DG MOVE Director for Land Transport, Kristian Schmidt offered a keynote address to the CEO's dinner the day before the General Assembly. He spoke of the positive changes anticipated for rail freight thanks to the ongoing revision of the TEN-T Regulation. He also promised that the new Rail Infrastructure Capacity Management Regulation, to be tabled as part of the Greening Freight Package will materially ease the capacity shortage.



DG MOVE Head of Unit for Maritime and Logistics, Annika Kroon, spoke about the Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation, under implementation, and the upcoming revision of the Combined Transport Directive, as well as the new CountEmissionEU Regulation to be introduced under the Greening Freight Package. She encouraged confidence by pointing out the "unique alignment of the stars

of freight transportation" that appears with the ongoing and upcoming EU legislative initiatives.

3 new members joining UIRR in January 2023 were greeted during the General Assembly:

Duisburger Hafen

– Lahaye Global Logistics

– Lotras



Evolit joined UIRR as a new Technology Partner, while 6 national associations strengthened the UIRR network of national associations from Czechia (CESMAD and ZESNAD), Hungary (HUNGRAIL), Italy (FERMERC), Lithuania (TTLA), and the Netherlands (RailGood). With these additions the UIRR community has expanded to 99 members.



The application of Liège Logistics Intermodal to become a member of UIRR from 1 June 2023 has been received during the General Assembly.

The General Assembly also reviewed the status of the CT4EU (Combined Transport for Europe) Campaign (www.ct4eu.eu) and endorsed the planning presented for the remaining year of campaigning. Communication in the Member State capitals – with the leadership of CT4EU national coordinators – will be supported by UIRR. This will be complemented with communication towards EU policymakers to ensure that the message of Combined Transport reaches the relevant audience.



UIRR will continue its close collaboration with the European policymakers working for an improved operating environment of Combined Transport.

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