

Business year 2024: positive Combined Transport performance despite numerous disruptions

Wednesday, 21 May 2025, Brussels: The General Assembly of UIRR oversaw the formal closing of the 2024 business year of European Combined Transport. The year brought about a **5,19% growth in the number of consignments** transported and a considerably higher increase in tonne-kilometres at 8,41%.

The performance figures of European Combined Transport in 2024 turned out exceptionally strong due to a historic performance of domestic services (+10,6%) predominantly in France and in Poland, while cross-border delivered only a +2,74% progress. The additional tonne-kilometre growth was attributable to the increased average cargo weight contained in the loading units transported.

Domestic Combined Transport services were not plagued by interoperability and border-crossing issues, whereas the cross-border performance is impacted differently depending on the corridor. The corridors crossing Germany, mainly on the North-South axis, performed weaker due to the disturbances caused by the excessive number of works sites exacerbated by day to day incidents, resulting in a -1.5% performance - also reported in the BAV Semesterbericht. Other corridors, not yet impacted by infrastructure works, were doing significantly better, which led to the overall cross-border growth rate of +2.74%.

The disruptions of the public railway infrastructure led to severe financial consequences for Combined Transport operators in 2024, ranging from (i) the landslide in the Maurienne Valley that closed down the Fréjus railway line – the main connection for freight trains between France and Italy – for a 19-month period between August 2023 and March 2025, (ii) the derailment in the Gotthard Base Tunnel that reduced the tunnel's capacities to 50%, and (iii) the extensive and often uncoordinated works on the rail infrastructure – impacting particularly the German network.

UIRR Chairman, Michail Stahlhut, pointed out that a proposal will be tabled by UIRR demanding a change to the European legal framework whereby Combined Transport operators and terminal managers, whose business models depend on the availability and reliable functioning of the public rail infrastructure, receive compensation payments for periods when the public service is inaccessible or when its limitations impose disproportionate additional costs onto them.



The Combined Transport Community of UIRR was reinforced by

- 4 new members: Afluent Terminal (Romania), CLIP Terminal (Poland), Haven Genk Terminal (Belgium) and Van der Vlist Terminal (The Netherlands)
- 4 new technology partners: B. Rekencentra, Greenbrier, Tatravagonka and Wascosa
- 5 new MoU Peers: AROSRAIL (Slovakia), GELPA (Lithuania), AHF (Hungary), Rail Cargo Information (The Netherlands) and ZESNAD (Czech Republic)

The UIRR Community is now counting 112 stakeholders.

The General Assembly reviewed the status of every **ongoing EU legislative dossier** relevant to door-to-door Combined Transport including the Combined Transport Directive, the Railway Infrastructure Capacity Management Regulation, the Weights and Dimensions Directive, and the TSI Telematics proposal. **Policy initiatives** were also discussed, including the EU's next 7-year budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-34 and the status



"Combined Transport achieved a robust performance in 2024, and the conditions remain convincing for continued growth. Nevertheless, the uncertainties of our times such as the war in Ukraine, the new reality, the tariffs and other disruptions to global trade are impacting Combined Transport and its decisionmakers." – remarked UIRR Director General, 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).

of EU funding for transport infrastructure projects (the CEF, Connecting Europe Facility), as well as the status of the Digital Automatic coupling (DAC) and the restructuring of EU R&D programmes.

The outcome of **European accident follow-up actions** handled by the EU Agency for Railway were considered, including the JNS Crosswind impacting the transport of semi-trailers in pocket wagons. Finally, the General Assembly exchanged views on the Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) and the TEN-T Guidelines regulations, which are both in an intensive implementation phase.

DG MOVE Head of Unit D.1, Annika Kroon (Maritime Transport and Logistics) and **Deputy Head of Unit C.1, Filip Negreanu** (Road Transport) provided detailed answers in the afternoon to the participating UIRR Chairmen, CEOs, Partners, MoU Peers and CT4EU Campaign Supporters on the various dossiers and policy initiatives handled by their respective teams.



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Combined Transport matters!

Highlights from

UIRR GA & Dinner 2025

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