

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

Introduction

The ILU-Code was launched 5 years ago as the new identifier for European intermodal loading units used in unaccompanied Transport. The European standard EN 13044-1 was approved by the CEN in October 2010 and UIRR was designated as the administrator of the ILU-Code as from 1 July 2011.

Since July 2011, more than 850 Owner-Codes have been allocated amongst 26 European countries. A large majority of swap bodies and semi-trailers circulating in combined transport have since then been identified with ILU (or BIC)-Codes. Today about 98% of the consignments shipped by UIRR operators are booked either with an ILU-Code or with a BIC-Code. With a higher rate of penetration in central European countries than in countries on the periphery, the distribution of Codes has been firmly increasing in Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway as well as in non-EU countries as Switzerland and Turkey.

An official register of all valid ILU-Code owner-keys has been made publicly available online: A downloadable PDF version is at your disposal and a paper version can also be ordered at any time (<http://www.ilu-code.eu/en/consult-the-ilu-code-register>).



Compliance with the new system

Regarding the roll-out of the implementation of the new system, **Paul Maas, from the Dutch company Wetron**, said: *“As a big player in the Intermodal business, we started directly with the new ILU-Codes on our fleet. In our own workshops, we did apply the codes directly during the inspection and maintenance of the equipment. We already had a good registration system, but now this works also perfectly for us in the terminals”.*

The logistics company Ekol said there was no need to introduce a new process for the ILU-Code implementation: *“The Turkish branch prepared very simply just by adding one row in the IT system” to adapt to the ILU-Code. The same for the dispatch system.”*



ILU-Code marking on a swap body



ILU-Code marking on a semi-trailer

Increased simplification and competitiveness

Competitiveness of Combined Transport has been enhanced through a more efficient booking, an improved data exchange and thus a more reliable tracking & tracing. The whole transport chain benefits from the simplification and the rationalization of the new standardised paperless system.

With a structure similar to the worldwide renowned BIC-Code used for ISO-Containers, the OCR-readable system can be used by terminals, CT operators, Customs authorities and other stakeholders, enabling automated booking validations to ensure that every loading unit features a valid ILU-Code owner-key. A web-service designed for the validation of the ILU-Code owner-key allows any operator to verify in real-time if an owner-key exists or not in the official ILU-Code Register.

Owner-key Allocation by UIRR	Registration number Free allocation by owner	Check digit Given calculation procedure
ABCA	001234	2

ILU-Code structure (fully compatible with the BIC-Code)

At operational level, a systematic control during the booking or when the ILUs are brought into CT Terminals is a required procedure in order to verify the conformity of the ILU-Codes and accept only registered ILU-Code owner-keys.

Importance of awareness campaigns

Aiming at enhancing the proliferation of the ILU-Code, awareness and dissemination campaigns were addressed to all European freight associations affected by the implementation of the ILU-Code in Europe, in particular the freight forwarders, logistics companies and shippers.

A large proliferation over Europe was achieved thanks to continuous dissemination efforts. An extensive information campaign targeting the various stakeholders of freight transport was launched in different countries through the support of the Marco Polo "Destiny" project (www.destiny-project.eu), an EU-funded programme aimed at the deployment of best practices in intermodal transport.



ILU-Code leaflet

Larger scope and future outlook

A full delivery of the benefits of the standardised ILU-Code will be achieved when the standard EN 13044 is applied by every stakeholder in the freight transport sector.

The optimization and extension of the ILU-Code identification to other modes will enable a better interoperability, and multimodality will gain in competitiveness with a unique standardized system of identification.

According to the European EN 13044, the ILU-Code identification is not exclusive to road and rail combined transport. Other unaccompanied transport modes – inland navigation, short sea shipping - are eligible to support the identification of their loading units with ILU-Codes.

Recent and future developments will likely contribute to a larger spreading of this procedure. It is expected in the foreseeable future that legislation will prescribe the use of the ILU-Code within the European Union:

- The new European Customs Code which came into effect in May and which will require that every loading unit entering or leaving the EU via unaccompanied Combined Transport bears a BIC- or an ILU-Code. This customs requirement will have to be filled in for each unaccompanied consignment at EU entry or exit .
- The recast of Directive 92/106 will require the use of ILU-Code for intra-EU freight traffic.
- The TAF TSI Regulation for data exchange between Rail Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings