



The Ordinary General Meeting (AGO) of the International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) was held in Brussels on 10th June 2008. The balanced annual accounts, the election of its new Board and the development of traffic were discussed, whereas the amendment of the articles of association was dealt with at an extraordinary GM. A variety of other subjects were discussed at the Interunit General Committee meeting held the following day. These meetings ended on 11th June with a Congress on the subject of "CT: from crisis to growth".

Board of the UIRR

As all terms of office had come to an end, a new Board was elected to serve for the period from 2009-2012. In accordance with the new articles of association passed at an extraordinary GM, a position combining the offices of Chairman of the Board and Managing Director (MD) was created and Mr Rudy Colle, who had up until then been MD, was chosen to fill it. The following persons were also elected: Vice-Chairman of the Board: Mr Robert Breuhahn (Kombiverkehr); Members: Mr Peter Howald (Hupac), Mr Jean-Luc M  lard (TRW), Mr Wilhelm Patzner (ICA) and Mr Silvio Rocca (Cemat). This meeting also offered an opportunity for tribute to be paid to the outgoing Chairman of the Board, Mr Eugenio Muzio who has been working to promote CT for almost 30 years. As IFB recently took over the activities of TRW, the former replaces the latter as Belgian member of the UIRR.

Development of traffic

The total traffic handled by UIRR companies increased by 2% in 2008 in spite of the drop in shipments in the 2nd six months linked to the economic crisis. Unaccompanied international CT, which has been the main driving force for the growth in road-rail CT for more than 30 years, actually fell off by 1%. Transalpine traffic suffered particularly (-14% on the link between Belgium and Italy for instance). Unaccompanied domestic CT has been better able to stand up to these new obstacles, achieving 5% growth. As for accompanied traffic, it recorded 10% growth. This result owes a great deal to the increase in domestic CT in Austria, a country where the government has long been translating its declared intentions into strong actions to promote sustainable mobility.

Interunit

On the following day the association of railway undertakings (RUs) which are members of the Combined Transport Group of the UIC and UIRR operators, Interunit, held its General Committee meeting. Dr J  nos Ber  nyi (Hungarokombi) was appointed Chairman of the association, with Mr Eric

Peetermans giving up his place in accordance with the articles of association. The discussions also dealt with the recession and steps which might be designed and implemented together. A reminder was also given of the very real concerns caused by hazardous attempts at liberalising the weights and dimensions of road vehicles.

2008 UIRR Report

Against this same background, the UIRR published its 2008 Report. The thread running through it is CT playing an active role in the face of the recession, with the use of restructuring and gateway solutions in order to keep the CT network on all major markets or the introduction of new production models as illustrative examples. The good partnership established with various railway undertakings is also a major factor in keeping the combined network as huge as possible, whereas the introduction of a Eurocode for the identification of intermodal loading units would help to increase productivity. A brochure showing detailed statistics for the UIRR for 2008 has also come out. These publications can be downloaded from the www.uirr.com website; the Annual Report is available in English, French and German.

UIRR Congress

The Conference on "CT: from crisis to growth" attracted nearly 130 participants from the whole of the sector. The panel of high level speakers included Mr Ted Prince, an expert in intermodal transport in the United States. He underlined the role of CT working for economies and as an indicator of their health, whereas Prof. Werner Rothengatter talked about his economic projections for the period up to 2030. The panel also included Mr Sandro Santamato, Head of Unit at the DG TREN, who emphasised the forthcoming Community initiatives designed to promote sustainable mobility. Mr Eugenio Muzio offered a reminder that the authorities have a duty to support CT, a clean, efficient mode of transport, even more so during the current recession illustrated by the 24.7% fall in goods traffic in 2009 mentioned by Mr Joachim Kroll, Secretary General of RailNetEurope (RNE). Mr Geert Pauwels (B-Cargo) presented certain initiatives designed to improve the quality of the services available. Finally, Mr Tom Van Dijk (BASF) underlined the need to continue with investments designed to promote CT, taking the building of the new Combinant intermodal terminal in Antwerp as an example.

Documentation about the Congress is available on the site at www.uirr.com.