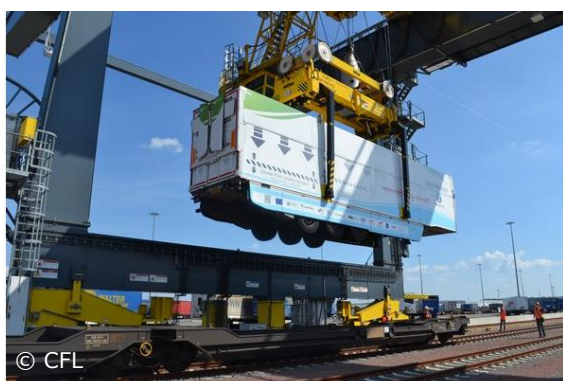


## Truck-train interoperability for more rail-road intermodality

Today, 5 October 2021, the Connecting Europe Express will reach Luxembourg for an afternoon dedicated to rail freight and intermodality. Home to CFL's (Compagnie des Chemins de Fer Luxembourgeois) modern Bettembourg intermodal terminal, Luxembourg was selected by the European Commission as the ideal location for a conference promoting the role given to rail freight in its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. A tour of the terminal will demonstrate the various transshipment techniques available there to transfer cargo from road to rail and underline the crucial importance of 'truck-train interoperability' when it comes to developing 'rail-road intermodality'.

These days, intermodal cargo transport is largely carried out via large boxes (called containers and swap bodies) which can be easily transferred from road to other modes, especially rail. These large boxes are so simple in their structures and shapes that they can fit on all kinds of vehicles (whether rail or road). However, rail is increasingly called to carry trucks or parts of trucks (road cabins, trailers and semi-trailers) with widely varying technical characteristics. This variety of weights, shapes, dimensions and physical properties (e.g. resistance to air pressure, craneability...) of trucks makes it sometimes very challenging for rail operators to put them on wagons and to run them on rail tracks at 120km/hour, in railway tunnels and on railway bridges.

To accommodate trucks, railways have invented various transshipment techniques and innovative wagon types, however it is important that trucks also adapt their characteristics more to rail transport if intermodality is to become the highway to greener logistics.



Example of a vertical transshipment operation at Bettembourg terminal



Example of a horizontal transshipment operation at Bettembourg terminal

**CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola** said: "The development of greener intermodal chains does not only depend on administrative facilitations and on financial incentives, for which the intended revision of the current intermodal legal framework is envisaged. As rail is called to carry more and more trucks and trailers (alongside

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*containers and swap bodies), it is clear that the interoperability/compatibility of trucks and trailers with rail transport is becoming an essential pillar of intermodality which may be, at least partly, addressed within the legal framework of road vehicle type approval. And it goes without saying that, in such an intermodal context, the trucks that run the road legs of intermodal chains should themselves strive to become cleaner”.*

The Commission conference on rail freight offers a promising forum to discuss this important topic and will be live-streamed from the [Connecting Europe Express website](#).

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### About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit [www.cer.be](http://www.cer.be) or follow us on Twitter [@CER\\_railways](#) or [LinkedIn](#).