



## **UIP: A timeline from its initial resilience to today's robustness**

*Translated from the Spanish version available on FAPROVE's website.*

The International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP) was founded on 18 April 1950, at the Hotel de la Couronne in the Swiss town of Attisholz-Solothurn. In a continent devastated by the war, six countries, Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland got together and expressed a shared vision for an integrated railway market, where private investors' wagons would circulate freely across Europe.

The foresight of two Swiss citizens, U. Sieber and W. Kesselring, anticipated by seven years the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which gave birth to the European Economic Community.

The genesis of UIP is closely linked to the development of rail freight transport in Europe. It was born from national associations and private companies, based on the need to coordinate, regulate, harmonise technical and operational harmonisation, and facilitate interoperability—seeking efficiency in rail transport across the continent in the second half of the 20th century. The founders took a bold stance in overcoming the obstacles imposed by each country to establish common standards that optimised the sector's interests and enhanced the fluidity of transport across European borders, avoiding the provincialism of each nation.

The evolution of UIP is a fascinating story with clear objectives, a strong defence of rail transport, and a long-term vision that has overcome short-term thinking and bureaucratic insularity. Furthermore, this spirit of transcendence and the promotion of free wagon circulation among its members has given the organisation a transversal character, now encompassing 14 countries from every corner of Europe.

The various working committees and the commitment to improving the safety of dangerous goods transports, reducing transit times, modernising the wagon fleet, noise mapping, and more, led to the formation of joint working groups with the UIC, OTIF, and various European and international organisations. UIP participates today in many meetings with DG MOVE thereby contributing to integrating private wagons into national and cross-border networks, supporting the liberalisation of the sector and the implementation of initiatives such as the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), aimed at connecting all of Europe through efficient and sustainable multimodal infrastructures.

The continuous efforts to develop best practices, to build and share knowledge, and to focus on providing added-value to freight rail transport, are in 2025 still the DNA of UIP's 75th anniversary. Few pan-European organisations can boast such a track record, with members representing a fleet of over 250,000 wagons of all types moving 50% of all goods (in tn/km) transported by rail across Europe.

Today, UIP's members include Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Czechia, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, Sweden, Belgium, Hungary, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Thus, UIP is a benchmark and an essential stakeholder in every decision-making process that affects rail freight transport in Europe. As the associations still enjoys excellent health on its 75th anniversary, we wish UIP: "Congratulations, and may you have many more successful years ahead!"

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