

**PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION OF THE STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT ON RAIL FREIGHT
NOISE REDUCTION**

*Committee Transport and Tourism, European Parliament
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Noise is one of the most widespread public health issue in Europe. The concern of rail noise increases in public opinions. The single railway market is very fragile that is why an **EU approach** is preferable to **avoid the fragmentation** of the market. 51% of the freight is international; if each Member States takes different measures against noise, the risk is to undermine the sector's competitiveness. A European approach could **ensure the interoperability** of wagons and harmonise national measures.

There is a **slow adaptation of new wagons** with the implementation of silent composite-made brakes. However, due to a life cycle of 40-50 years, there is also a **need for the retrofitting of existing wagons by 2022** in order for the entire fleet to comply with new noise limits. The timetable of the Commission's proposal is in line with German, Swiss, Dutch timetables and potentially the future French and Italian ones on noise.

The Commission will thus coordinate approaches and harmonise measures on the noise issue through different tools:

- **Combining financial instruments:** Regional funds and CEF have to cover a part of the retrofitting. Two calls of €20 million (in total €40 million) under CEF have been published for 2015 and 2016. The use of the Juncker Plan (EFSI) will also be considered for leading a cost-effective retrofitting process.
- **Formalisation of incentives:** the Commission encourages IMs to differentiate TAC in function of noise (Recast Directive). It targets RUs and not the main investors, which are wagon keepers.
- **Formal specification for interoperability:** all wagons will need to comply with new noise limits by 2022 to be allowed to circulate. The **Technical pillar of the 4th railway package** offers a tool for a mandatory retrofitting of existing wagons.
- **Possible exemptions:** in function of density, the noise map (will be presented in TEN-T days in Rotterdam), geographic particularities...

MEPs' positions

Wim VAN DE CAMP (EPP, NL) welcomes the proposal, but asks for a clear and transparent publication on the website. He also questions the relation between the freight noise caused by trains and the one caused by infrastructure.

Michael CRAMER (GREENS, DE) welcomes the proposal after 12 years of discussions. A European approach is the only one possible to avoid a fragmentation of the market and to ensure interoperability. At the same time, there is a real need to deal with noise. It can be a good opportunity for the rail to be more competitive since it will reduce maintenance and energy costs and limit TAC. Germany and Switzerland are good examples of a "win-win situation". It is better to improve wagons than building noise barriers everywhere. **Peter VAN DALEN (ECR, NL)** was also very supportive. For him it is time to tackle this issue. Digitalisation could be a means to limit noise through detection systems to prevent derailment for example. **Ismail ERTUG (S&D, DE)** said that the Commission was not ambitious enough because of lobbyists behind. Germany should be seen as an example with the

completion of the retrofitting by 2020. Synergies with DG Competition have to be found in order to allow national investments in retrofitting.

Dominique RIQUET (ALDE, FR) underlines extra-costs for railways. Costs are double: the initial investment for retrofitting and the maintenance of new equipment, which increases with the new brakes. It will reduce the rail competitiveness for a long-term period and so makes even more fragile the rail sector. In a provocative way, by reducing rail competitiveness, the Commission will reduce the noise since railways will lose market shares, he said. **Elżbieta Katarzyna ŁUKACIJEWSKA (EPP, PL)** was in line, saying that the high cost puts into risk the rail sector, especially in Eastern Europe where rolling stock is old. Small RUs would be more impacted than others. She calls for a White Paper on the issue in order to assess the financial impact of the proposal.

Peter LUNDGREN (EFDD, SE) and **Merja KYLLONEN (GUE, FIND)** agreed on the fact that the “silent technology” proposed by the Commission, especially composite brakes, are not working in cold environment such as in Scandinavia. It means that it will create risk for safety. Moreover, they underline the need of flexibility in the implementation of the proposal because noise is not an issue in Scandinavia due to a low density of population. The issue seems to differ largely from Member States.

More radically, **Jacqueline FOSTER (ECR, UK)** said that the noise issue does not really exist at the EU level and thus no EU funds should be allocated for retrofitting wagons. According to her, where noise is an issue, RUs are responsible for funding the new brakes.