

PRESS RELEASE



3rd April 2017, Brussels

ERFA strongly welcomes the French Regulatory Body's strong signal in favour of better value for money for taxpayers' investment in rail.

The French Regulatory Body's decision to highlight concerns regarding the proposed new investment and performance contract between the Government and the infrastructure manager, is an important step in improving the quality of rail services.

EU rules provide an excellent framework for Member States to ensure strategic rail investments and a more customer-orientated infrastructure manager. The rules oblige Member States to commit long term public financing for rail in return for efficient investment in infrastructure development and specific performance targets.

The rules also include an important provision for Member States to provide incentives so that the cost of infrastructure management is decreased and access charges for rail companies reduced.

At a time when rail is facing stiff competition from other modes of transport, in particular from road, it is vital that efficient use of public money is made and that effective performance targets are in place in order to bring rail costs down and improve rail's attractiveness.

Regulatory bodies should have a key role to play in scrutinising the use of public funds in rail. At the moment it is optional for Member States to involve their regulatory bodies in this process. ERFA urges Member States to use this tool in order to guarantee value for money for their rail investments.

ERFA stresses the key role Member States have in supporting the development and growth of eco-friendly rail. Providing long-term, stable investment plans in support of developing and enhancing their rail infrastructure and effective scrutiny of how that budget is managed are vital for the development of a competitive rail sector.

Link to French Regulatory body press release: <http://www.arafer.fr/communiqués/le-projet-de-contrat-de-performance-entre-letat-et-sncf-reseau-manque-les-objectifs-fixes-par-la-loi-de-reforme-ferroviaire/>

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ERFA - European Rail Freight Association - represents new entrants, i.e. all those operators who want open access and fair market conditions, and sustains their role of pushing forward the development of the railway market. The Association is very much a spin-off of the First Railway Package, adopted by the EU in 2001, and its vision of creating an open and competitive European rail market.

In 2017, ERFA represents 32 members from 16 countries. The members of ERFA all share a commitment to work towards a competitive and innovative single European railway market by promoting attractive, fair and transparent market conditions for all railway companies.

The members of ERFA represent the entire value chain of rail transportation: rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders, passenger operators and national rail freight associations.