

PRESS RELEASE



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ERFA clarifies why greater separation between those running the tracks and those running the trains in Europe is badly needed

ERFA is alarmed at the statements made in Rome last week by some of the big incumbent rail operators in Europe, who refuted the need for greater separation in the rail market.

ERFA members, who are the smaller and non-incumbent operators, are on the receiving end of many discriminatory practices on the rail market.

This discrimination is down to incumbents who are more interested in protecting their own dominant position on the market than securing the future viability of rail.

ERFA fully supports the political pillar of the 4th Railway Package in removing any financial stake between the entity in charge of managing the tracks and train operators.

This type of separation is badly needed.

The entity responsible for the management of the tracks should not have an interest in undermining or blocking other rail users, with which it has no direct financial ties.

This type of treatment is experienced by ERFA members across Europe, jeopardising the very existence of smaller operators, deterring investment and innovation and going against all serious attempts to promote rail growth.

In dismissing the need for greater separation, criticism was also levelled at the separated UK rail model.

Would this be the one and the same UK model that has seen unparalleled rail growth and from which many incumbent operators across Europe run successful services?

ERFA Director and Chairman of the UK Rail Freight Group, Tony Berkeley, has published a strongly-worded open letter defending the separated model in the UK.

In his letter Berkeley rebuts the myths surrounding the UK rail system and highlights the strong growth levels experienced in the UK, where the separated model ensures equal treatment for all operators.

Since 1995 the UK has seen an increase in passenger kilometres by over 90% compared with 18% in Germany.

In freight, volumes have increased by around 60% over the same period.

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Government funding of the UK railway has remained the same in 2012/3 as in 1993/4, but includes a very significant increase in Government investment in new rail infrastructure to improve service quality and capacity.

ERFA reiterates that a sustainable rail market will never be achieved Europe-wide if discrimination against new entrants persists.

Blocking smaller operators on the rail market is simply a gift to the more polluting modes of transport.

It is crucial that rail reform is pursued via the political pillar of the 4th railway package in order to ensure a bright future for rail, one in which smaller and independent operators can contribute to rail growth.

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Link to ERFA Director and RFG Chairman Tony Berkeley's open letter:
http://www.erfarail.eu/uploads/r140718_to_Grube_and_Elia_final.pdf

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 2014, ERFA represents 31 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.