

PRESS RELEASE

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ERFA: Positive step forward for rail's competitiveness with the adoption of EU rules to improve international coordination of infrastructure works

- **Improved rail performance is essential to make rail a more attractive transport mode for customers and to encourage modal shift from road to the eco-friendly rail**
- **Late information regarding planned disruptions; limited provision of and/or unsuitable diversionary routes; uncoordinated infrastructure works across one or more networks, all contribute to a poor quality of rail service**
- **Lack of clarity in current Rail Freight Corridor legislation a current barrier to effective coordination of infrastructure works**
- **The final wake-up call: Rastatt crisis and the series of planned construction works that severely disrupted Europe's North-South rail traffic flows during the early summer. An effective organisation and coordination of planned line closures/restrictions is a good basis for better management when there are unplanned disturbances**

ERFA strongly welcomes new EU rules to create a more customer-orientated rail network, taking important steps forward to improve the reliability and quality of rail services.

Effective management and coordination of planned infrastructure works is an essential part of an infrastructure manager's responsibilities. The new framework provides basic consultation and coordination obligations for infrastructure managers aimed at minimising disruptions to rail services.

The infrastructure manager's crucial role in planning construction works should also be facilitated by long-term investment commitments from national governments. It is an obligation under existing EU rules for Member States to commit long term public financing for rail, thereby providing a stable framework for infrastructure development. ERFA hopes that joint efforts by national governments and infrastructure managers to support their rail sector will guarantee the viability of competitive rail transport in Europe.

ERFA highlights, in particular, the following positive changes for capacity restrictions impacting international rail services:

✓ **Early advance warning** - For major capacity restrictions (more than 7 days, affecting 30% of traffic) infrastructure Managers are obliged to set up a coordination platform, together with users and service facilities to prepare timetables, including the provision of diversionary routes.

PRESS RELEASE

- ✓ **Early coordination work** – Infrastructure managers, including those impacted by the rerouting of trains, are obliged to coordinate amongst themselves capacity restrictions more than 24 months before changes to the working timetable.
- ✓ **Involvement of users in the early coordination work** – Railway undertakings and service facilities have a right, subject to invitation from the infrastructure managers, to be involved in the coordination work for international rail services.
- ✓ **Early and clear communication** – The planned day, time of day, the section of lines affected and the capacity of diversionary lines shall be provided to users more than 24 months in advance and updated 12 months in advance of the change in the working timetable.
- ✓ **Planning that minimizes rail disruption** - For the most disruptive capacity restrictions (more than 30 days and affecting more than 50% of traffic) at least 2 alternatives of capacity restrictions shall be offered to users, indicating the duration of the disruption and available capacity on diversionary lines.

The new rules are a positive step in the right direction and ERFA urges infrastructure managers to start working on their effective implementation as soon as they enter into force at the end of the year. Nothing prevents infrastructure managers from going over and beyond the basic framework to support rail's growth and competitiveness.

The impact of the changes will start to be felt from the 2018 timetable change, but most will kick in for the 2019 timetable change, with the full impact being felt for the 2020 timetable change.

Link to the new EU rules:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2017/EN/C-2017-5963-F1-EN-ANNEX-1-PART-1.PDF>

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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.

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