

PRESS RELEASE



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ERFA supports EU proposals for “quick wins” to improve rail’s performance

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

The changes aim at minimising disruptions to rail services when infrastructure works are being carried out and at creating a more dynamic timetable process for reserving capacity.

Line closures and/or line restrictions are essential to enable infrastructure development and maintenance, but must be organised in such a way as to limit the negative impact on the quality of service offered to end customers.

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. Improved rail performance is essential to make rail a more attractive transport mode and to encourage modal shift from road to the environmentally-friendly rail.

ERFA strongly welcomes the European Commission’s efforts to help support the sector deliver on effective management and coordination of planned infrastructure works. The infrastructure manager’s crucial role in planning maintenance and renewal of rail infrastructure 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.

The proposed new EU rules also provide a framework for infrastructure works impacting train services crossing national borders, obliging early consultation and publication of disruptions and the setting up of a Task Force, with the close involvement of railway undertakings, to prepare timetables and the provision of diversion routes. Improved coordination and consultation on infrastructure works is a key priority for railway undertakings operating on the EU rail freight corridors. Railway undertakings must know of disruptions in advance in order to adapt their operations and transport needs. All efforts must also be made to limit the costs of any disruption for railway undertakings.

In view of the European Commission's proposals ERFA fully supports the following basic provisions:

- ✓ **Mandatory advance warning and consultation with RUs of all planned rail disruptions, including for disruptions of less than 1 day.**
- ✓ **The greater the disruption to rail services the earlier RUs must be informed and consulted on with at least 2 alternative scenarios for capacity restrictions.**
- ✓ **“Major impact” disruptions should be defined as all planned disruptions of more than 7 days**
- ✓ **Significant disruptions to rail services should not be limited to line closures, but should also be defined as speed reductions and restrictions of train parameters, such as length, weight, profile or mode of traction.**
- ✓ **All capacity restrictions should be published in one single consultation document, easily accessible for railway undertakings.**
- ✓ **Additional costs** incurred by the diversion of trains should **not be included in the access charges** paid by railway undertakings. **This also applies for diversionary routes that circumvent national networks.** Compensation by the Infrastructure Manager for additional costs incurred by RUs should be promoted EU - wide.
- ✓ For disruptions impacting **cross border rail services** IMs should coordinate and establish a **Task Force**, in close coordination with railway undertakings, to plan diversionary routes.
- ✓ **A mandatory process to bid into the timetable at any time or a second deadline** for capacity requests to accommodate greater flexibility for path reservations.
- ✓ **The new rules should take effect as soon as possible. Accommodating for the longest lead-in time before applying the new rules would result in unjustifiable delay in improving rail's performance. A transitional regime is needed to cover the phasing in of the different lead in times.**

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Contacts: Julia Lamb Secretary General, +32 4 85 25 99 88, julia.lamb@erfarail.eu

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.