

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### SAVE THE DATE 18<sup>th</sup> April – ERFA Annual Event



**ANNUAL EVENT 2018**  
**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Hotel Le Plaza, Brussels**  
**12.30-16.00**

The topic of ERFA's annual event will be "How to reduce track access charges and improve rail's competitiveness?" More details to come soon!

### A NEW ERFA ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL



From 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018 ERFA's Secretary General, Julia LAMB is on maternity leave.

**Carole Coune** has taken up the position of ERFA Acting Secretary General and will be head of ERFA's Brussels Office until September. Carole Coune has served in different functions at Belgian level in the field of railways (SNCB, cabinet of Ministers and Belgian Ministry of Transport). In particular Carole has played a key role in the restructuring of the Belgian state operator SNCB and in the establishment of the Belgian rail Regulatory Body.



### Launch of new ERFA WEBSITE!

Check out our new website! <http://erfarail.eu/>

### High Level meeting between IMs, RUs and end customers to learn from Rastatt

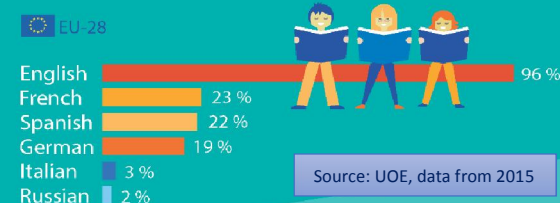
At a special IM-RU meeting convened by the **European Commission on 17<sup>th</sup> January** clear commitments were made by rail's main service provider, the infrastructure managers, to **step up support for competitive international rail freight services**. DB Netz together with Rail Freight Corridor 1 presented the **international contingency plan Handbook**, a first attempt to address the basic communication, alternative route availability and traffic management challenges raised by the Rastatt disaster. RU representatives,



including ERFA, welcomes the Handbook as a good first step, but **further changes are needed if the Handbook is to become an effective tool in the event of major disruptions and contribute to improving the day-to-day management of international services**. The Handbook's adoption by all IMs is foreseen for May. The door has clearly been opened to **simplifying language requirements for international rail services**. European Commission wants to see the running of **pilot tests** before the end of the year and urges willing RUs and IMs to participate! ERFA stresses hand in hand the development of a business case to support the solutions for simplified language requirements.

**What is the language solution for rail? There is a new determination to simplify the rail language requirements, especially following Rastatt.**

Which are the most studied foreign languages?  
(% of students in general upper secondary education)



**The answer is: English!** 96% students of upper secondary education in Europe-28 study English.

One of the options on the table is to move towards a **common operational language** in the rail sector, reducing barriers, especially for cross-border operations. When looking to choose the "rail language" it is vital to look at what languages future generations are learning. Europe is the home of 28 countries, with 24 official languages recognised within the EU. But what is the most studied foreign languages?

### ILLEGAL USE OF STATE AID?

ERFA welcomes European Commission's launch of an investigation into restructuring aid for Polish Regional Railways and its wider implications for the European rail sector. EU rules allow a company to receive restructuring aid only once over a 10-year period, according to the principle: *"one time, last time"*.

This is to avoid that struggling firms rely on public funding to stay in business, instead of improving performance and competing on merit.

### ERFA INPUT TO OTIF DISCUSSIONS

ERFA has submitted an official position to OTIF ahead of the Meeting of the "Revision Committee" (27<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018) on the Swiss proposal to modify liability rules in case of damages caused by freight wagons, as currently set out in the CUV. The Swiss proposal does not take account of recent changes in the GCU agreed at sector level and would most likely lead to a higher overall cost for the rail sector. ERFA assumes that the objection to the Swiss proposal will be shared widely.

### ERFA WELCOMES MODAL SHIFT INVESTMENT

ERFA strongly welcomes the European Commission's approval of 60 M€ French state aid for the establishment, renewal and extension of rail freight sidings. The French rail sidings market is in a particularly difficult situation. Many industries are facing aging sidings which may lead to closure, resulting in reverse modal-shift to road.

### REGULATOR INTERVENES IN LOCO DRIVER SHORTAGE

The Spanish Regulator, CNMC, has introduced conditions on RENFE to improve the pool of availability of loco drivers, as a result of Renfe hiring 30% of the competitors' loco drivers, creating a shortage of drivers and big disadvantages to private rail freight companies operating in the Spanish market.

### Latest news on road charging:



ERFA attended the latest round of European Parliament discussions on EU rule changes to road charges. The MEP in charge of the legislative changes, French MEP C. Revault D'Allones proposes the **introduction of mandatory distance-based tolling for all vehicles, so not just to heavy**

**goods vehicles, but to all road vehicles.** ERFA believes that it is essential to **correct price distortions that favour the more polluting modes of transport** and therefore seeks the promotion of **lower track access charges for rail** as long as road does not pay a similar per km road toll. **The Italian Toll discount is a great example of the positive impact of lower charges for rail on modal shift.**

### Next steps to simplifying access conditions for rail facilities

The European Commission is organising a meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February to develop the **"Common Template for rail service facilities"**, with **input from RUs and service facility operators** (diverse list including freight terminals, maintenance facilities, storage sidings, refuelling facilities, marshalling yards).

The newly adopted EU legislation on rail service facilities intends to improve information availability on rail facilities and ensure transparent and non-discriminatory access conditions. **The development of a Common Template is a requirement of the new EU legislation in order to simplify the provision by service facility operators of information and access conditions regarding rail facilities and their services.** There is **no legal obligation** for a facility operator to adopt the common template. It is intended as a **tool to facilitate the new EU legal obligations and should facilitate the work of RUs in identifying suitable facilities.** **The new EU obligations regarding the publication of information and access conditions for service facilities apply from 1st June 2019.**

### ITALY IN THE SPOTLIGHT - CORRECTION



Regarding ERFA's December Newsletter we have been informed by the Italian Authority of Transport (ART) that the **data on track access charges for freight transport in Italy**, published in the "IRG Fifth Annual Market Monitoring Report" (dated March 2017), **is wrong** and that the report is in the course of rectification. The average track access charge in Italy in 2015 communicated by ART is 2.29 euro per train-km, which would in fact make it **lower** than the **average European Track Access Charge.**