

NEWS IN BRIEF

CONSULTATION ON COORDINATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS LEGISLATION

The EC has launched a [public consultation](#) on the draft legislation on timetabling and coordination of works. The aim of the legislation is to put in place obligations for IMs to coordinate infrastructure works and to consult and inform RUs in case of disruptions. In order to collect ERFA members' views, ERFA has elaborated a short questionnaire for its members on how to minimise the impact of infrastructure works on the RUs' businesses. The objective is to determine which options would be beneficial for its members.

DEBATES ON THE TEN-T POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In view of the revision of the CEF budget, Members of the European Parliament (MEP) started to discuss the **priorities for the TEN-T corridors**. Michael Cramer (Greens/DE) criticised the lack of investments from Member States in **missing links**, especially for access to the Gottard base tunnel. The **lack of rail capacity** in some parts of Europe e.g Germany, was highlighted as a major bottleneck, which should be addressed at EU level. Finally, MEPs discussed how to attract private investments in infrastructure projects in particular through the EFSI.



Sian Prout



Lindsay Durham



Gert-Jan Koopman

ERFA LEADS A UNITED FRONT FOR A COMPETITIVE AND OPEN RAIL MARKET IN EUROPE



At [ERFA's annual event](#), the **EU Commission's Deputy head in charge of state aid cases, Gert-Jan Koopman**, highlighted that despite successive rounds of rail liberalisation, new entrants still face basic competition issues. Together with Sian Prout, Head of the Single European Rail Area unit, they stressed the European

Commission's (EC) strong focus on effective enforcement of EU market opening legislation and competition rules. **ERFA President, Lindsay Durham** welcomed the commitment of the EC to tackle competition issues. In strong alliance with passenger new entrants, ERFA will work closely with national competition authorities and regulators to ensure transparent and fair conditions for the rail market in Europe.

During the debate, **Dominique Riquet, Vice-President of the Transport Committee** in the European Parliament, stressed that an open market is the prime condition to attract more investments in rail. **Erich Forster, CEO of WESTbahn** as well as **Tomi Lapinlampi from the Finnish Transport Agency**, explained the importance of open data for supporting a competitive rail sector.

[More information and pictures](#)

THE EC ENDORSES THE SINGLE OPERATIONAL LANGUAGE IDEA PUSHED BY ERFA

At the occasion of ERFA's annual dinner, Sian Prout, head of unit "Single European rail area" highlighted the EC's wish to explore the possibility of a single operational language for cross-border operations further. In the context of the **revision of train drivers' directive**, [ERFA supports](#) a progressive introduction of a single operational language for railways in Europe in order to improve rail interoperability and reduce the administrative and financial burden for railway undertakings. At the PRIME-RU Dialogue a decision was taken to establish a subgroup of RUs and IMs to develop a set of **standardized and simplified expressions in English**, which should be the basis of train drivers' communication with IMs. The objective is to launch a **pilot train crossing different borders**.

STATE OF PLAY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU MARKET OPENING LEGISLATION

The EC has announced that possible [infringement proceedings](#) may be launched against Member States in the 2nd quarter 2017. The EC is currently looking into whether national transpositions on market opening rules comply with EU legislation.

JOINT MEETING RU/IM DIALOGUE: FINDING COMMON UNDERSTANDING

On 28th March, ERFA took part in the 1st joint meeting of the RU/PRIME (IM) dialogue. The aim of the exchange is to ensure a **better understanding of RUs' needs and IM constraints** and to agree measures to support a competitive rail sector.

Michail Stahlhut, ERFA Board Director, urged IMs to speed-up the implementation of the [10 priority projects](#) from the Rotterdam sector statement, in particular by using pilot tests in order to improve the quality and efficiency of the rail freight corridors. The EC echoed his views and underlined the need to solve operational issues as quickly as possible.

ERFA Secretary General, Julia Lamb, presented the many concerns raised by RUs regarding [Track Access Charges \(TACs\)](#) and the urgent need for IM charging schemes to better support rail's competitiveness. TACs represent between 20-35% of RU operational costs, which obviously has an impact on rail's attractiveness. More must be done to improve the transparency, predictability and efficiency of TACs in order to support rail's competitiveness.

The possibility for RUs to apply derogations from the train drivers' language requirements for border sections was also discussed. ERA presented their guidelines on how the derogations should be applied. RUs stressed the need for derogations in order to reduce escalating costs for cross-border operations and to better reflect the practices in the road sector, but some IMs argued that lower language requirements could represent a safety issue. The **single operational language was highlighted as a long-term solution** to be tested on some sections of the network.

[More information and presentations](#)

RU DIALOGUE – HOW TO BEST IMPLEMENT THE RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR SECTOR STATEMENT?

The [RU Dialogue plenary meeting](#) took place in Brussels on 29th March. It offers a regular forum for **open discussions** between RUs on operational issues and how to improve the competitiveness of the rail sector.

At this occasion, **Irmtraut Tonndorf, ERFA Board director**, presented the [state of play of the implementation](#) of the **Rotterdam sector statement on rail freight corridors**. She encouraged RUs to commit more in the discussions concerning the implementation of priority projects in order to not lose the momentum for rail freight. Only a few projects are progressing, which puts at risk the ability of the sector to achieve results in a short timeframe. She highlighted the need for a more structured organisation, **identifying clear responsibilities** for steering and developing projects. She also announced the creation of the **website** dedicated to the sector statement, which will improve the communication on the progress made and facilitate the involvement of stakeholders.

TRACK ACCESS CHARGES' DISCUSSION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In on-going discussions with the Dutch MEP Wim Van de Camp **on how to lower track access charges**, ERFA continues to highlight the need for more transparency, predictability and efficiency of the rail charging system, especially in view of rail's competition with road. At the meeting the French Regulator, ARAFER, presented changes that can be made by the IM to maximise efforts to support rail's competitiveness, but also highlighted the difficulties IMs face due to limited state funding and political interference in rail funding. For ERFA it is clear that Member States have a key role to play in supporting the development and growth of eco-friendly rail. **Providing long-term, stable investment plans** in support of infrastructure management are vital for the development of a competitive rail sector.



AGENDA

REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON TECHNICAL PILLAR - ERA

The ERA and the EC have launched a series of regional debates, where RUs can raise their concerns and questions on the 4th Railway Package – Technical Pillar

- **26th April 2017, Budapest**
- **10th May 2017, Helsinki**
- **23th May 2017, Valetta**
- **7th June 2017, Amsterdam**
- **20th June 2017, Brussels**

The EC updated participants with the first results of the ERA Noise Task force, in charge of finding a cost-effective compromise to deal with rail freight noise. A **section-approach** would be the preferred option. Silent sections will be defined by Member States according to certain criteria e.g. density of population, already in place protections.

The German association, VDV, presented their [projects on e-ticketing](#) for multimodal transport. This initiative would allow better integration of transport ticketing and tariffs systems. Tony Berkeley, ERFA Board Director, highlighted that open data on ticketing, together with transparent and fair reselling conditions, would allow a real competition between RUs.

DEPLOYMENT OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

ERFA actively participates in the development of a **market-orientated list of KPIs** to be deployed as a first step along the rail freight corridors in 2018 and then extended to the whole network. Discussions have started between the RU dialogue subgroup on international rail freight, customers and Infrastructure managers. Although many Rail freight corridors (RFCs) and IMs already publish KPIs, in particular on punctuality and average speed, some **IMs seem reluctant to implement the list of KPIs** proposed by the RUs and end customers. The KPIs on average speed along the corridors and average track access charge are crucial in order to steer improvement of the IMs and to increase the efficiency of operations at the corridor level. **ERFA will continue to discuss with IMs and rail customers and push for a quick implementation of market-orientated KPIs.**

COMBINED TRANSPORT CONSULTATION

Discussions on the **changes to the combined transport legislation** have started. The EC would like to update and modernise the framework for supporting combined transport at the EU level. A [public consultation](#) is currently open until 24th April for all stakeholders. Several issues are under discussion:

- Definition on combined transport, in particular on road leg limits. The objective is to encourage modal shift and the use of combined transport;
- The harmonisation of economic support across the EU is also addressed in order to improve interoperability and effectiveness of combined transport at the cross-border level;
- Simplification of the procedures and digitalisation of the documents have been highlighted as a necessary step forward to make combined transport more attractive;

THE DECISION OF THE FRENCH REGULATORY BODY: BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY FOR TAXPAYERS' INVESTMENT IN RAIL

ERFA welcomes the opinion of the French Regulatory Body (ARAFER) on the new investment and performance contract between the French Government and the Infrastructure Manager, SNCF Réseau. ARAFER highlighted that the **financing plan is unrealistic** and that **key performance targets are missing**. This decision sends a strong signal that Regulatory Bodies have a strong role to play in scrutinising the use of public funds in rail in order to guarantee value for money for rail investments.

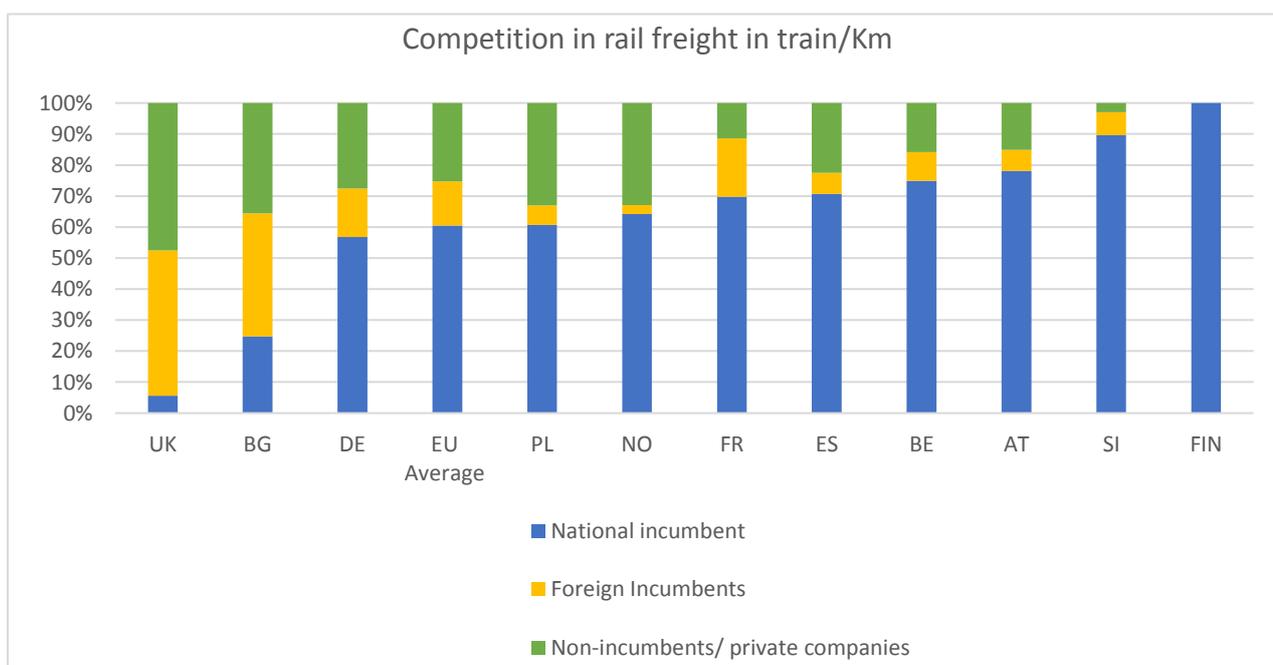
EU rules provide an excellent framework for Member States to ensure strategic rail investments and a more customer-orientated infrastructure manager. The rules oblige Member States to commit long term public financing for rail in return for efficient investment in infrastructure development and specific performance targets. The rules also include an important provision for Member States to provide incentives so that the cost of infrastructure management is decreased leading to reduced access charges for rail companies.

Regulators are key actors in implementing such a framework in national Member States. [ERFA welcomes the decision of ARAFER](#) and hopes it will **pave the way for similar action by other Regulators**.



INFOGRAPHICS – NEW ENTRANTS IN THE RAIL FREIGHT MARKET

The association of rail Regulatory Bodies (IRG-Rail) has published its [5th annual market monitoring report](#). It provides a comprehensive picture of the rail market in Europe, including market players and the competitive state of play. In its last Newsletter, ERFA presented the evolution of new entrants in the European rail freight market. The term “new entrants” also refers to incumbents operating in other Member States. ERFA wants to propose a new infographic, showing the market share of non-incumbent/ private companies in several Member States!



Data from IRG-RAIL, 5th Annual market monitoring report

ERFA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

[ERFA General Assembly Meeting](#) took place on the 7th March in Brussels. It was good opportunity to review ERFA's activities for 2016 and to discuss rail political and technical issues faced by ERFA members. As a market-orientated driver, ERFA relies on the contribution of its members to define its strategy and priorities.



On the same day, **Lindsay Durham** (Freightliner Group) was elected ERFA President and **Markus Vaerst** (Cargo Rail Europe) ERFA Vice-President.

