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ERFA REMINDS

THE LIBERALISATION OF THE MARKET HELPS THE RAILWAY SAFETY PROCESS

The ERFA welcomes the recent ERA intermediate report on railway safety in the European Union (> **See the link** <http://www.era.europa.eu/Search/Key-Documents>). This report shows that the level of European railway safety is constantly improving with the market liberalisation process initiated in 2006 for national and international freight transport.

In the eyes of the ERFA, these interim lessons are important, for many reasons:

- Contrary to what some organisations are propagating, there is no negative correlation between the opening of the market and the level of safety.
- New railway undertakings entering the market have contributed in large measure to these positive statistics through very high personnel recruitment requirements, their policy of continuous control in the field and the high level of investments in new rolling stock.
- This trend could only be confirmed through the stakes and decisions that will have to be taken soon and rapidly, namely:
 - At the level of the 4th railway package:
 - The approval of the single certification of railway undertakings by a revision of the safety directive.
 - The joint reinforcement of the powers of the ERA to ensure European harmonisation to limit drastically the national rules and specific features within short deadlines.
 - At the level of the regulation concerning the rail freight corridors, the commissioning of the first 6 corridors in November of this year

François Coart, President, points out: *“Private and new railway undertakings entering the market are investing heavily in training and in rolling stock. They have put safety at the top of their priorities and are subject to very many inspections. We are helping to improve the overall level of rail safety. The approval of the 4th railway package as a whole, namely its technical pillar, but also its new infrastructure governance pillar, will help boost even further the system’s safety level through the harmonisation and easier application of national rules, and will contribute to an enhanced dissemination of operating experience and rules on good practices. The governance of the system must also enable the infrastructure manager to affirm its independence and to bring its operational means and resources as well as investments under control, which will help to raise the safety level of the overall system.”*