

30 January 2013

PRESS RELEASE

European decision-makers: take your responsibility!

Today, the EU Commission released the long awaited Fourth railway package: The whole package and on time!

It is a major step forward in terms of empowerment of the infrastructure manager. All essential functions must now be concentrated within the infrastructure manager: path allocation, traffic management, maintenance, planning, etc... This will ensure a better independence for the IM. However, the full independence of the IM remains the most efficient way to ensure non-discrimination, transparency and the absence of conflict of interest with all Railways Undertakings running on the networks.

The Fourth rail package fully opens the passenger domestic market which can be only beneficial for freight.

ERFA also welcomes the enhanced role of the European Rail Agency which is a key success factor for interoperability and safety on the whole European rail network.

Social protection is taken into account for public transport plan. This is a highly positive aspect which must lead to a European rail social harmonisation: there cannot be economic progress without social integration.

ERFA nevertheless expresses its frustration to the Commission: There is a huge step backwards compared to the previous version of the proposal dating back to just some days ago! It related to the separation and cross-subsidisation between the infrastructure manager and some incumbent operators. Our industry is already complex enough and overregulated. Additional Chinese Walls will never prevent suspicion!

ERFA expresses its scepticism about the reciprocity clause which allows unbundled countries to reject incumbent integrated operators. Most of the market volume is in France and Germany which are integrated or in a process of being integrated!



ERFA thanks DG MOVE team and is aware of the very last month pressure they had to endure. It is no longer acceptable that dominant operators can dictate their views to decision makers: it is a matter a democracy..... **“Rendez-vous” now with the Supreme democratic structure, the European Parliament for the first reading!**

François Coart, President, declared: *“it is more than ever time for EU decision makers to take their responsibility. The rail market has not met the industry expectations for years. We already lost 10 years with the recast and will have to wait another 10 years for the full implementation of the 4th RP in Member States. Competition against road is a daily issue already now! Why then continue with the same dominant structures having no interest in changing! Make up your mind and act! Deliver us a real European open market and things may change”.*

Contacts:

ERFA (European Rail Freight Association) was set up with the 1st Railway Package in Brussels in July 2002 to represent the interests of the new independent and private ‘open access’ rail freight operators. ERFA is EU Representative Body. Today, the association comprises 30 members (21 rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders as well as 9 national rail freight associations) from 16 countries in wider Europe. ERFA represents more than 800 locomotives and 55.000 freight wagons within the direct members. ERFA's main objective is to make the rail freight market fit for competition so that rail freight can expand its market share, attract new investments, become more innovative and create jobs. By doing so, ERFA contributes to a highly competitive EU rail freight market.

ERFA's key mission to achieve its objective is to remove all legal, technical, social and administrative barriers that prevent its members from rapidly establishing international cross-border freight services, using all rail infrastructures regardless of who manages them, and to encourage any developments likely to enable all rail companies to flourish on this market, regardless of their size or age.

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