

2 April 2014

PRESS RELEASE

Expansion of ERFA and reinforcement of the ERFA Board, strengthening the voice of independent rail operators in Europe, as Vice-President & Commissioner Siim Kallas and TRAN Chair Brian Simpson pledge their strong on-going support to the sector

At its 13th General Assembly Meeting held on 1st April 2014 the European Rail Freight Association welcomed three new members into the association, the **Bulgarian Railway Company (BRC)**, the Italian rail freight association **FerCargo** and for the first time in ERFA's history a passenger operator, **Westbahn** from Austria.

ERFA furthermore welcomed three existing members, **NEE**, **MT Group** and **Rail Cargo Europe** onto the Board of Directors. This general assembly was also a unique opportunity to introduce a new member of staff to our community: Julia Lamb, who was unanimously selected by our board. Julia is the former Head of Cabinet for the Chairman of the European Parliament Transport Committee and will succeed as Secretary General to Pierre Tonon on 1st July.

The Association's expansion and the reinforcement of the Board is timely. It comes at a moment when the sector is at a crossroads. As very clearly outlined by President François Coart, in a special seminar event held following the General Assembly, "*the clock is ticking for rail freight.*" In the presence of rail stakeholders from across Europe, François Coart stressed the need for firm action in the direction of market opening. "*At the moment this has effectively ground to a halt, while we await the start of Council deliberations on the market pillar and wait to see developments following the European Parliament elections in May.*"

ERFA also took the opportunity to reiterate its strong support for the promising developments on the technical pillar of the 4th railway package, while underlining the critical importance of getting the governance part of the package back on track. ERFA continues to stress the importance of a real separation between infrastructure manager and historic operator.



This point was also strongly made by the Vice President of the European Commission Siim Kallas and by his Director of mobility networks Olivier Onidi. The Commissioner made it clear he would not accept any step backwards from what has already been achieved in the Recast of the First Railway Package, firing a clear warning shot to the Member States ahead of any deliberations in Council.

Brian Simpson, Chairman of the European Parliament's Transport Committee, reiterated his long-standing support for delivering a fair and non-discriminatory level playing field for all rail operators on the market. He pledged his continued support to the rail freight sector in his new capacity as TEN-T coordinator for Motorways of the Seas, where one of his priorities will be to develop and improve rail connections with EU ports.

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 31 members (22 rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders as well as 9 national rail freight associations) from 18 countries in wider Europe. ERFA represents more than 900 locomotives and 55.000 freight wagons. ERFA represents 70 Railways Undertakings all over Europe. 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.

ERFA asbl
Pierre Tonon
Secretary General
+32 475235348
p.t@erfarail.eu
François Coart
President
francois.coart@erfarail.eu