

PRESS RELEASE



10th March 2017, Brussels

ERFA Annual event 2017: Strong unity of rail new entrants for an open and competitive European rail market!

ERFA's Annual event, held on March 7th was a great success with over 100 delegates and was supported by representatives from both DG Move and DG Competition at the European Commission and the European Parliament's Transport Committee. The event was dedicated to the actions needed to deliver further liberalisation following the finalisation of the the 4th Rail Package in December 2016.

The European Commission stressed its commitment to ending competitive distortions in the rail sector. DG Competition and DG Move are joining forces to ensure a more effective enforcement of EU market opening rules and EU competition rules, a move strongly supported by ERFA. **ERFA's new President, Lindsay Durham from Freightliner Group**, highlighted the need to focus on the prize of increasing rail market share and the benefits to society and the economy that would deliver. She also supported more collaborative action between freight and passenger new entrants to accelerate the pressure for much-needed change in the rail sector. This new entrant appetite for growth and innovation is needed to keep rail ahead of the game.

As stated by **Gert-Jan Koopman, EU Commission's Deputy Director General for State Aid at DG Competition**, despite successive rounds of liberalisation, state-owned incumbents continue to largely dominate the rail market and new entrants continue to struggle in setting up new types of service and routes to serve the European market. If rail wants to play a leading role in the EU's sustainable transport vision, basic competition problems in the sector should urgently be tackled. **Sian Prout, Head of Unit in the EU Commission's DG for Mobility & Transport, for the Single European rail area**, echoed Mr Koopman's views, highlighting that the top priority is to ensure effective and timely enforcement of existing EU rules on market opening and to fill the existing loopholes with implementing measures, particularly on access to facilities and timetabling.

Speaking on the subject of what rail needs to do to attract much-needed investment in the sector, **Dominique Riquet, Vice-chair of the Transport committee in the European Parliament** stressed that both open markets and targeted EU funding are the prime conditions needed to attract investment to the sector. One solution proposed would be to lower the risk for private investors by blending grants (for example from CEF) and EFSI. **Duncan Clark, Strategic Development Director in GB Railfreight**, highlighted that ensuring a non-discriminatory and transparent access to the essential facility infrastructures such as terminals, depots or stations is crucial to boost competition and market shares for rail.

The accessibility and availability of open data in the rail sector is another challenge that should be tackled by EU policy makers. As CEO of **WestBAHN Erich Forster** highlighted the basic timetabling and ticketing

PRESS RELEASE



problems that exist in rail, limiting the ability for passengers to have details of all options for their journey. **Tomi Lapinlampi, open data specialist in the Finnish Transport Agency**, emphasised the benefits from more transparency, by describing the Finnish open data system as a cornerstone of an efficient, open and user-friendly rail system, which is a prerequisite to foster modal shift to rail.

ERFA's Annual event was also an opportunity to introduce ERFA's new President, Lindsay Durham, from Freightliner Group and to thank the outgoing President Irmtraut Tonndorf for her remarkable energy and dedication to improving rail's marketability. Markus Vaerst is the newly appointed Vice-Chair of ERFA. ERFA also welcomes one new Board member, Andreas Mandl, Managing Director of LTE Transport and Logistics.

Contacts:

Julia Lamb Secretary General, +32 2 513 60 87, julia.lamb@erfarail.eu

ERFA - European Rail Freight Association - represents new entrants, i.e. all those operators who want open access and fair market conditions, and sustains their role of pushing forward the development of the railway market. The Association is very much a spin-off of the First Railway Package, adopted by the EU in 2001, and its vision of creating an open and competitive European rail market.

In 2017, ERFA represents 32 members from 16 countries. The members of ERFA all share a commitment to work towards a competitive and innovative single European railway market by promoting attractive, fair and transparent market conditions for all railway companies.

The members of ERFA represent the entire value chain of rail transportation: rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders, passenger operators and national rail freight associations.