

PRESS RELEASE

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Implementing EU rules is an urgent need to make rail more competitive

ERFA, representing new entrants in the rail market highlights two deadlines in July, which are important steps forward in moving rail towards a more competitive and cost-effective mode of transport

1. The first deadline concerns **the removal of more than 11 000 national rules**, which heavily contribute to a fragmented and more costly rail market. ERFA fully supports the role of the European Union Agency for Railways, ERA, in analysing, reviewing and removing all unnecessary and redundant national rules.
2. The second deadline concerns **the transparency of how track access charges are calculated** and passed on to railway undertakings. Rail regulators will for the first time have the opportunity to scrutinise how the costs are calculated and to check whether railway undertakings are paying too much.



Member States are expected to send their national implementation plans, listing national safety rules and planning for the removal of redundant and unjustified national rules. The European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) will review the national plans and the European Commission (EC) can request Member States to withdraw burdensome and redundant national (safety) law regarding operations.

National safety rules are responsible for increasing the burden and costs for railway undertakings, without necessarily contributing to a safer railway. ERFA draws particular attention to the situation in Italy regarding the two-driver rule, which imposes two drivers in the locomotive cabin. There is no clear justification on the basis of safety why one driver is deemed sufficient for rail operations, and indeed road operations, across Europe, except for in parts of Italy. The same goes for the obligation on railway undertakings to install emergency manual torches in their locomotives in Italy in order to inform other trains in case of incidents, despite existing digital safety alert systems.

Results of implementation

- ✓ Simplifying requirements, while guaranteeing high level of safety standards
- ✓ Improving cost-efficiency of rail operations
- ✓ Unlocking the great potential for cross-border operations

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Deadline for infrastructure managers to provide the rail regulators with full transparency on how track access charges are calculated. Infrastructure Managers will have to provide the methods of how they calculate track access charges (direct costs) to the rail regulators. Today many railway undertakings are concerned that they are overpaying for the service they are getting.

As track access charges account for a considerable part of operational costs for rail operators, they do have an important impact on rail's competitiveness. Scrutinising the consistency of the calculation of charges with EU rules is a key element to restore confidence of rail businesses and investors.

Results of implementation

- ✓ Ensuring the compliance of infrastructure managers with EU rules on charging methods
- ✓ Improving transparency of charges and restoring confidence
- ✓ Incentivizing Infrastructure managers to perform better and reduce their costs

ERFA urges all efforts to be made to fulfil the requirements of the deadlines. These are two major steps forward towards a more competitive and simplified rail system, allowing rail to better compete with other modes of transport and to drive changes.

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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.