European Rail Freight Association

To Mr. Siim Kallas
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Sent by mail only

Brussels, 30th October 2012

Concerns: France – New "Pôle Public Ferroviaire Unifié"

Dear Vice-President Kallas,

The French transport Minister, Monsieur Cuvillier announced today the creation of a "Pôle Public Ferroviaire Unifié", a unified state owned railway pole. It will include RFF under SNCF.

ERFA takes directly contact with you because the opening of the French market seems not to be on the agenda of this government despite a strong EU commitment in this direction as you stated in your allocution of September 24 at the "Last Mile" conference.

This reintegration project is unclear as regard the governance in relation with the first railway package criteria. It is also unclear how the RFF debt will be managed as regards the Maastricht criteria.

ERFA represents all rail actors having an interest in rail liberalisation and in line with the transport White paper and we do not know how new entrants may survive in a system totally controlled by SNCF. In addition, this reversal of the French government sends a double negative signal to the historic railwaymen community:

- This means the end of the liberalisation,
- The reinforcement of the supremacy of the SNCF means no need to change or to improve the system.

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Registration number: 0478.440.721. Publication in the Belgian Official Gazette: 14 November 2007. VAT: BE 0478.440.721

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How this new structure will cope with the new 4th railway package and especially its extended responsibility of the infrastructure manager including all essential functions on top of path allocation and charging? How will the independence be managed?

This unclear situation in such strategic country as France reinforces the need for a proposal end of this year of a clear 4th railway package including strict separation rules.

In the name of our members, I thank you in advance for your support in this uncertain period.

Yours very sincerely,

François Coart

President

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