

PRESS RELEASE



Friday 14th November, Brussels

Intercity prize for new entrant shows the benefit of competition above tracks

ERFA congratulates one of its passenger members Westbahn for winning prestigious 'European Inter City Operator of the Year' award at the European Rail Congress 2014 held in London this week.

Julia Lamb, ERFA secretary General, comments 'this success demonstrates that competition above rail as achieved by Westbahn brings better service quality and competitive prices on an important intercity route Salzburg – Vienna.'

ERFA believes that fair competition above rail for both passenger and freight traffic brings innovation, better service quality and competitive prices, leading to investment and growth. That is why taking forward the 4th Railways Package as a whole, with the Governance and technical pillars together, is necessary.

The Transport Council meets on 3rd December to discuss the way forward; they should note this success of one of the few independent intercity operators, Westbahn, and must have the courage to do what is needed to create a genuine single market for rail. Backdoor cooperation agreements between Infrastructure Managers and their incumbent operator, as proposed by some member states, must be avoided. These would perpetuate all the problems that new companies face when trying to enter such monopolistic markets.

ERFA's paper on cooperation agreements is attached.

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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 2014, ERFA represents 34 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.