

Working together for a more competitive rail network



On the occasion of the Rail Freight Day in Vienna ERFA President Lindsay Durham highlighted **key priorities** for boosting rail freight transport in the coming years.

ERFA, representing private companies in the rail freight sector, seeks to create an attractive environment for rail companies to be able to **grow their business, easily able** to offer new services in and across Europe. **Creating the right dynamic** to

develop rail's share of the transport market is crucial to keeping environmentally-friendly rail at the forefront of Europe's sustainable transport system.

Strong cooperation within the sector is key to unlocking rail's potential and securing its place as the best solution for **reducing harmful emissions, decongesting Europe's roads** and **providing the efficient and competitive services sought by customers**.

With this in mind Lindsay Durham welcomed the **Rail Freight Forward initiative**, a coalition of rail freight operators supported by sector associations, including ERFA, which aims to achieve a **30% share of rail freight in Europe by 2030**.

Further work needs to be done to **ensure much-needed support** from infrastructure managers so that rail can compete successfully with other modes of transport for customers.

Part of that has got to involve **getting national governments** to buy into rail freight and support their infrastructure managers in delivering services that meet **reliability, quality and cost expectations**.

Key ERFA priorities highlighted by Lindsay during her intervention include the following:

- **Increasing efficiency and reducing costs** through a more standardised infrastructure, e.g a standard gauge to transport standard containers, so that unit costs can be reduced, enabling a more competitive price. If infrastructure is not fit for purpose, then it is the railway undertakings who suffer the inefficiencies
- **Increasing the reliability of rail services** by putting in place incentives for Infrastructure Managers to deal with recurring problems on the network, which lead to service delays/ cancellations. Unless responsibility is attributed for trying to prevent and resolve recurring disturbances to the rail network, such as falling trees on the track, suicides and maintenance-relate problems, rail will be unable to seriously address its quality problem.
- An improved framework for delivering competition within rail. **Competition drives innovation, investment, efficiency and new ideas**. A large part of the policy framework has already been put in place, but **not yet is there an open and competitive market in all countries**. We would therefore support evolution of the existing rail packages to ensure that there really is absolute clarity and no hiding place for discrimination.

ERFA welcomed the Rail Freight Day as an opportunity to take stock of the progress made via the on-going sector cooperation to boost international rail freight and to increase awareness of the targeted support needed from national governments in order to maximise rail's potential.