

Press Release – ERFA Sets Out Rail Freight Policy Priorities for New European Commission

10 September 2024

During its annual event on 10 September, ERFA presented its 2024-2029 manifesto to industry experts and policy makers. The manifesto presents what ERFA believes are the key issues which must be addressed by the European Institutions and Member States during this legislative cycle. The manifesto identifies three broad policy objectives which should be focused on. These are fixing infrastructure, achieving the Single European Railway Area and improving rail freight's competitiveness.

ERFA believes to achieve these three goals, a broad and holistic approach is required which looks at both financing and legislative policy. It is important that all proposals put forward have a benefit on at least one of the three policy objectives. This will require a coordinated approach to policy development between European and national policy makers and the rail freight industry. Concrete demands are follows:

1. **Infrastructure** has to be renovated and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) completed, whilst also ensuring that in the next years temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs) are optimized regarding effects on rail freight. This includes railway undertakings (RUs) being financially compensated in full. Switzerland currently follows this path and can be a benchmark.
2. **Track Access Charges (TAC)** rules and regimes have to be reassessed and developed into a strategic framework to support shift to rail. We need multiannual stable framework for TAC and major support measures as TraFöG in Germany. TAC policy should be the major, non-discriminatory instrument to support rail freight instead of subsidising specific market segments or directly subsidising specific companies.
3. **ERTMS** has now to be fully prioritised in implementation, but with reliable implementation plans – coordinated with the availability of on-board units – and monitored. Specification changes have to be minimised, and test specifications have to be harmonised and simplified. Financing for the ERTMS on board units have to be fully financed, as there is no direct added value for RUs from the technology. Without this, ERTMS deployment will remain slow and problematic. There should be no new public investment and finance programs for other technologies until ERTMS is fully implemented.
4. A **Single European Railway Area (SERA)** has to be completed with reduction of bureaucracy, simplified language requirements and simplified certification processes for railway licenses and rolling stock.

For more information, you can Contact:

European Rail Freight Association asbl, info@erfarail.eu, Tel +32 2 513 60 87;
Rue Montoyer 23, B-1000 Brussels ; Reg nr. 0478.440.721. Belgian official gazette 26.11.2007



ERFA President, Dirk Stahl, stated, *“on behalf of ERFA, I am pleased to be able to present our vision for the coming five years. Rail freight today is facing many challenges, and it is critical we come together to find common solutions. We believe with the adoption of a business-friendly strategy for rail freight, the industry can play an increasingly important role in decarbonization rail freight and building resilient logistic chains.”*

ERFA Secretary General, Conor Feighan, concluded, *“the manifesto comes at an important moment ahead of the appointment of a new European Commissioner for Transport. It will be important the incoming Commissioner can ensure that current initiatives can be concluded in a satisfactory manner, such as the Railway Capacity Regulation, whilst also developing an ambitious strategy for rail freight.”*

The ERFA Manifesto 2024-2029 can be found [here](#).