

Press Release – Achieving Modal Shift: The Swiss Alpine Example

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The first half of 2021 has seen rail freight experience the [highest modal share of rail freight traffic in transalpine transport via Switzerland in 25 years](#). The modal split for rail freight has gone up from 71.5% in 2020 to 74.4% in the first half 2021 which is for sure the highest in Europe. This positive achievement shows first and foremost that modal shift is achievable when the proper political framework is in place. Lessons from these developments and Swiss transport policy should therefore be carried into European policy over the coming years.

The Swiss Alpine example makes clear the necessary preconditions to achieve modal shift. Over the past years in Switzerland there has been a **broad public and political support for rail freight** (Alpenschutzartikel in Bundesverfassung) joined with **heavy investments in infrastructure with a strong focus on the needs of rail freight** (Lötschberg, Gotthard and Ceneri base tunnels with a corner height of 4 meters), **early liberalization of the market** with competition in the network and a **strong and independent regulator** with knowledge of the market. It has also been acknowledged that financial support for rail freight, namely the specific support for intermodal transport, has significantly contributed to this modal shift.

Given that the European Union will begin a revision of a number of key legal texts which will directly impact rail freight over the coming years, with a revision of the Rail Freight Corridors and TEN-T network imminent, it is important that lessons are learnt from the most successful example of modal shift on the European continent.

ERFA President, Dirk Stahl, commented, *“We are pleased to see the high level of modal shift being experienced regarding cargo moving through the Swiss Alps. It clearly shows that when the right conditions are in place, modal shift is possible. A high level of competition, as we have it on Corridor 1 (Rotterdam-Genoa), is clearly a supporting and necessary prerequisite.*

ERFA Secretary General, Conor Feighan, said, *“The release of these modal shift figures is timely. In the coming weeks we will see the revision of legal texts which will define what infrastructure rail freight will operate on for the coming decade. It is essential that European policy makers ensure that there is a strong focus on the needs of rail freight. It is also a reminder that policy makers need to continue to promote competition as a means to achieve modal shift and ensure sufficient financial support is provided for infrastructure development.”*

For more information, you can Contact:

Conor Feighan, Secretary General, 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