



The Group of Representative Bodies (GRB)

To:

Johannes Hahn
Commissioner for Budget and Administration

Adina-Ioanna Vălean
Commissioner for Transport

Karima Delli
Chair, European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism

Monika Hohlmeier
Chair, Committee on Budgetary Control

Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair, Budget Committee

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Need for a sufficient budget of the European Union Agency for Railways

With the 4th Railway Package being in full swing, the European railway sector is preparing for the challenges of the future - both financially as well as related to organisational and technical aspects. With the 4th Railway Package, the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) was given a prominent role as authorisation entity and ERTMS system authority in Europe including tasks like certification, authorisation and further harmonising the interoperability and safety framework. Furthermore, the Agency shall soon become an important interlocutor for the future Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, without a doubt the biggest, game-changing European research and innovation initiative of the decade.

Regrettably, the Agency's current and future performance is put at risk with the decision taken at EU level to cut its operational budget significantly. The negative impact of an underperforming and understaffed Agency is detrimental for the sector and its vital future. An insufficient ERA budget which limits ERA staffing levels will inevitably lead to slower processing vehicle authorisation, safety certification and ERTMS trackside applications by ERA, leading to the Agency becoming a bottleneck in the overall process of handling such huge amount of authorisation cases whilst being understaffed. Concerning vehicle authorisation, the railway sector considers leaner regulatory provisions as crucial to minimise such an ERA bottleneck. The provisions on "conformity to type" in the framework of the 4th Railway Package are unnecessarily time-consuming, lead to decreased rolling



stock availability and in consequence harm the implementation of changes and innovation. In addition, important ERA activities described in the ERA work programme (SPD) have already suffered and will not be given the necessary attention i.e. IT infrastructure development, clean-up of national rules, safety related topics ranging from information exchange to defining measures mitigating the risk of railway accident and incidents as well as maintenance of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) and error corrections.

In the European Year of Rail and despite the key role of the railway sector to stop climate change, it was regrettably decided to weaken this European Union Agency for Railways, the sector has to rely upon. In order to ensure a sufficient Agency's budget, the fees & charges charged to the sector were increased in order to compensate the Agency's deficit. This approach only shifts the problem onto the sector, placing additional burden on the railway actors by increasing their costs whilst endangering our competitiveness.

The European railway actors are willing to do their part but this does not solve the problem. The European Union Agency for Railways must be sufficiently staffed and budgeted by the European Union and at the same time its efficiency being increased in order to be able to carry out all its tasks. We are willing to jointly reflect how to overcome this challenge.

The European railway sector has identified both challenges and opportunities for the years to come after the implementation of the 4th Railways Package's Technical Pillar: among those, the accelerated European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) deployment incl. European Train Control System (ETCS) retrofitting, the deployment of the digital automatic coupling (DAC), boosting freight business, increased interoperability by an enhanced technical and operational harmonisation, stability of the regulations and a harmonised safety culture across the Union.

We call the European institutions to firmly support their Agency and increase its budget in such manner that ERA can comprehensively fulfil its role and assigned tasks and support the European railway system in its development.

Autonome Lokomotivführer-Gewerkschaften Europas (ALE)

Alliance of Rail New Entrants (ALLRAIL)

Community of European Railways and Infrastructures Companies (CER)

Association of ERTMS Accredited Laboratories



European Infrastructure Managers (EIM)

European Passengers Train and Traction Operating Lessors' Association (EPTTOLA)

European Rail Freight Association (ERFA)

European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways (FEDECRAIL)

Notified Bodies Association (NB-Rail AISBL)

International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP)

International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies (UIRR)

International Association of Public Transport (UITP)

Union of the European Railway Industries (UNIFE)

GRB chair