

Zero emission rail freight demands equal treatment

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The European Council first reading position on Eurovignette Directive reform

In advance of tomorrow's expected adoption of the Council first reading position on Eurovignette Directive reform, the European rail freight sector has significant concerns about the Council position, as it runs contrary to the shared climate and transport policy objectives of the Member States themselves:

- The European Summit last week agreed to upgrade the European Climate Law target for CO₂ emissions from a 40% to a 55% cut by 2030.
- The European Commission describes the need for an ambitious Eurovignette Directive reform as necessary to achieve climate, pollution, congestion and accident objectives in the recently unveiled Mobility Strategy.

Rail freight offers a zero emission, low pollution, congestion-free and safe alternative to long-distance trucking.

The first reading position of Member States on the revision of the Eurovignette Directive, protecting long haul trucking, is a step backward and further delays rail and water-borne intermodal transport to be able to compete on an equal footing with road-only transport within the EU single market (milestone 9 of the Mobility Strategy).

The integrity of the single market and a level playing field for every mode of freight and intermodal transport must be achieved. Fair competition in terms of infrastructure charging is needed to enable all modes to make their fair contribution to greening transport. The current amendments proposed by the Member States will regrettably further hamper rail's competitiveness.

Subsequently, CER, ERFA and UIRR call on Member States, to focus on the best means of achieving emission reductions in freight transport in general, in place of the exclusive focus on road emission reduction. A multimodal approach in this regard is unavoidable. A 100% toll reduction for "zero emission trucks" will undermine Europe's modal shift objectives unless matched by similarly ambitious infrastructure charge reductions for all other zero emission modes like rail.



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Issuing associations

CER – The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 71% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow @CER_railways on Twitter.

ERFA – ERFA is the European Association representing European private and independent railway companies. ERFA members share a commitment to work towards a non-discriminatory, competitive and innovative Single European Railway area.

UIRR – Founded in 1970, the International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport represents the interests of European road-rail Combined Transport Operators and Transshipment Terminal Managers. Road-Rail Combined Transport (CT) is a system of freight forwarding which is based on efficiently and economically inserting electric rail into long-distance (road) transport chains through the use of intermodal loading units (ILU).