

# Press Release

Bonn, 11 October 2012

IRG-Rail

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## **IRG-Rail dialogue with ERFA in Bonn**

On 09 October 2012, Dr. Iris Henseler-Unger, Chair of IRG-Rail, the Independent Regulators' Group - Rail, and Vice-President of Bundesnetzagentur, met with Mr. François Coart and Mr. Pierre Tonon, President and Secretary General of ERFA respectively, the European Rail Freight Association, in Bonn, to discuss several rail sector issues.

Mrs. Henseler-Unger pointed out: "Stakeholder dialogue is elementary for IRG-Rail to share its views with all relevant railway market players. In this context we also wanted to strengthen the dialogue between IRG-Rail and ERFA which represents new entrants and rail freight stakeholders from 16 countries across Europe. According to the substantial and constructive meeting today, both sides committed themselves to follow the cooperative approach between IRG-Rail and ERFA."

The President of ERFA, Mr. François Coart, noticed: "ERFA and IRG-Rail share some very essential objectives. We both want a well functioning railway sector with independent Regulatory Bodies for a branch which is currently going through a process of deep change. Challenging developments require the regular exchange of views and the development of best practices."

The main topic of the meeting was the upcoming Fourth Railway Package and the respective positions of IRG-Rail and ERFA. Both groups expressed their view that the Fourth Railway Package must support an efficient and competitive rail system in Europe and considered the announced proposals as a necessary step towards a fully liberalised European railway market. A common view was expressed that a proper coexistence of a liberalised domestic passenger market and a well functioning rail freight market should be considered carefully by the upcoming Fourth Railway Package.

Dr. Henseler-Unger emphasized generally that strong, efficient and independent Regulatory Bodies and a close cooperation especially on cross-border issues are of particular importance. ERFA shared this view and pointed out that fully fledged, powerful and independent infrastructure managers will be crucial to tackle the challenges of efficiency and total non-discrimination in the European railways.

Further topics of common interest have been the implementation of the first Railway Package, the Rail Freight Regulation and charging issues. All participants of the meeting considered the dialogue extremely interesting and emphasized their interest in continuing regularly the dialogue in future.

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**Background:**

IRG-Rail was established in June 2011 and is committed to exchanging experiences among its members. It consists of national Rail Regulatory Bodies of Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Close cooperation between these partners will ensure that experiences can be shared and common practices can be developed to foster the European railway market.

Further information can be found on the website of IRG-Rail at [www.irg-rail.eu](http://www.irg-rail.eu).