

## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Rail network grinds to a halt over construction works: rail customers alienated and the survival of smaller railway undertakings jeopardised**

**Reverse modal shift as customers forced to put goods back onto the road: negative impact on the environment, road congestion and safety during the busy summer period**

**Risk to rail of losing customers due to inconsistency of services and lack of reliability**

**Basic household goods such as washing powder, pet food, as well as key industrial goods, tyres, plastic granulates for automotive industry and parcel delivery services heavily impacted**

ERFA highlights the impact of a series of infrastructure works during the summer period in Germany, but also on neighbouring networks, most notably in Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands, which are heavily damaging rail's reputation as a serious alternative to road transport. There are reported to be at least 22 construction sites during the month of July on the key Central Europe North- South corridor linking the north of Italy with Germany, the Netherlands and far beyond.

Longer journey times and train cancellations risk alienating more and more customers from choosing rail as an attractive alternative to road.

The disruption to rail services has a devastating impact on the viability of smaller railway undertakings, risking future of competition in the sector. These disruptions mean that costs for railway undertakings are increasing, with no change in their fixed costs, whilst no compensation is received - a situation which is far harder to absorb for small rail companies.

ERFA acknowledges that line closures and/or line restrictions are essential to enable infrastructure development and maintenance. However they must be organised in such a way as to limit the negative impact on the quality of service offered to end customers and to ensure viable solutions for existing business. ERFA stresses again and again that improved coordination on infrastructure works, in particular for international routes, is a key priority to improve rail's quality of service.

Firm commitments were made in June last year in Rotterdam both by EU Transport Ministers and the rail sector to urgently improve the coordination of infrastructure works on the rail freight corridors. One of the focus areas was the need for advanced notice by national transport ministries of funding for infrastructure works impacting international rail freight traffic, so that infrastructure managers are in a stronger position to coordinate works. One year on ERFA awaits concrete results.

Maximum efforts are needed to deliver greater customer orientation of the way the rail infrastructure is managed. ERFA calls for urgent action to restore a high quality of rail service for Europe's most important rail transport route and to guarantee the viability of competitive rail transport in Europe:

### **1. "Capacity restriction" compensation scheme for Railway Undertakings**

- To reimburse additional costs they incur
- To incentivise better planning by the infrastructure Manager

### **2. When infrastructure works are planned, Railway Undertakings should be consulted in advance by the infrastructure manager**

- At least 2 alternatives of capacity options of capacity restrictions should be offered
- The capacity available on diversionary lines, alternative routes and the indicative travel times should be communicated in advance
- The infrastructure manager should consider the holistic impact on train services not just its own costs.

### **3. Where infrastructure works impact international traffic coordination between infrastructure managers should take place**

- Infrastructure managers should cooperate to jointly and in advance prepare timetables, including the provision of diversionary routes.
- National transport Ministries should communicate to infrastructure managers, 24 months in advance of the timetable change, funding for infrastructure works impacting international traffic.

**ERFA fully supports the European Commission's on-going legislative work to improve the coordination and consultation on capacity restrictions and urges a quick adoption of this new legislation by national governments.**

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ERFA - European Rail Freight Association - represents new entrants, i.e. all those operators who want open access and fair market conditions, and sustains their role of pushing forward the development of the railway market. The Association is very much a spin-off of the First Railway Package, adopted by the EU in 2001, and its vision of creating an open and competitive European rail market.

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In 2017, ERFA represents 32 members from 16 countries. The members of ERFA all share a commitment to work towards a competitive and innovative single European railway market by promoting attractive, fair and transparent market conditions for all railway companies.

The members of ERFA represent the entire value chain of rail transportation: rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders, passenger operators and national rail freight associations.