

Press Release – Greening Transport Package Must be Priority for European Parliament and Council

11 July 2023

On 11 July, the European Commission unveiled its long awaiting Greening Transport Package. With less than one year to go before European elections, it is essential that the European Parliament and Council work on this package with a matter of urgency. The adoption of these proposals, in a way that meets the needs of rail freight, will have a major bearing on Europe’s ability to increase rail freight volumes by 50% by 2030 and doubling volumes by 2050 – a goal set out in the European Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy - and Europe’s subsequent ability to reduce freight transport emissions.

Firstly, the proposal for a Capacity Regulation is an essential tool in Europe’s mission to grow rail freight volumes. Today, over 50% of rail freight volumes cross at least one border whereas the infrastructure they operate on is nationally focused. Rail freight is therefore largely operating international services on a patchwork of national systems. The European Parliament and Council must adopt an international approach to capacity management which reflects rail freight’s operating model. It is clear a national-centric approach will undermine growth.

Secondly, it is counterproductive to assess the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive in isolation from other proposals. The revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive must be worked on in conjunction with the revision of the Combined Transport Directive which will be released later this month. Both texts must ensure the interoperability of road and rail freight transportation, as well as fair competition between transport modes.

Finally, the proposal on CountEmissionsEU is a positive development and has the potential to allow shippers to better take into consideration transport related emissions when planning their supply chains. The proposal must be user friendly and also focus on energy efficiency and other externalities such as noise, safety, and land use, rather than solely tailpipe emissions.

ERFA President, Dirk Stahl, stated, “If the European Parliament and Council are serious about growing rail freight and reducing freight transport emissions, we need an ambitious approach on this package. We need to urgently move towards a more international and user-friendly railway system. These proposals have an important role to play”.

ERFA Secretary General, Conor Feighan, concluded, “*With less than one year to go until European Elections, it is essential we see progress on this file over the coming weeks. This package must also be viewed in conjunction with other important proposals currently under negotiations such as the TEN-T Regulation*”.

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