

Press Release – TEN-T Guidelines: Securing Modal Shift in the Short and Long Term

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With the eagerly anticipated publication of the European Commission’s proposal for a revision of the TEN-T Guidelines in December 2021, a pivotal discussion has begun on infrastructure development which will have a direct influence on rail freight’s ability to meet its 2030 and 2050 growth targets. ERFA supports many of the provisions within the Commission proposal, but the text remains unfinished and further clarification and elaboration is needed in key areas. Crucially, it is essential that Rail freight can operate efficiently over the next 8-10 years in order to reach the 2030 growth targets.

ERFA strongly supports the infrastructure parameters being proposed and believes the development of standardized corridors are essential for rail freight over the long-term. That being said, the Regulation must introduce provisions to ensure that rail freight can continue to function as best as possible in light of an anticipated high intensity of planned construction works. This will involve a strong level of coordination along the entirety of corridors with a particular focus on international planning, strong communication to rail freight undertakings, professional execution and good infrastructure management in terms of disruptions.

The opportunity must also not be missed to reflect on the current problems facing ERTMS and ETCS deployment. The financial strain being placed on Railway Undertakings to deploy ETCS is significant and it is doubtful any operational gain will be experienced until 2030 at the very earliest. ETCS deployment, and subsequent financing, must also be included as a priority for infrastructure development. In the short term it is essential that Railway Undertakings are not confronted with specific national obligations which require additional software changes, which are costly and could further restrict the use of locomotives.

ERFA President, Dirk Stahl, commented, “within ERFA, we have studied the Commission proposal in detail and believe, although there are many good provisions within the Regulation, further work is needed. The essential years for reaching the targets of the Green Deal and modal shift is those up until 2030. The implementation plans for infrastructure development and ERTMS therefore have to be reliable and must fit with the operational needs of rail freight business in the coming years”.

ERFA Secretary General, Conor Feighan, concluded, “The TEN-T Guidelines have a critical role to play in regards to infrastructure development. What must not be forgotten is that they also have a role to play to ensure these developments take place in a coordinated manner. It is

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essential for rail freight that we finally move away from national development plans to a coordinated and international approach whilst keeping in mind the capacity needs of the sector. This also includes the necessary development and implementation of a slot allocation system to secure rail freight paths”.

Further information on ERFA’s position can be accessed [here](#).

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