



News Release

Rail Forum Europe seeks measures for competitive freight transport

Brussels, 6 December – Adequate framework conditions should be put in place for rail freight to unleash its enormous potential and increase its attractiveness to customers. Rail stakeholders and legislators, at national and EU level, should leave personal interests behind and cooperate on this issue. This was the main message of Rail Forum Europe’s dinner debate held in Brussels on 5 December and sponsored by CER, ERFA and UIRR.

Sylvie Charles (CEO of SNCF Logistics Rail & Intermodal Division) highlighted the imbalances that European rail freight undertakings suffer from under the present regulatory framework across Europe and the consequent stagnating share of rail freight. She stated: *“Over the past years there has been strong progress in terms of productivity improvements and customer-focused services in the context of an open rail freight market. Despite the sector’s efforts, the competitiveness of the rail freight is still facing critical hurdles including the lack of a level playing field with road and cost-intensive regulatory requirements for rail freight undertakings”*.

Paul Hegge, (Head of public affairs of B Logistics) highlighted the issues related to infrastructure funding and financing and stressed the need to improve quality access, transparency and accountability. He said: *“Public budgets and European taxpayers cannot afford to finance all the rail infrastructure upgrades that society and the economy need. Consequently, regulatory framework conditions must be created to enable private capital to invest in rail infrastructure”*.

Matthew Baldwin, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE, described the actions being carried out by the Commission to improve conditions for rail freight. In particular, the Rotterdam Ministerial Declaration and Sector Statement on rail freight corridors, the implementation of the 4th Railway Package, the deployment of ERTMS in the framework of digitalisation as well as actions aimed at reducing rail noise prove that rail freight is high on the Commission’s agenda: *“The development of rail freight remains a top priority for the European Commission, in the context of transport decarbonization and of the implementation of the 2011 Transport White Paper”* he said.

Intervening in the open discussion, **Carlo Borghini, Executive Director of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking,** pointed out that innovation is key in the process of shaping the future of rail freight: *“The Shift2Rail programme has a dedicated Innovation Programme for rail freight,*

Rail Forum Europe AISBL

Avenue Louise 221,
B-1050 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 642 23 25
info@rail-forum.eu

Executive Secretary
Leonardo Dongiovanni

Managing Board
Michael Cramer MEP
Gesine Meissner MEP
Georges Bach MEP
Lucy Anderson MEP
Ines Ayala-Sender MEP
Karima Delli MEP
Ismail Ertug MEP,
Jo Leinen MEP
Boguslaw Liberadzki MEP
Tomasz Poreba MEP
Franck Proust MEP
Jozo Rados MEP,
Christine Revault MEP
Dominique Riquet MEP
Massimiliano Salini MEP,
Andreas Schwab MEP
István Ujhelyi MEP
Wim Van de Camp MEP
Martina Werner, MEP

www.rail-forum.eu



aimed at addressing all issues currently faced by this segment. The industry should innovate and digitalise, in order to modernise the European rail system” he said.

Pauline Bastidon (European Shippers’ Council) provided a feedback from a customers’ perspective on the status of rail freight: *“Many customers would love to make more use of rail freight, but rail freight needs to deliver in terms of reliability, cost-attractiveness, speed, and flexibility. Ensuring that customers have access to the rail network by investing in last-mile infrastructure is also key”.*

Libor Lochman (CER), highlighted the importance of increased cooperation between Railway Undertakings and Infrastructure Managers to improve the development of rail freight: *“We encourage the European Commission to facilitate regular meetings bringing together the RU Dialogue and PRIME members in order to identify and execute joint solutions for key challenges enabling an increased efficiency of rail freight”.*

RFE Chairman Michael Cramer thanked participants and concluded the debate: *“Time is up for self-pity: today we want to hear solutions, tomorrow we want to see action, and the day after tomorrow we want to benefit from the results. Like it or not, the world is changing at very high speed and stakeholders should take radical measures to make rail freight an attractive solution. European and national authorities as well as operators, infrastructure managers and industry should all play on the team. Other transport modes are not waiting, why should rail freight?”.*

About Rail Forum Europe

Founded by Members of the European Parliament from across the parliamentary committees, Rail Forum Europe is an international non-profit making association that aims at bringing together EU decision-makers and the rail sector to achieve a better understanding of rail-related issues.

For more information on Rail Forum Europe, please contact info@rail-forum.eu or visit www.rail-forum.eu.

Rail Forum Europe. The MEPs’ platform dedicated to rail transport.