



European Shippers' Council

Rail Freight Memorandum

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Rail Freight Memorandum

- The European rail market offers an important link for the transport of goods from the European ports to the hinterland.
- Rail transport is an efficient and sustainable transport with low CO₂ emissions and a high level of safety.

Despite the past progress on important rail corridors, further collaboration and harmonisation are required to increase reliability and flexibility of rail transport.





A harmonized European Railway for freight transport with a level playing field

The rail system of each Member State is part of the European rail system and is connected to the network of highways and waterways through multimodal hubs.

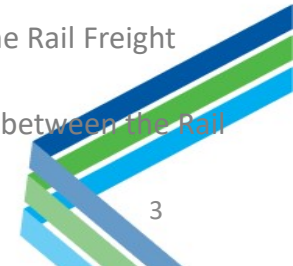
Improving cooperation between the corridors and policy aimed at the branches of the rail corridors will strengthen the European rail network serving travellers and goods.

Harmonization through policy measures will help to achieve the modal shift from road to rail desired by the European Commission.



ESC recommendations:

- To evaluate the current vision on corridors;
- To draft a plan on:
 - How cooperation between the corridors and rail IMs can be strengthened;
 - How policy measures can be harmonized;
 - What should be a European policy for the mutual recognition of existing railway equipment and alignment of technical requirements (for instance, the use of trains taillights in France and nowhere else) coordination of various security systems, and language requirements for drivers;
- To coordinate the implementation of the European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS) and to take into account a high cost of a driving system compliant with the ERTMS (500 000€), so implementation should be achieved step by step anticipating the impact on railways undertakings;
- To strengthen the link between the management of the Rail Freight Corridors and the TEN-T network coordinators;
- To enable a more frequent exchange of best practices between the Rail Freight Corridors.





Increasing capacity through intensified cooperation between IMs and through a bottleneck analysis shared with railway undertakings and main end users when loops can be created to avoid empty runs.

Shippers experience a lack of capacity in rail freight transport and cannot fully benefit from this transport mode. The increasing passenger transport on several rail connections elevates pressure on capacity for rail freight even further putting freight transport at risk.

One way to solve this issue is to use railways more efficiently. It is also important to pay attention to back-up and alternative routes in order to increase agility and guarantee capacity under sub-optimal conditions (for instance blockage of a line by weather conditions or accidents).

Using rail transport to a large extent for international shipments, shippers still suffer from insufficient planning of timetables and traffic management.

In other words, coordination between the Member States is still not up-to-standard.

ESC recommendations:

- To further elaborate the assurance of the capacity as included in the current track package;
- To intensify and coordinate collaboration between IMs in the areas of capacity allocation, traffic management, and operational harmonization of laws and regulations;
- To undertake a bottleneck analysis of the European rail network and deployment of TEN-T applied to rail infrastructure.





Limiting the impact on the environment

Rail freight transport offers many benefits in terms of sustainability. In addition, there are some Member States that use green energy for the rail network, so that CO₂ emissions are almost zero.

Yet, rail freight transport in densely populated areas of Europe is experiencing resistance from residents. To increase the social acceptance of rail transport, tackling the nuisance on the environment is important. Trade and production companies in several Member States are already implementing an active policy here.

European investments in infrastructure and equipment adjustments are crucial. Due to a lack of European standards on vibrations, it is difficult to take harmonized measures to prevent vibrations.

It would be advisable for the European policy makers to develop and establish vibration standards in addition to noise standards.

ESC recommendations:

- To develop standards for rail vibrations;
- To co-finance equipment and infrastructure in order to reduce a negative environmental impact;
- To support the use of green energy in the entire European rail network.





Improving availability of digital data visualisation

Reliability is a key concept in logistics. Therefore, punctuality as a key performance indicator will improve the effectiveness of rail freight quality management.

Key figures on the end-to-end supply chain are indispensable for a smooth logistic operation.

European projects like ELETA are developing a more sophisticated system of a reliable estimated time of arrival (ETA).

Already two proofs of concept have been developed within the project.

For shippers, it is vital to have the information as inclusive as possible and also available for shippers.

ESC recommendations:

- To continue investing in projects aimed at reliable, agile, and sustainable rail sector.





Thank you very much for your attention!

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