

Press Release

Brussels, 12 June 2009

Transport Ministers miss an opportunity to boost rail freight

Meeting in Luxembourg on 11 June, European Transport ministers missed an opportunity to boost rail freight across the EU when they placed political priorities over the business needs of the European transport sector. Discussing ideas to revise the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), as well as a proposal by the European Commission to create a competitive rail freight network, the ministers rejected ambitious ideas to prioritise rail freight and allow non-railway companies to book capacity on the network.

Europe's independent rail infrastructure managers (EIM) and the European rail supply industry (UNIFE) welcome the ministers' conclusions on the TEN-T Policy Review. In particular, they applaud the reconfirmation of Member States' commitment to the financing and implementation of TEN-T projects and their request for adequate Community financing.

However, EIM and UNIFE express concern over the outcome of the discussions on the proposed regulation on a competitive rail freight network. Michael Clausecker, Director General of UNIFE, said *"For TEN-T, the needs of TEN-t priority projects such as sufficient funding were taken into account. Unfortunately for the freight corridors political rather than business considerations prevailed."*

Additionally, Transport Ministers lacked ambition in granting certain effective priority to freight trains, both in timetable definition and traffic management. Making rail freight more attractive is vital to meeting the EU's greenhouse gas reduction targets as well as to easing congestion on Europe's roads. In case of traffic disturbances, infrastructure managers should be allowed to take decisions that focus on the reduction of delays to priority freight trains while trying to minimise overall delays. The numerous references contained in the political agreement to "passenger needs" may unnecessarily hamper freight transport while not producing any tangible benefits for passengers.

The addition of an Executive Board composed of Member States' representatives to the governing bodies of corridors will also result in a more bureaucratic administrative structure for the management of freight traffic in Europe. Michael Robson, Secretary General of EIM, said *"By making corridor management more cumbersome and by denying access to new market players, Transport Ministers have missed an important opportunity to boost rail freight demand."*

In many European countries, non-railway companies (such as ports, manufacturers or logistics companies) can apply to book capacity on the network. EIM and UNIFE, regret that transport ministers did not act to ensure that these "authorised applicants" will be able to also book capacity along trans-European rail corridor.

Infrastructure managers and the rail supply industry now call on the incoming European Parliament to build on this and to overcome the major shortcomings of the Council political agreement in view of creating a truly competitive rail freight network.

<ENDS>



Notes to editor:

The TEN-T network is a multi-modal network established to allowing goods and people to circulate quickly and easily between Member States. The European Commission has proposed revising the rules underpinning the scheme, and has launched a public consultation. EIM's response to the consultation is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/eim-ten-t>

On 11 December 2008, the European Commission proposed a regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight. This initiative is aimed at improving the quality of international rail freight transport in Europe. The Commission proposes the creation of trans-European corridors on which priority, both in path allocation and traffic management, would be granted to certain types of freight traffic. EIM and UNIFE support the proposal, as long as it results in a flexible, market oriented structure. More information is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/freightreg>

For further information, please contact:

Patrick Keating
EIM Public Affairs Manager
phone +32 2 234 37 70
mobile +32 476 66 19 09
e-mail patrick.keating@eimrail.org
Twitter: twitter.com/EIM_rail

EIM, the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers, was established to promote the interests and views of the independent infrastructure managers in Europe, following liberalisation of the railway market. It is a lobbying organisation which also provides technical expertise to the appropriate European bodies. To find out more about EIM, visit www.eimrail.org or follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/EIM_rail

Max Obenaus
UNIFE Head of Communications
phone +32 2 642 23 28
mobile +32 497 97 67 65
e-mail max.obenaus@unife.org

UNIFE represents the interests of the European Rail Industry towards the European institutions, international railway associations and other business relations. The European Rail Industry provides competitive railway systems for increased rail traffic and follows the objective of making rail transport the sustainable solution for the challenges of the 21st century mobility. The European Rail Industry consists of trend setting industries in the field of rolling stock, infrastructure, information technology and signalling, provision of part and services. For more information, see www.unife.org