

**Press Release 11.12.2008**

## **Commission proposal will improve quality of rail freight**

**Europe's independent rail infrastructure managers welcome the publication of a proposal for a regulation on competitive rail freight by the European Commission today, 11 December. By ensuring the use of market principles and a bottom-up approach, the proposed new rules will help to improve the quality and reliability of rail freight.**

The goal of the regulation is to encourage Member States to designate international rail freight corridors in order to improve the integration of rail infrastructure and cooperation between infrastructure managers, to efficiently prioritise freight traffic and to ensure better connections between rail and other modes.

EIM is pleased that the Commission has opted to select freight corridors according to market demand and that no prescriptions are made on how to manage individual corridors. However, the use of market principles could be taken further, as a competitive market driven approach generates efficiency and improves the quality of rail freight.

Under the rules proposed by the Commission, some time-sensitive freight could be classified as "priority," giving it right of way over other trains, including passenger services, and ensuring that its train path can not be cancelled. This will enable better monitoring of performance along corridors and an increase in the reliability and quality of freight services, helping to make them more attractive to shippers and competitive in comparison to other transport modes.

While welcoming the principles behind the Commission proposals, EIM does have some concerns regarding the practical details of the text. The use of a Regulation might not be appropriate, as the rules will have to be applied uniformly to Infrastructure Managers across all EU Member States, despite variations in their roles and responsibilities. EIM members would have preferred to have seen a more flexible approach which could be adapted to the needs of freight markets in each Member State.

Michael Robson, Secretary-General of EIM said "By enabling Infrastructure Managers to improve the quality of rail freight services, rail freight will become more attractive. By increasing rail's modal share, we can help the EU meet its environmental goals while reducing congestion on Europe's roads."

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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](http://www.eimrail.org)