



Press Release 16.10.07

EC Freight-Oriented Rail Network Communication outlined at EIM lunch today

Today, the CEOs from the European Rail Infrastructure Managers (EIM) met with members of the European Commission (EC) to discuss priorities for the rail sector. The EC delegation led by E. Grillo-Pasquarelli, Head of Directorate E for Inland Transport, discussed the EC Communication on a Freight-Oriented Rail Network and the Action Plan on Freight Transport Logistics that will be issued later this week.

EIM believes that the expected communication on Freight-Oriented Rail Networks will be a major step forward in promoting rail freight and resolving international freight issues, including removal of bottlenecks in the traffic.

Mr. Grillo-Pasquarelli, acknowledging that the document is still on rather general terms and focusing on broad guidelines, said that the EC counts *“on the participation of EIM members gathered with other actors in order to establish a group of 12-15 people that the EC will use for inspiration when setting the Action Plans”*.

EIM has strongly promoted for example the harmonisation of train length, axle loads and loading gauge throughout European corridors and believes that the basic framework for implementation of a freight-oriented network is now in place.

EIM, however, believes that great attention now needs to be paid to the details of this communication, for it to be successful in delivering its objectives. This includes:

- *Greater focus on competition and fair access to the infrastructure.*
- *Adequate resourced and staffed corridor structures.*
- *Guaranteed funding and resources for the corridors.*
- *Clear direction and timeline on legal instruments used to achieve the objectives*

During the lunch meeting the EIM CEOs also brought up the issues of the recast of the first railway package and in specific the difficult areas of charging and financing. The CEOs also discussed a future European Rail Technical Strategy and the importance of long term planning for growth in the transport sector. Linked to the questions surrounding long term planning, an in-depth discussion took place on the vital subject of multi-annual contracting.

EIM is in full agreement with an EC framework for multi-annual contracts that provide long term certainty for the rail sector as to its funding levels, allowing for improved planning and subsequent efficiency improvements.

EIM made it clear that:

- Without legal action from the EC there will be no progress in achieving the stated objectives.
- EIM strongly believes that mandatory EU legislation is the preferred way of guaranteeing a common framework for multi-annual contracts throughout Europe.

EIM Vice-President, Paul Plummer, Director of Planning & Regulation for Network Rail, the UK Infrastructure Manager stated “that it is essential for the Infrastructure Managers to be able to invest in the rail infrastructure in a way that enables the reduction of long term cost. A multi-annual contract must therefore be output driven and also be enforceable either through the rail regulatory body or the national legal framework.”



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Notes to the Editor:

For further information on EIM:

<http://www.eimrail.org>

For new photography related to this press release:

<http://www.eimrail.org/events.html>

For photography related to EIM people:

<http://www.eimrail.org/people.html>

For information related to EIM European Rail Technical Strategy:

http://www.eimrail.org/pdf/techpapers/ERTS%201.1_March%202007.pdf

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