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Rail Reform makes progress

EIM (European Rail Infrastructure Managers) welcomes the successful conclusion of negotiations between the European Parliament, Commission and Council yesterday on the Third Railway Package.

The lack of a timetable for market liberalisation has now been resolved and the opening of the international rail passenger market is set for 2010. This includes cabotage on the same lines.

The opening of the international freight market from the 1st of January 2007 coupled with the opening of the international passenger market is the key to increasing rail market share, reducing road congestion and hence has a positive impact on climate change.

Driving licences for train drivers will in the future become recognised across Europe with the railway undertaking only being required to train the driver for specific national conditions. This is a very positive step in the direction of allowing for free movement of train drivers and enhancing market opening. This can only assist in furthering market conditions and thereby future growth in international freight services.

The EIM was also concerned that the proposed extension of the regulation on international passenger's rights from covering international passengers to now including domestic passengers would have duplicated existing legislation already in place in Member States. However, the distinction between basic rights and the right to compensation has been applied in such a way that suburban and regional traffic will not be subject to the compensation package. Member States can also over the next five year period, with the possibility of extending this twice to a total of 15 years, prepare adequately to apply the rule for compensation on domestic long distance traffic.

EIM Secretary General, Michael Robson said that "the European Rail Infrastructure Managers are satisfied that sensible compromises have been reached, allowing the rail sector to continue to focus on gaining market share and benefiting the environment".

Notes to the Editor:

For further information on EIM:

<http://www.eimrail.org>

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

For EIM position papers on the 3rd railway package:

http://www.eimrail.org/template_subsubpage.asp?pag_id=17&spa_id=22&lng_iso=EN&ssp_id=3

Contact for press release:

Helene Norman-Dupuy

Public Affairs Manager,

EIM (European Rail Infrastructure Manager)

Tel: 02 234 37 70 - Mobile: 0476 66 19 09

Email: helene.norman-dupuy@eimrail.org