

EIM welcomes the Karel van Miert High Level Group Report

The European Rail Infrastructure Managers' Association (EIM) welcomes the publication of the Karel van Miert Working Group report on the priority projects for the Trans European transport network up to 2020.

Investment in Europe's railway infrastructure is fundamental to a sustainable European transport infrastructure. In some countries, investment in infrastructure has been wholly inadequate, mainly condensed on road, leading to congestion, pollution, and reduced safety on key road and rail network. A European approach is essential to ensure that key international transport corridors are effective in providing sustainable mobility.

EIM contributed to the Study Group's work and recognises that the group took into account the Member States' proposals for priority projects.

EIM welcomes the resulting recommendations which are aligned along key European corridors. EIM believes that "Corridor thinking" is necessary to achieve good results, but such thinking should include not just the major projects (such as Lyon-Turin), but also the many short and medium term projects that could increase international capacity and improve service quality more quickly.

In the short term, the harmonisation and publication of Network Statements and the disciplined path allocation process by the new authorities will lead to an increase in capacity but much remains to be done to produce high quality freight services in international rail services.

As far as the infrastructure managers are concerned, the EIM members fully support a stronger cooperation on international path setting and allocation. They participate actively in the development of an One Stop Shop network through RNE.

The financing of future improvements is a critical issue

Member states must be ready to give the appropriate guarantees to ensure that the private sector can play an effective role in financial provision.

The EIM are convinced that a common approach to access charging is needed in all modes and urges the Commission to take up this issue:

- an appropriate access charging regime will ensure the socio-economic efficiency of the railway infrastructure in the long term;
- cross-financing can help develop alternative modes in sensitive areas while reducing congestion on the relevant road sections;
- a coherent access charging regime among the modes improves the competitive balance.

Given this, the financing of investment in the appropriate international infrastructure becomes clearer and more objective.

The Member States concentrate on national priorities. An international overview is required and the EIM recommend and would contribute to such an overview, on a route by route basis. If financing and decisions on routes remain only in national hands, the result will be national improvements, with few cross-border improvements and "corridor coherent" measures. Member states and the Commission should consider the development of a joint competence over these in order to obtain international benefit.

The EIM are ready and willing to work with the Member States, the Commission and other international bodies to further this important work.