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## CER urges EC to improve rail cargo's regulatory framework instead of worsen it

The European Commission is putting at risk the transport of goods by rail that is subject to customs supervision – by imposing a system developed for road which doesn't fit rail. Instead the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) urges the Commission to use the so-called ETD system, a fully electronic and rail-dedicated customs transit procedure.

The ETD procedure has been designed to supersede the existing paper-based simplified rail transit procedure. For the past couple of years, the rail sector has been heavily involved in the realisation of this procedure grounded on article 233(4) of the Union Customs Code.

The proposed system would allow an efficient application. It is easy to implement and ensures compatibility with other systems of authorities who already use electronic rail data, thus removing the need for extra data entry into another system. In addition, it will reduce security risks due to the elimination of long stops at external borders.

**CER Executive Director Libor Lochman** said: "A rail-dedicated customs transit system is decisive for the efficiency and attractiveness of rail transport. Previous practice has demonstrated - for decades - how essential rail-dedicated customs procedures - such as ETD - are. The ETD is the best-fitting digital tool both for the rail sector and for the customs administrations and will pave the way for a fully computerised future for rail cargo transport. The non-implementation of the ETD procedure would inevitably lead to unbearably high costs for the companies and their customers, and consequently, to a modal shift to road."

The system promoted by the European Commission, NCTS, cannot be considered as a viable option for railways. Not only would it be entirely disconnected from the available RailData database, but it will require numerous manual inputs, making the whole instrument equivalent to a step backwards, heavily hampering the rail business while offering no benefits to customs authorities. When tested five years ago, it caused high investment costs and a labour-intensive workflow – in addition to major delays in particular at departure – and demonstrated the incompatibility of NCTS with the rail sector's needs.

Thus the push for NCTS goes completely against the EU objectives for a more sustainable transport system and increased role of railways in long-distance cargo transport. It is even more alarming given that the volumes of rail transport taking place under customs supervision in Europe are expected to grow further.

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## **About CER**

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 73% of the rail network length, 80% of the rail freight business and about 96% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.cer.be">www.cer.be</a> or follow us via Twitter at

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