

European rail CEOs assemble in Brussels to further ambitious work programme

Europe's leading rail CEOs gathered yesterday for the Management Committee and 71st General Assembly of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), to discuss the ambitious work programme for 2023. Mr Wouter Koolmees, President and CEO of Dutch Railways (NS) was unanimously appointed as member of the CER Management Committee for the remainder of the 2022-2023 term. The CER membership also unanimously approved three important position papers related to the expected European Commission legislative proposals on rail capacity allocation and management, and also a position paper on hydrogen propulsion.

Under the Sustainable and Smart Sustainability Strategy, the European Commission is expected to publish a legislative proposal on rail capacity allocation and management in the coming months. To support the Commission's drafting process, CER has developed sectoral positions on three crucial topics of capacity allocation and management, namely position papers on Time-Tabling Redesign & Digital Capacity Management (TTR & DCM), on Commercial Conditions, and on Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCRs).

Based on thorough legal analysis the **Position Paper on Time-Tabling Redesign & Digital Capacity Management (TTR & DCM)** (accessible [here](#)), highlights that it is important to create legal certainty and a strong legal basis for TTR and to introduce it integrally in all countries. However, the paper concludes that there are very few provisions of Directive 2012/34/EU that could possibly be interpreted as not being already fully aligned with the TTR process. Therefore, the position paper calls for the Commission to limit their proposal to only the absolutely necessary legal amendments and not to reopen the Directive, as this would be both time consuming and completely unnecessary. Maximizing both freight and passenger transport should be the overarching goal of the new capacity and allocation process. The new capacity process must address the current lack of harmonisation, synchronisation and coordination but should neither lead to additional administrative burden, nor to institutional or operational fragmentation.

The **Position Paper on Commercial Conditions** (accessible [here](#)) outlines the views of the sector on the financial mechanisms that are set in case of amendments or cancellations of requested/allocated train paths. Optimising the use of existing rail capacity is essential. Commercial conditions should be designed to incentivise capacity-friendly behaviour for all parties and be applied reciprocally to infrastructure managers and railway undertakings. Infrastructure managers and capacity allocation bodies, in coordination with RailNetEurope (RNE) and in consultation with railway undertakings/applicants, should develop and implement principles for commercial conditions that are aligned and harmonised Europe wide by a certain date.

The **Position paper on Temporary Capacity restrictions (TCRs)** (accessible [here](#)) highlights three main points that are needed to reduce the negative impact of TCRs: a

full implementation of existing rules, a better international coordination of TCRs by implementing Timetabling and Capacity Redesign (TTR) and Digital Capacity Management (DCM), as well as multi-annual financing of infrastructure managers.

CER supports all efforts to decarbonise railway transport and recognises that hydrogen propulsion for the railway sector can play a role in this. In the **CER Position Paper on Hydrogen Propulsion in the European Railway Sector** (accessible [here](#)), CER acknowledges the work carried out by the standardisation organisations, both at European as well as at international level, and stresses that national approaches must be avoided in this respect in order to ensure full interoperability. The European Agency for Railways is encouraged to assess with the sector and with the input of Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (ERJU) to which extent requirements for hydrogen propulsion can or should be integrated into EU regulation in the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI).

The railway operating community believes in following the technical developments of other industries and refraining from developing railway-specific solutions and technologies. Nonetheless, railway-specific needs do need to be properly addressed in regulation and standardisation, or alternatively sufficient room must be given to have gaps defined by the railway sector. CER recommends the completion of the standardisation landscape with a focus on refuelling stations and hydrogen logistics.

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About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 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 78% of the rail network length, 81% of the rail freight business and about 94% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on Twitter [@CER_railways](#) or [LinkedIn](#).