



The Voice
of European
Railways

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Copy to: Mr Maroš Šefcovic, Commission Vice-President, Energy Union
Mr Jyrki Katainen, Commission Vice-President, Jobs, Growth, Investment and
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Brussels, 25 February 2015

Dear Mr President,
Dear Commissioner for Transport,

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure companies (CER) deeply appreciates your commitment to revitalizing the European economy and to improving the conditions under which businesses operate in the EU market.

CER welcomes the Commission proposal for a Regulation on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (COM(2015)10) although we do view the proposed huge cut to the CEF budget for transport as well as to Horizon 2020 with some concern. Nonetheless, we remain hopeful that EFSI will be steered wisely in a way which will not be detrimental to rail projects.

For this, important questions must be raised with regards to the attractiveness of rail projects in the context of EFSI: which private investor would invest money in rail infrastructure projects when technologies and standards change at each border? Which private investor would really believe that huge rail projects can safely return investments if rail undertakings cannot offer international logistics services to their customers with any certainty?

COMMUNITY OF EUROPEAN RAILWAY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANIES - COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE DU RAIL ET DES COMPAGNIES D'INFRASTRUCTURE - GEMEINSCHAFT DER EUROPÄISCHEN BAHNEN UND INFRASTRUKTURGESELLSCHAFTEN



It is therefore obvious, in light of your recent initiatives, that only an EU-wide technical harmonization of the rail system would make a number of rail projects attractive to private investors and thus viable for them to access the resources put in place by EFSI.

This harmonisation cannot come too soon for the EU rail sector, which suffers dire consequences the longer it is put off: the lengthy and diverse national homologation procedures cause a situation where sizeable capitals are frozen in assets that are not able to provide any positive return to the investors.

The Fourth Railway Package, currently being discussed by the legislators, is expected to offer a solution since, besides completing the opening of the rail market (with the so-called Market Pillar), it aims to harmonise the EU rail system (with a Technical Pillar revising the legal provisions on the European Rail Agency, rail interoperability and rail safety).

Unfortunately informal dialogues on the Technical Pillar do not seem to be progressing fast enough. As a result, it is very likely that the technical harmonization of the rail system will not be achieved by the time EFSI enters into force and thus the cuts to the CEF budget will be nothing but a net loss for the entire sector.

We therefore would appreciate if you could call upon the Council and the European Parliament to conclude the negotiations on the Technical Pillar of the Fourth Railway Package, allowing its entry into force as soon as possible, without being part of a time consuming package deal.

Once this is achieved, the full potential of EFSI can be realised and the discussions on the Market Pillar of the Fourth Package will be able to continue towards a fruitful agreement.

With our best regards,



Christian Kern



Libor Lochman