

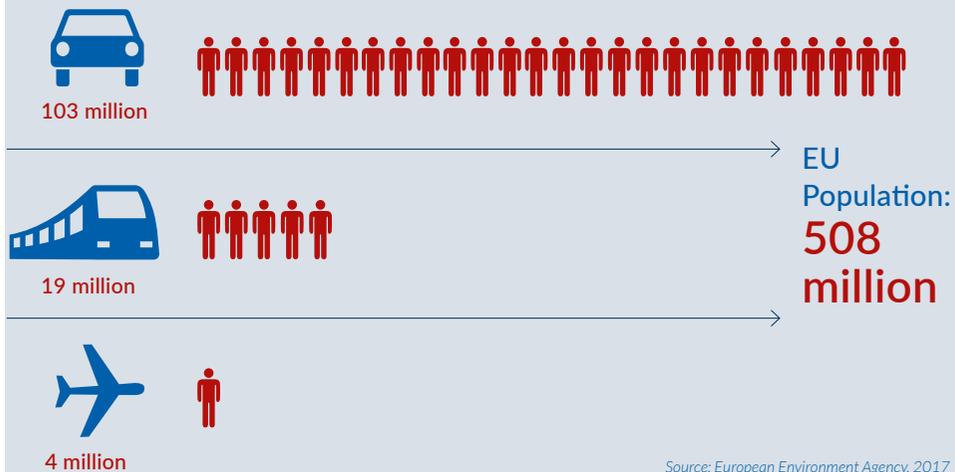
Reducing rail freight noise

Noise is a side effect of **all major modes of transport** and is one of the key concerns for people living near transport infrastructure.

Noise from rail is considerably less annoying than noise from road transport and affects just 4% of Europeans. Nevertheless, rail freight noise is **the last remaining environmental challenge** for the European rail sector, therefore it is a **priority topic**. A large number of wagons run across borders emitting noise not only in their country of origin but across Europe.

25% of Europeans are exposed to noise, just 4% to rail noise

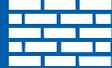
Compared to road traffic, railway and aviation have a much lower impact in terms of overall population noise exposure and annoyance but both remain important sources of **localised noise pollution**.



Source: European Environment Agency, 2017

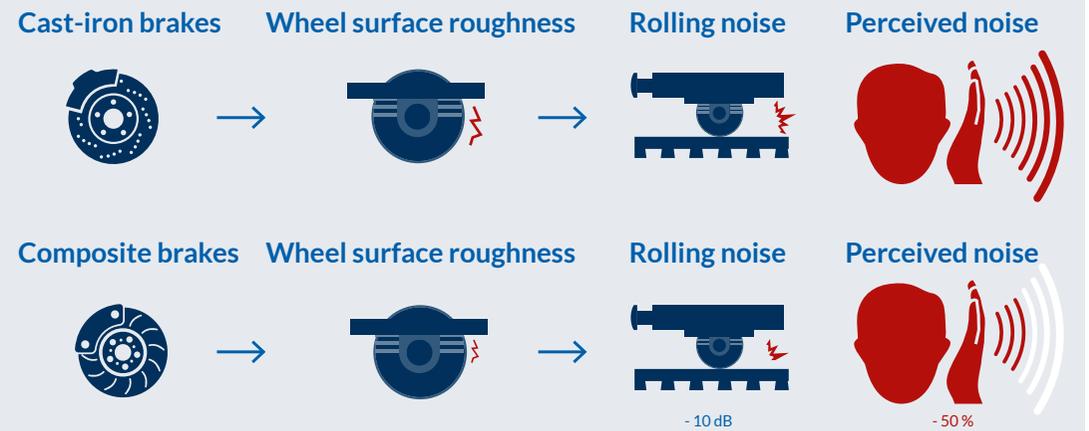
Solutions to the problem

The railway sector promotes a freight noise strategy that pursues noise reduction efforts on 3 fronts, depending on the situation.

MEASURES AT SOURCE	MEASURES AT INFRASTRUCTURE LEVEL	
 <p>Retrofit wagons on condition that sufficient funding is available to maintain the sector's competitiveness.</p>	 <p>Construct noise barriers where the noise effects from retrofitting of existing wagons are insufficient.</p>	 <p>Introduce additional infrastructure measures such as grinding or rail dampers in certain hot spots.</p>

Retrofitting is the most effective measure

Retrofitting cast-iron brakes with disc brakes or composite brake blocks cuts the noise perceived by half. Besides achieving the best noise reduction, **tackling the problem at the source** is also the most cost-effective approach.

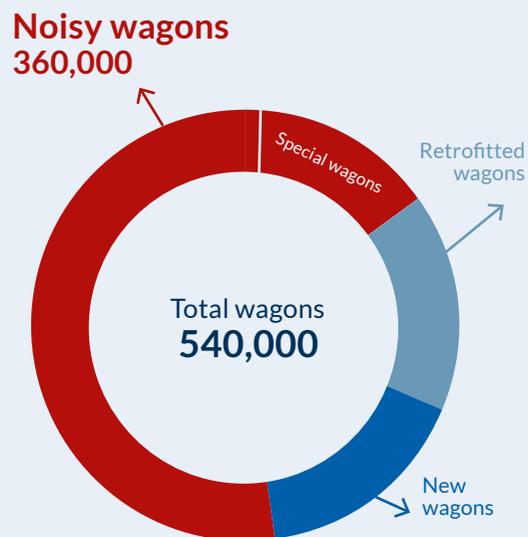


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Funding for retrofitting of wagons must be addressed now

About one third of the EU's wagon fleet is already either retrofitted or replaced with new vehicles. The remaining 65% have cast-iron brakes. That's **360,000 noisy wagons**, a quarter of which are special wagons requiring more complex and costly retrofitting.

Status of EU wagon fleet in 2017



In total, wagon owners and keepers need to pay at least **€700 million** to retrofit their wagons with composite brake blocks.

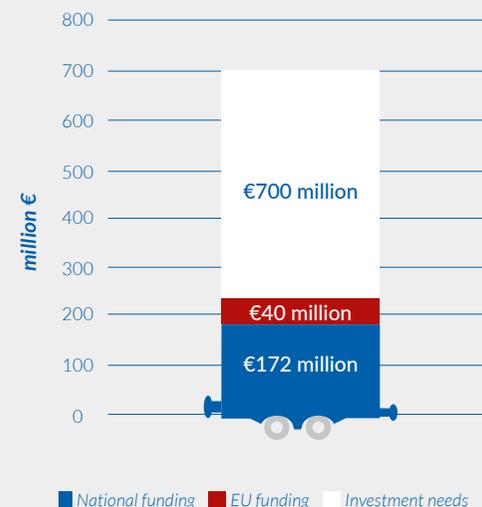


Fixed cost (per wagon)

Fixed cost (EU estimate)

Life-cycle cost

The available public funding corresponds to only one third of the investment costs and the scope of funding is limited.



The **EU support** for encouraging the retrofitting of wagons is **limited** as it covers only up to 20% of eligible costs.

The way forward

- CER advocates a **pragmatic European solution** to deal with rail freight noise that offers flexibility for both the Member States that are most affected and the Member States where rail noise does not significantly affect the population.
- CER requests that the availability of **public funding** should be consistent with the policy goals set by decision makers.
- CER **opposes all operational restrictions** - such as night bans, speed limits or rerouting - as they could lead to intermodal as well as intramodal distortion of competition.
- CER calls on policymakers to proceed with **internalising noise costs** for all transport modes based on the **polluter-pays** principle.