

Latest CER COVID Impact Tracker: railways lose €50 billion since the start of the pandemic

The 2021 results of the 'CER COVID Impact Tracker', carried out by the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) are in. **€50 billion** is the figure to remember. It corresponds to the COVID-related revenue losses of the rail sector in the European Union (EU27) over 2020-2021:

- around €27 billion for 2020,
- around €23 billion for 2021.

All in all, no less than **33%** of turnover was lost **over the past 2 years** because of COVID:

- More than **€46 billion** loss on **passenger** services (-41% in 2020 and -36% in 2021),
- Almost **€4 billion** loss on **freight** services (-12% in 2020 and -10% in 2021).

The various parts of the rail system have been affected in very different ways.

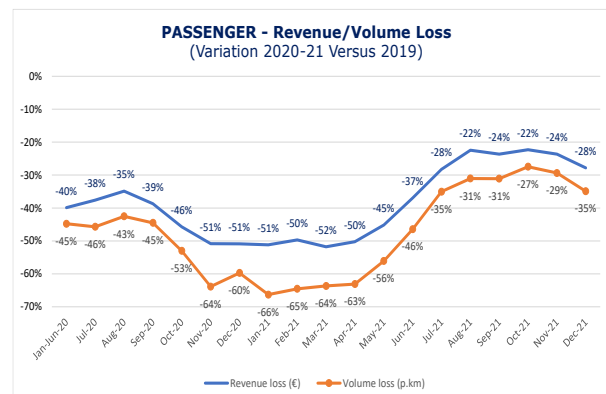
PASSENGER

Passenger services suffered most with an extremely low 'winter season' (from November 2020 to April 2021) at about

- **-50%** in revenues (€),
- **-60%** in volumes (p.km),

and with a relatively less bad 'summer season' (May 2021 to October 2021) at around

- **-25%** in revenues (€),
- **-30%** in volumes (p.km).



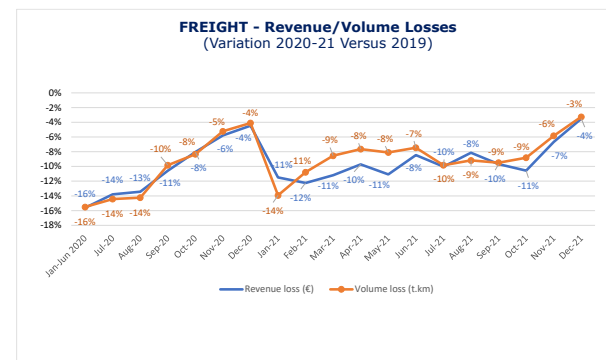
The new winter season starts again with a downturn in November-December 2021, however less severe than in 2020 (December 2021: -28% revenues / -35% volumes).

FREIGHT

After a collapse in January 2021, freight revenue losses stagnated at around **-10%** (compared to 2019) until October 2021.

As in 2020, an upswing appears towards end 2021, with almost 'back to normal' figures.

In its last data request, CER managed to collect volume data along with revenue data for the whole period of the pandemic. In freight, volume and revenue variations highly correlate. Average volume losses are around **-10%** (-12% in 2020 / -9% in 2021).



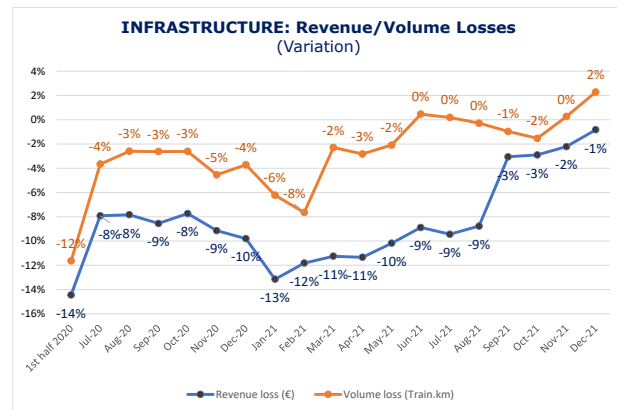


INFRASTRUCTURE

While passenger volumes (in p.km) and freight volumes (in t.km) have dropped, train volumes (in train-km) “seem” to have returned to normal.

However infrastructure revenues remain in the red and consistently lag behind volumes.

The figures also hide significant differences between countries, linked to insufficient compensation received for COVID-related reductions of Track Access Charges (TAC).



If not addressed, insufficient compensation for TAC reductions and inadequate support to operations may jeopardise infrastructure managers’ maintenance capacity as well as the investment capability of all rail stakeholders in the medium and long term.

At the 17 May 2021 Rail Summit, Ursula von der Leyen stressed **“how important it is that the rail sector emerges stronger from COVID-19, and that Europe needs rail as a sustainable mode of transport more than ever to achieve the European Green Deal goals”**.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *“The COVID crisis continued to have a heavy impact on railways last year. In 2021, commercial revenues were down by 33% versus 2019. At the end of 2021, CER members resumed the same number of trains as in 2019, but with a reduced ridership (down by 35%). This shows that CER members continued to provide services in 2020 and 2021 proving the resilience of the rail system, keeping people and goods on the move across Europe. However, the amount of rail revenue losses in EU27 reached the alarming level of €50 billion. Left uncorrected, this will have a long-lasting effect.”*

More information as well as previous reports are available on the CER website [here](#).

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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 79% of the rail network length, 77% of the rail freight business and about 90% 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](#).