

PRESS RELEASE

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UNIFE and CER welcome the conclusion of the negotiations on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation

The European Rail Supply Industry (UNIFE) and the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) applaud the conclusion and outcome of the negotiations of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), which now includes rail under its scope, a key missing element not foreseen in the European Commission's proposal. This will encourage Member States to consider the roll-out of alternative fuels infrastructure on the rail network and thus, further contribute to the achievement of the EU Green Deal objectives.

Rail is by far the greenest mode of mass transportation as it accounts for less than 0.5% of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions through direct usage (diesel) and is the only mode to both steadily improve its energy efficiency while increasing capacities. Already today 80% of train-kilometres run on electric energy, a growing portion of which comes from renewable sources, even though only 54% of the European rail network is currently electrified. Considering the relatively longer life cycle of the rail system – for example, several decades for rail rolling stock, decarbonisation measures complementary to electrification would be helpful. These would support the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructures for rail and would be aligned with the 2050 EU goal of climate neutrality.

Indeed, the European railway industry has been working for several years to develop and place on the market solutions based on alternative fuels, including battery-powered trains and hydrogen applications, to gradually phase out diesel trains. The ongoing deployment of those alternative fuels solutions in the rail sector is already a reality in several European countries and is set to grow even further in the coming years.

Against this background, the European rail supply industry, operators and infrastructure managers have welcomed the remarkable efforts made by the EU to enable the European rail sector to proceed on a path towards full decarbonisation, and to lead the mobility green transition in the coming years. In this sense, AFIR marks an opportunity to establish the basis for a progressive deployment of alternative fuels infrastructures for rail, particularly for those lines which cannot be electrified.

UNIFE and CER consider the inclusion of rail under the scope of AFIR to be a step in the right direction, in particular due to the relevant rail related provisions:

- Member States shall assess the development of alternative fuel technologies and propulsion systems for rail sections that cannot be fully electrified for technical or cost-efficiency reasons, such as hydrogen or battery-electric train and, if relevant, any refuelling and recharging infrastructure needs, and,
- Member States will have to provide an overview by 2025, within their National Policy Frameworks, of the state of play, perspectives, and planned initiatives for deployment of infrastructure including targets, key milestones and financing needed for hydrogen or battery

electric trains on network segments that cannot be electrified. Equally important is that the European Commission will be able to issue recommendations on the National Policy Frameworks regarding the level of ambition of targets and objectives and the policy measures related to them.

AFIR therefore sets an appropriate regulatory framework to sustain the investments made by railway suppliers, operators and infrastructure managers alike in innovative alternatives to diesel, facilitating European technology leadership in this domain.

UNIFE Director-General Philippe Citroën said: *‘The European Rail Supply Industry is pleased to see that EU institutions, in particular thanks to the efforts of the European Parliament, have finally included rail in the scope of AFIR. Even though the level of ambition could have been higher, the Regulation will create an important incentive and visibility for the industry to continue its investments in developing competitive alternatives to diesel on lines that will not be electrified. Achieving the EU Green Deal objectives will require the full decarbonisation of the transport sector and with the inclusion of rail under the scope of AFIR, the rail sector can also contribute to this endeavour.’*

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *‘There is no doubt that railways will continue to lead transport’s decarbonisation. Further electrification coupled with the deployment of alternative fuels through the new AFIR offers a regulatory framework to progressively phase out carbon-intensive fuels in rail over the next decades. European railway and infrastructure companies look forward to national plans to deploy alternative fuels to rail. In the short-run, however, rail’s operating costs and in particular electricity costs need to be carefully assessed, and in today’s situation support measures are needed to make sure that rail’s intermodal competitiveness is not hampered and that a shift to diesel traction is avoided.’*

For more information, please contact:

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<p>Andrei Ciufu UNIFE Head of Communications P +32 2 626 12 64 E andrei.ciufu@unife.org</p>	<p>UNIFE represents the European Rail Supply Industry in Brussels since 1992. The association gathers more than 100 of Europe’s leading large and medium-sized rail supply companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. UNIFE also brings together 12 national rail industry associations of European countries. For more information, visit www.unife.org or follow @unife on Twitter or LinkedIn.</p>