

Press release

Brussels, 30 June 2023



Rail sector welcomes European Semester call for prioritising sustainable mobility

Today on 30 June the European Council endorsed the country-specific recommendations on the 2023 National Reform Programmes. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcomes the references in these recommendations to the prioritisation of sustainable mobility both in terms of investments and supporting reforms.

In particular, the recommendations underline the importance of designing fiscal reforms that encourage more environmentally friendly transport, and the need to avoid environmentally harmful subsidies, including tax exemptions and tax reductions: **“Environmentally harmful subsidies such as fossil fuel subsidies (including tax exemptions and tax reductions) hampering the green transition”** is clearly stated in one of the recommendations.

Also recognised is the important link between fostering sustainable mobility and enhancing Member states’ energy security via more efficient means of transport, with particular reference to collective modes of transport. The recommendations underline that **“Efforts on energy efficiency, including in transport”** are important in order to achieve national climate and energy targets, reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and boost competitiveness and job creation. The recommendations also praise the commitment to finance public investment for the green and digital transitions, and for energy security, **“such as investments in the rail network”**.

Furthermore, the importance of continuing the efforts towards **the completion of the core high-speed rail network**, including cross-border by 2030, is recognised as something that *“will accelerate the transition towards climate neutrality and make transport less reliant on fossil fuels”*.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *“We will engage further with the European Commission and the EU Council to consolidate this alignment of views and build on it for ever better EU policies and national reforms. The Semester process is essential not only to ensure macroeconomic convergence among EU Member States, but also to ensure that the priorities agreed at European level are met at national level with initiatives that effectively mirror those priorities”*.

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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

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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](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).