

Tzitzikostas sets out vision in high stakes hearing for transport

Yesterday's confirmation hearing in the European Parliament for the EU Commissioner-designate for Transport, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, provided valuable insights into the future policy direction and Commission priorities for the EU's transport sector. Key areas include sustainable mobility & tourism, infrastructure development & funding, and digitalisation of transport systems. In particular, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcomes the Commissioner-designate's commitment to "put forward a plan for an ambitious European high-speed rail network to help connect EU capitals including through night trains, and to accelerate rail freight," and increase rail safety through ERTMS deployment.

CER has long advocated for action on high-speed rail, which was highlighted as a significant gap or "glaring paradox" in former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta's recent High-Level Report on the Future of the Single Market. The rail sector is eager to understand how the Commission plans to involve all necessary political, operational, and financial stakeholders to achieve the Smart and Sustainable Mobility strategy's goal of doubling high-speed rail traffic by 2030 and tripling by 2050.

Regarding digitalisation, Tzitzikostas emphasized his focus on *"a transport system that can support the competitiveness of our businesses and the connectivity of our citizens while respecting climate and environment. This goal can only be achieved through continued efforts to successfully achieve the twin green and digital transitions of the sector, to pursue breakthrough innovation, and to ensure that transport in Europe is and remains safe, accessible and affordable."*

This recognition that digitalisation is essential to help modernise the transport system is vital. Deploying key digital enablers, such as the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), Digital Capacity Management (DCM), Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) for optimised rail freight operations, and the Open Sales and Distribution Model (OSDM) for easier international ticketing, will be transformative. For instance, DCM can significantly increase rail capacity at just 5% of the cost of building new infrastructure. The sector is eager to understand Tzitzikostas' stance on creating a centralised governance model with a European Programme Management for ERTMS, which is currently lacking, and on tackling the challenges to speed up its deployment across all Member States.

CER commends the Commissioner-designate's commitment to improving gender balance in the transport sector, which is completely in line with the objectives of the CER Women in Rail Autonomous Agreement signed by the social partners in 2021.

CER equally welcomes the Commissioner-designate's intention to put forward a Sustainable Transport Investment Plan, which will outline a strategic approach to scaleup and prioritise investments in transport decarbonisation solutions. The Commissioner will *"work to increase investment and deployment of rail infrastructure and high-speed rail services"*. To fully realise their potential as the backbone of

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sustainable mobility and net-zero logistics in Europe, railways require fair, long-term, and comprehensive financing.

The European Rail Community reiterates its commitment to achieving seamless cross-border rail ticketing by 2025 through the implementation of OSDM and expanding the CIT [Agreement on Journey Continuation](#) (AJC) as well as other steps outlined in the [CER Ticketing Roadmap](#), designed and agreed proactively by European rail passenger undertakings. CER looks forward to working with the Commissioner-designate on a Single Digital Ticketing and Booking Regulation.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola expressed support for Tzitzikostas' priorities and said: *"European railways stand ready to work with and support the Commissioner designated in achieving these ambitious and necessary priorities which, amongst others, will focus on increasing modal shift towards sustainable mobility and tourism, accelerating the roll-out of trans-European infrastructure, including a master plan for high-speed rail, and making the most of digital tools to support high-performing, sustainable, and inter-connected networks across Europe, in particular deploying ERTMS, DAC and DCM. These ambitions align perfectly with the main priorities of the CER Manifesto "On track for Europe".*

Read more on the priorities of European rail at www.cer.be/ontrackforeurope.

Contact person

Cliona Cunningham
CER Head of Communications
E: cliona.cunningham@cer.be
M: +32 491 16 21 73

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 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).