

# Investing in rail mobility to empower citizens to move and to stay

**Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms Raffaele Fitto today launched a call for evidence on the forthcoming Right to Stay Strategy. The flagship policy framework under preparation by the European Commission aims to address the challenges preventing Europeans from building a future in the place they call home. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) wholeheartedly supports this new initiative and recalls that mobility is one of the essential services that unlock opportunities for citizens in their region. Sufficient investments in these services should be a central component of any strategy that seeks to promote the freedom to stay.**

In an EU Single Market that is based on the freedom to move, Enrico Letta's 'Much more than a market' report rightly highlights that free movement should be a choice, not a necessity. The equally important 'freedom to stay' is about empowering citizens to remain in their region and not feel forced to relocate due to a lack of opportunity.

CER and its railway members are strongly committed to providing the essential mobility services that make the freedom to stay possible. Rail provides daily transport for commuters, connects businesses, and drives sustainable tourism. It offers inclusive, reliable and energy-efficient mobility, at a time when volatile fuel costs place a growing burden on car-dependent households. Rail also generates significant economic value for the communities it serves. At EU level, rail contributes €247 billion in gross value added (GVA) and supports over 3.1 million jobs. For every €1 in GVA generated by railway transport, another €2.7 is supported in other industries; and for every person employed by railways, another 2.6 jobs are supported in the wider economy.

In partnership with other services of general interest (SGI) providers gathered within SGI Europe and the European Parliament Intergroup on SGIs and the Social Economy, CER is part of the Freedom to Stay Coalition formed earlier this year. The coalition calls for a revitalised Single Market that strengthens economic, social and territorial cohesion. It is encouraging to see the issue tackled by the European Commission with a dedicated Right to Stay Strategy.

Strengthening connectivity within and between regions must be a key part of the strategy. However, ambition must be matched with sufficient resources. Underinvestment in rail limits the development of the network and constraints on public budgets directly impact the level of services contracted by authorities under public service obligation (PSO). The opportunities created by stronger rail connections, digitalisation, improved interoperability and the expansion of high-speed rail into a truly European network require robust and predictable funding. As discussions progress on the EU's next long-term budget, it is important to ensure that every instrument in the Multiannual Financial Framework, including the Connecting Europe Facility, the European Competitiveness Fund, and National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP), is leveraged in the best possible way.

**CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola** said: *"Making sure Europeans are well connected, wherever they choose to live, is an important benchmark for a thriving Single*

## Press release

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*Market. Railways are fundamental to opening up opportunities, but it is easy to take them for granted. In the EU's forthcoming Right to Stay Strategy, we hope that the essential mobility services provided by railways within and between regions will be acknowledged as an important part of the solution to be promoted and supported."*

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### About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The diverse and comprehensive membership made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, covers the large majority of the rail infrastructure network, rail freight business and rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a resilient, competitive, and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit [www.cer.be](http://www.cer.be) or follow us on social media.