

## Press release

Brussels, 3 June 2021



# Putting rail at the forefront of Sustainable & Smart Mobility – CER welcomes Council Conclusions

Today, European Transport Ministers, gathered virtually at their EU Council meeting, adopted two important sets of Council Conclusions on EU rail and on the EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) especially appreciates the work of the Portuguese Government, under the lead of Minister Pedro Nuno Santos, which has produced the Council Conclusions "*Putting Rail at the Forefront of Sustainable and Smart Mobility*".

In these Conclusions, the Council unequivocally recognises the central role which rail must be allowed to play to increase the overall sustainability of the EU economy and to achieve EU climate objectives.

The text touches upon issues of key importance to the development of the sector: the impact of Covid on EU mobility and on railways, the need for supporting rail R&I, the role of modal shift, the importance of TEN-T and rail freight corridors, the revamping of night trains, the need to boost long-distance and cross-border (high-speed) passenger rail services, ERTMS, and the efforts being made to further digitalise passenger and freight services.

**CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola** said: "*This is likely the most appropriate way to celebrate the first semester of the European Year of Rail and I must congratulate the Portuguese Presidency and the whole Council for agreeing unanimously on a text that is ambitious and clear in its objectives. The Council Conclusions are a clear call for being bold about modal shift and the policies that should make it a reality. We expect this to represent a true political agenda that the Council, together with the other EU institutions, will keep as a reference in the near and distant future - starting with the next revision of the TEN-T Regulation*".

Regarding the Council Conclusions on the Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, CER underlines the pivotal importance of its sixth paragraph – calling for the "polluter-pays" and "user-pays" principles to be reflected in transport policy measures for and across all modes of transport.

CER also supports the work done on the International Rail Passenger Platform and the development of an Action Plan to boost international rail passenger services.

Mr Mazzola further stated: "*It is unavoidable at this point that hopes are raised on a more constructive position of the Council on important dossiers such as the ongoing revision of the Eurovignette Directive*".

*The Council Conclusions "Putting Rail at the Forefront of Sustainable and Smart Mobility" are available [here](#), and the Conclusions on the EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility [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 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% 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](http://www.cer.be) or follow us on Twitter [@CER\\_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).