

EU leaders called to back rail Declaration in support of Ukraine

A declaration pledging assistance to Ukraine's railways and reconstruction efforts signed by 32 rail companies and organisations across Europe has been sent to the leaders of the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), as a committed signatory of the Declaration, hopes its proposals will now find top-level EU support to ensure they can be realised.

Concluded on 9 July at the Rail CEO Summit 2022 held in Vienna by Austrian Federal Railways ÖBB, the Declaration has continued to attract signatories. To date it has been signed by 32 railway companies and rail associations, including CER with the full support of the CER membership. The declaration has now been shared with EU leaders for their support in a letter addressed to them by ÖBB CEO and CER Chair, Andreas Matthä, who hosted the CEO Summit 2022.

The joint declaration sends a clear signal of the European rail sector's solidarity and belief in common European values. Rail CEOs also wanted to clearly state the importance of the Ukrainian rail infrastructure as the backbone of the humanitarian corridor for displaced people and aid supplies such as food and medical products. This is just one reason why the European railways want to continue to show support and solidarity with Ukrainian Railways and work together to rebuild the railways and their infrastructure after the end of the war. The railways want to contribute to this with urgently needed materials but also with technical know-how.

In addition, European railways are united in appealing to the EU to establish a "Rebuild Ukraine" fund where funds are made available quickly and unbureaucratically, specifically for the railways and rail infrastructure in Ukraine. After all, a functioning European rail network is essential for a functioning European economy.

Andreas Matthä, CER Chair and CEO of Austrian Federal Railways ÖBB, said: *"I am glad that we can now present this declaration to the EU leaders. I am proud that 32 companies and organisations have signed the declaration and have sent such a strong signal. I hope that our proposals will now find top-level EU support. Our Ukrainian Railway colleagues work every day under unimaginable conditions and risk their lives, they count upon our fullest support and solidarity."*

CER Executive Director **Alberto Mazzola** said: *"CER is proud to be part of a solidary European rail community that rallies around our partners in times of need. With our Ukraine Declaration and call for EU leaders' endorsement, we wish to support the best conditions to preserve and rebuild the country's infrastructure, so that Ukraine and its people can continue to rely on resilient rail services for their future."*

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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

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made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 79% of the rail network length, 77% of the rail freight business and about 90% 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).