

European Parliament approves AFIR report: a major step forward towards the full decarbonisation of the transport sector

On 19 October, a European Parliament plenary in Strasbourg approved - with a large majority - the report on the Commission proposal for the deployment of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), one of the key files of the Fit for 55 package.

The European Rail Supply Industry (UNIFE) and the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcome the remarkable efforts made by rapporteur **Ismail Ertug** and other members of Parliament over the past months, which have enabled the European rail sector to proceed on a path towards full decarbonisation and to lead the mobility green transition in the coming years. The AFIR proposal marks an opportunity to establish a European legal framework to support the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructures for rail, especially for those lines that are not mandated for electrification under the **Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T)**.

The report that was approved today sets the following more ambitious decarbonisation targets for the rail sector:

- Asserts the key role **alternative fuels** will play in shifting away from the remaining **fossil fuel-powered trains** that are still in service
- Ensures an appropriate amount of **alternative fuels infrastructure** will be deployed in the TEN-T network segments where **electrification is not possible** or is not provided for in the TEN-T Regulation
- Commits to the use of the **'energy efficiency first' principle** when deploying alternative fuels infrastructures
- Establishes that **urban nodes** and **multimodal hubs** are essential to fostering multimodality

The Parliament position defines a path for the full decarbonisation of the transport sector. Railways are already ahead in decarbonisation compared to the other modes of transport. Indeed, the rail sector is already testing a significant number of alternative green technologies to progressively substitute the remaining diesel locomotives.

Anticipating the upcoming trilogue negotiations, UNIFE and CER urgently call on **Member States** and the **European Commission** to endorse this parliamentary position and maintain the same level of ambition for the rail sector in the final text. We believe that decarbonisation of the European transport sector cannot be achieved without rail. In this respect, the deployment of **rail alternative fuels solutions** is set to play a key role in achieving the **EU Green Deal** targets.

Responding to today's developments, **UNIFE Director General Philippe Citroën** stated that: *"UNIFE applauds the European Parliament's decision to approve more ambitious rail-related provisions within the framework of the AFIR proposal. The deployment of alternative fuels solutions in the rail sector is already a reality in many*

Press release

Brussels, 19 October 2022



European countries and is set to grow even further in the coming years. This clearly shows rail suppliers and operators' joint commitment to further contributing to the development of the zero emissions trains market in Europe. For this reason, an adequate European regulatory framework that reflects this growing market was very much needed."

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: "CER welcomes the adoption of the AFIR Report by the European Parliament. Rail is today the greenest means of transport for both goods and passengers and we are committed to further increase our contribution to reach EU environment goals. 80% of train kilometres already run today on electric energy but of course, as the report says, not all lines can be electrified. We need to progressively shift from diesel locomotives to green technologies but to do this we need access to a proper infrastructure for hydrogen.

However, with the electricity prices tripled in one year and in some countries ten times higher than last year, railways as one of the biggest single consumers of electricity in Europe call today for urgent measures to correct the situation, among them making railways benefit from the windfall revenues to reduce the unit cost of rail electricity and prolonging the Track Access Charges reduction. We need urgent measures to block the reverse of modal shift."

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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 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).

UNIFE represents the European Rail Supply Industry in Brussels since 1992. The association gathers more than 100 of Europe's leading large and medium-sized rail supply companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance, and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. UNIFE also brings together 12 national rail industry associations of European countries. For more information, visit www.unife.org or follow [@unife](https://twitter.com/unife) on Twitter or on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/unife).