

INTELLIGENCE Analysis

to Berlin and Hamburg, which 'have reached their capacity limits' following the strong increase in demand. These services are operated by ÖBB with SBB providing logistical and marketing support. They operate as part of a complex web of portion workings designed to return the rolling stock to Wien for servicing on a regular cycle, which complicates any options for expanding the operation. Nevertheless, Matthä confirmed that production had started on the 13 Nightjet trainsets ordered from Siemens, adding that the first vehicles were expected to enter service during 2022.

Pointing out that Zürich was now western Europe's second largest hub for night trains after Wien, with services to Berlin, Wien, Graz, Budapest, Praha and Zagreb, Meyer said he agreed with Matthä that overnight services were 'an important part of the overall offer, with great potential for synergy with daytime connections'. The two railways want to develop 'an attractive range of rail services which supports the objective of transferring short-haul air traffic to rail'.

ÖBB and ČD are looking at adding extra couchettes to the EuroNight service linking Zürich with Praha via Salzburg and Linz. The partners are also 'aiming to incorporate other European cities into the Nightjet network and connect them with Switzerland', although the destinations have yet to be agreed.

However, SBB and ÖBB have hinted that 'better transport policy conditions' would be needed to support the expansion of night trains. This could include direct financial support, which they suggest could potentially come from a CO₂ levy, or a reduction in track access charges and other operating costs. ■

market'. It believes that specific rules may be needed to exclude 'non-European state-owned enterprises' from EU procurement competitions in the absence of reciprocal market access.

UNIFE welcomed the Commission's adoption in July of guidance indicating that Chinese economic operators could be excluded from EU tenders in the absence of binding agreements on reciprocal market opening. However, it would be 'of utmost importance for the Commission and the member states to make sure that contracting authorities are aware of and apply these rules'.

UNIFE wants to see a revised offer from China addressing market barriers faced by the European rail supply industry. It believes that access to the Chinese market has 'become increasingly restricted or effectively non-existent for European rail manufacturers', with accessibility falling from 63% to 18% in less than eight years. At the same time Chinese state-owned suppliers have become major competitors 'in all product segments and on all continents'. The association pointed out that 'advanced railway equipment' was among the 10 priority sectors in the Chinese government's 'Made in China 2025' strategy, and rail also forms an essential component of the Belt & Road Initiative geopolitical strategy.

'For the sake of the 400 000 people employed by the European rail supply industry, it is crucial for the European Union to rise to this challenge and immediately ensure the conditions for open but fair trade relations between the EU and China in the rail sector', UNIFE warned.

Meanwhile, the association has called on the European Council and

18%

ACCESSIBILITY TO THE CHINESE MARKET FOR EUROPEAN RAIL MANUFACTURERS, DOWN FROM 63% EIGHT YEARS AGO, ACCORDING TO UNIFE

Parliament to finalise an 'international procurement instrument' which it believes could open up new market opportunities for European suppliers. ■

USA

CRRC refutes espionage claims

Massachusetts-based CRRC MA Corp has refuted suggestions that Chinese rolling stock manufacturers might pose a threat to national security, insisting that all sensitive equipment was locally procured and installed.

The Railway Supply Institute, which represents local rolling stock builders, has written to the US Congress calling for 'swift' approval of proposed legislation to prevent the use of federal funding for the purchase of vehicles from Chinese state-owned or state controlled companies.

First introduced to Congress as the Transit Infrastructure Vehicle Security Act, amid suggestions that Chinese-built vehicles might somehow be used for espionage, the measure has now been incorporated into the National Defense Authorisation Act. The White House has reportedly endorsed the proposed legislation on the grounds that a ban would be 'critical' to economic and national security.

Over the past two years, CRRC MA has opened assembly plants in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles to produce metro and commuter rail rolling stock for operators in Boston,

The first CRRC-built trainset for Boston's MBTA entered service on the Orange Line on August 14.

INTERNATIONAL

Fair access is key

European suppliers' association UNIFE has reiterated its call for 'a real level playing field' and 'fair conditions' for both European and Chinese manufacturers.

Responding to the announcement that Chinese rolling stock conglomerate CRRC was to acquire Vossloh's locomotive manufacturing business (p20), UNIFE suggested on September 2 that this deal confirmed 'China's strategy to enter and conquer the European rail market'.

The association has called on the European Commission to publish a report identifying how 'to fully address the distortive effects of foreign state ownership and state financing in the internal

