

News Release

The European rail industry welcomes the Commission's proposals to make the rail sector more efficient

Bruxelles 31 January 2013 – UNIFE, the association of the European rail supply industry, welcomes the proposal of the European Commission for the Fourth Railway Package. UNIFE shares the Commission's objectives of competitive rail transport in Europe and of the creation of a Single European Railway Area. In order to meet the targets of the Commission White Paper on Transport, the modal share of rail must increase and rail has to become the transport mode of choice in Europe. If implemented as proposed, the Fourth Railway Package will help achieve these objectives.

UNIFE attaches particular importance to more efficient authorisation procedures for railway equipment in Europe and describes the current situation as unacceptable: EUR 1.4 billion of capital is immobilised and tied up in cumbersome and slow authorisation procedures which can last up to 2 years for a single country certificate. Currently, the internal market for railway products is fragmented due to different national authorisation procedures.

UNIFE is pleased to see that the European Commission finally addresses this issue in the Fourth Railway Package. Authorisation for placing on the market of railway vehicles will soon be granted by the European Railway Agency which will hopefully lead to quicker and less costly authorisation procedures in Europe. A key element of the proposal is the idea that vehicles will receive an authorisation valid across Europe and based on which the Railway Undertaking will take the decision for placing vehicle into service. UNIFE supports this idea but it needs to be ensured that no further layer of bureaucracy will be added after the authorisation for placing on the market.

UNIFE also welcomes the proposals of the European Commission to strengthen the role of the European Railway Agency on issues other than authorisation. A stronger European Railway Agency is necessary for the promotion of ERTMS, the promotion of European railway standards abroad, and in the field of research.

"A Single European Railway Area requires a single European Railway Agency with strong competences", said Philippe Citroën, Director General of UNIFE. UNIFE supports the Commission proposal and urges the European Commission to ensure that the European Railway Agency is appropriately staffed to handle the new and necessary tasks effectively.

The Fourth Railway Package can help make railway transport in Europe stronger and more competitive. An important element that would contribute to achieving the same objective and that would help Europe's rail industry to defend its position of global leadership must also be addressed: research and development. Given the competitive pressure, it is necessary to invest heavily in rail research and development. UNIFE calls

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on the European Commission to support the European rail industry in their wish to enhance cooperative research and development.

In this respect, UNIFE appreciates the European Commission's reference to the SHIFT2RAIL initiative that would contribute to developing rail as a transport mode by promoting step-change innovations for passenger rolling stock, freight transport, traffic management systems and rail infrastructure.

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About UNIFE

UNIFE represents the European Rail Industry in Brussels since 1992. The Association gathers more than 80 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. A further one thousand suppliers of railway equipment partake in UNIFE activities through 16 national rail industry associations. UNIFE members have an 80% market share in Europe and supply more than 50% of the worldwide production of rail equipment and services.

UNIFE represents its members' interests at the level of both European and international institutions. On the technical side, UNIFE works on the setting of interoperability standards and coordinates EU-funded research projects that aim at the technical harmonisation of railway systems. The association is one of the supporting bodies of the European Railway Agency.

UNIFE. Promote rail market growth for sustainable mobility.

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