

CER UIC High-Level Freight meeting

DECLARATION

of the European Rail Freight CEOs

Every new crisis emphasises more and more the importance of rail freight for Europe, as it is the only sustainable land transport mode, provides supply security and is 7 times more energy efficient than road transport. The participants of the CER-UIC High-Level Freight Meeting commit to help Europe reach energy efficiency in the transport sector quickly and, thereby, reduce Europe's dependency on imported energy sources. For this, they are ready to go even beyond their original target of 30% modal share for rail by 2030, provided that the necessary framework conditions are in place.

1. **Compensate for energy price increases:** In the context of electricity prices currently rising by up to 1000% (compared to less than 100% for diesel), modal shift is in danger and a huge burden is put on rail freight customers. Participants therefore insist on the need to **preserve Services of General Economic Interest** such as Rail Freight by granting them special treatment:
 - a. in the **capping of energy prices**. A clear demand of the participants is that the price increase of traction electricity does not exceed the increase of the price of diesel.
 - b. in the **reduction of Track Access Charges**, e.g. by simply amending Reg. (EU) 2020/1429 on the sustainability of the rail market established for the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - c. in the **allocation of a significant part of** the currently intended **solidarity contributions** on the windfall profits of businesses active in the oil, gas and coal industry
2. **Secure sufficient infrastructure capacity for rail freight.** The growth of rail freight, in terms of both quality and productivity, is severely hampered by infrastructure constraints. A regulation supporting TTR and guaranteeing a sufficient capacity for rail freight is urgently needed and in no case should the demands of the TEN-T-proposal in that respect be watered down.
3. **Support competitiveness of the sector by co-funding game-changing technologies** as formulated in the Rail Freight Forward strategy
 - a. This is particularly the case for the deployment of the **European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS)** and the deployment of **Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC)** for freight wagons. These investment-intensive technologies are key to increase rail interoperability and productivity and both need extensive public funding from the start to guarantee the shortest possible migration period and the fastest possible returns. Such investments will then render further productivity gains possible via the deployment of **Automatic Train Operations** by the sector.
 - b. This is also the case of the deployment of **Digital Capacity Management (DCM)** based on new Time Table Design principles and of **Digital Platforms (DP-Rail)**, which not only require some kick-start co-funding but also a sensible and uncomplicated simplification of the regulatory framework that currently governs traffic & capacity management & allocation.
4. **Promote energy efficient multimodal chains:** via a coordinated revision of the **Combined Transport and Road Vehicles Weights & Dimensions Directives** to ensure the technical compatibility of trucks with rail transport and to optimize the use of freight wagon capacity.

Adopted by the Rail Freight Forward Coalition after consultation at the UIC-CER High-Level Freight Meeting in Vienna on 13 October 2022.