

## Press release

Brussels, 30 September 2021



# Railways are the backbone of sustainable mobility & key to delivering EU climate objectives

The European Commission is holding a conference today entitled “*Building up a network of European long-distance rail services*”, on the occasion of the arrival of the [Connecting Europe Express](#) in Berlin. Speaking at the event, Dr Alberto Mazzola, Executive Director of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), will stress that the long-term vision of the railway sector is the creation of a seamless European high-speed network, linking European capitals and major cities, supporting the development of an international passenger service market in order to deliver the EU’s climate objectives.

Railways are enablers for sustainable multimodal mobility services at local and regional level and want to play a bigger role in door-to-door mobility chains. To achieve this ambitious goal, passenger experience needs to be central to business plans and regulatory demands alike. The journey experience is dependent on seamless ticketing and digitalisation, but also includes the affordability of ticket prices, the speed and duration of rail passenger travel, the reliability of the services as well as on-board facilities. **The aim of any sustainable strategy should be to shift short and medium distance travel in Europe from road and air to rail to cut CO2 emissions.** Therefore, it is also essential to fully internalise environmental externalities with a smarter approach on pricing that is based on the ‘user-pays’ and the ‘polluter-pays’ principles. More commercially viable international train services could then be developed.

High-speed and night trains are a sustainable alternative to cheap flights with a range of 1000km **if appropriate political support is provided**, and the sector would like to double its share of Europe’s passenger traffic to 15% by 2030. In order to achieve this, several legal and technical obstacles need to be addressed in relation to setting up new cross-border international train services, including night trains. Harmonised technical and regulatory framework conditions in Europe still need to be fully implemented and obstacles to full interoperability pose major technical, operational and economic challenges for cross-border passenger transport. Fast harmonisation of technical and operational rules, norms, and requirements is needed.

The European Rail Sector stakeholders<sup>1</sup> support the work of the International Rail Passenger Platform and the willingness of its members to improve international rail passenger services. The rail sector realises that the status quo is not an option: the international transport systems of Europe need to be adapted to face the challenges of the ongoing and accelerating climate crisis

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<sup>1</sup> Encompassing representatives of railway undertakings (CER/ALLRAIL/UIC/CIT) and infrastructure managers (EIM/CER/UIC), railway suppliers (UNIFE), passenger and consumers’ organizations (EPF/BEUC), travel companies (EU Travel Tech/ECTAA) and distributors (EU Travel Tech/ALLRAIL)

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**CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola** (speaking at 11:20 CET) looks forward to an interesting debate on these topics, noting: *"An interconnected and competitive network of rail passenger services will underpin the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of our continent"*.

The Commission Conference '**Building up a network of European long-distance rail services**' is live streamed from the [Connecting Europe Express website](#).

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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 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% 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](http://www.cer.be) or follow us on Twitter [@CER\\_railways](#) or [LinkedIn](#).