

Press release

Brussels, 08 November, 2023



Unique opportunity offered by revision of Combined Transport Directive must not be wasted

The European rail sector has welcomed the presentation of the proposed revisions to the Combined Transport Directive but underlines that certain essential elements, which are currently missing, must be included as a matter of priority. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) supports the ambition to reduce external costs through combined transport but stresses that public measures to reduce the operational costs by at least 10% must also be effectively achieved and that the European Parliament and Member States must approve and implement this requirement.

In particular, CER insists that additional provisions aimed at reducing red tape in State aid procedures for combined transport operations can play a decisive role. **This revision must not miss a unique opportunity.** It is imperative that public support to combined transport operations is made automatically compatible with EU State aid rules, hence without the need of notifying the support scheme to the European Commission. This provision would significantly speed-up the process and boost the market by making State aid accessible on average 3 years earlier compared to the current framework. Using existing tools on external costs, including those on greenhouse gas emissions, will also simplify and expediate this procedure.

CER approves the requirement for Member States to reduce the cost of combined transport operations by at least 10% in their territory. The requirement that each Member state shall adopt a national policy framework for facilitating the uptake of intermodal transport and in particular combined transport operations is equally welcomed.

However, to be fully efficient, the proposed revision of the Combined Transport Directive would require further fundamental changes to the Weights & Dimensions Directive proposal to make trucks and trailers truly interoperable with environmentally friendly transport modes like rail.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *"We welcome the publication of the proposal and in particular certain elements such as the reduction of external costs through combined transport. It is nonetheless imperative that public measures to reduce the costs by at least 10% will be effectively implemented and that the process to support combined transport is significantly simplified and streamlined. To allow the new directive to fulfill its promise, it is also essential that rail and road are progressively made more interoperable. More than ever, CER calls on the co-legislators to consider both the Combined Transport and Weights & Dimensions directives in a synchronized, coherent, and coordinated manner"*.

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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 or follow us on Twitter [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).