

## **INTER-Regio-Rail Position Paper on the White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system"**

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The **European passenger rail authorities** united under the banner Inter-Regio-Rail (IRR) believe that intra-modal and inter-modal competition is essential for the development of a Single European Railway Area. In order to achieve this goal, we support modal shift towards more environmentally friendly transport modes such as rail and the internalisation of external costs for all modes of transport.

The European Commission White Paper published in March 2011 sets out the important issues to be dealt with in the coming years in order for European transport to fully meet its potential. Some of the issues presented in the 2011 White Paper were given further consideration in the draft report by Mathieu Grosch which tackles a number of important issues for Inter-Regio-Rail.

Just like the rapporteur, Inter-Regio-Rail is in favour of setting short term objectives for the transport sector in addition to the long-term goals favoured by the European Commission. Moreover, we agree with the **internalisation of external costs** for all modes of transport by 2014 and with the obligations of Member States as regards local public transport and services when liberalising markets. However, INTER-Regio-Rail believes that much more still needs to be done in order to develop an efficient transport network for regional rail passengers.

### **Intramodal and intermodal competition**

Measures have to be taken as soon as possible to open the market in rail transport in order to increase **competition** and improve service quality, including mandatory award of public service contracts under competitive tendering. Technical, administrative and legal barriers need to be abolished while tax distortions and unjustified subsidies have to be eliminated so as to allow for free and undistorted competition. These are essential measures in order to achieve a level playing field between transport modes.

It is vital to green European transport and in this perspective public as well as regional rail transport can offer solutions to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and accidents. We believe that the Commission should promote the use of public transport as an alternative to individual conventional transport, and not limit the alternatives to examples such as walking, cycling and car sharing.

INTER-Regio-Rail also supports the introduction of **carbon footprint calculators** with common EU standards allowing passengers to make educated decisions regarding the mode of transport that they choose for their journeys. These soft measures should go hand-in-hand with regulatory measures aiming at shifting traffic from road to rail.

## Investment and Funding

Inter-Regio-Rail considers that **investment priorities** for TEN-T financing should be set according to the achievable benefits for end-users. Moreover, infrastructure should be funded only if the investment minimizes the overall effects of the transport system on the environment and maximizes the overall use of infrastructure for public transport.

While TEN-T funding provides financial resources for a limited number of projects of EU wide importance, other European funds should be developed to finance investment in and maintenance of rail infrastructure. At the same time, additional funds for regional rail transport authorities are needed in order to improve transport quality for passengers.

It is also crucial to better coordinate cohesion and structural funds with transport objectives in general, and to set investment priorities for rail transport in particular.

## Passenger Rights and Services

Inter-Regio-Rail considers that the development of **rail freight corridors** should not take place at the expense of passenger transport. Therefore, it is essential to increase the attractiveness of passenger rail transport on medium and long distances especially by increasing comfort, access and reliability as well as by providing attractive frequencies and assuring intermodal integration.

Inter-Regio-Rail considers that additional **passenger rights** need to be introduced as the current legislation only provides a basic set of rights. Therefore we are in favour of a legislative proposal by the European Commission establishing a Charter of Passengers' Rights for all transport modes by 2013. However, this document should not contain just the basic rights. It should enforce and enhance the rights of passengers by including provisions regarding short notice information concerning delays, disruptions and alternative routes.

In a time when the European population is ageing, better accessibility to infrastructure for elderly needs to be a reality in the coming years. Similarly, passengers with reduced mobility and disabled persons should not be left out. They should have the appropriate legal framework to protect their rights so as to make public transport more accessible for them.

**Multimodal connection platforms** and smart integrated **ticketing and journey planning** with common EU standards will be of high added value to passengers.

## Improve cross-border rail traffic and increase rail density

**Cross-border rail services** also offer a European added value and should be enhanced. Priority should be given to the removal of cabotage restrictions so that cross-border rail traffic can fully meet its potential. This should be one of the priority initiatives of the European Union. However the

European Commission and the EP rapporteur do not set concrete actions in order to remove cabotage restrictions.

Regional Rail Transport (RRT) ensures the mobility of the population, protects scarce resources, and generates employment. Therefore, we support measures to increase the density of the rail network in order to adequately tackle the mobility needs of European citizens.

## **The European Railway Agency and technical matters**

In order to achieve a single European transport area, it is essential to harmonize safety certification and establish a single vehicle type authorisation. Moreover, enhancing the certification and maintenance process for safety critical components used to build rolling stock and rail infrastructure represents an important step towards increasing the reliability of European rail transport.

Inter-Region-Rail considers that it is necessary to increase the role of ERA in order to ensure an adequate supervision of National Safety Authorities and of the safety certification process.

**However, these measures should not increase the costs and the duration of the certification procedure.**

IRR therefore supports Mr Grosch's claim for a better functioning rail certification process.

### For further information, please contact

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### INTER-Regio-Rail aims to improve Regional Rail Transport in Central Europe. The nine project partners are making this happen on three different levels:

On the one hand we are demonstrating, using studies and pilot projects as examples, how Regional Rail Transport can gain and keep new customers if it is better organised, with better infrastructure and tailored services.

Using the experience gained from these regional projects, we are approaching policy makers at regional, national and European level and argue in favour of improving the framework conditions governing the organisation and financing of RRT.

Finally, professional networking between RRT authorities and dialogue with transport companies, passenger associations, regional authorities and external experts are very important to us.

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