Transport Ministers adopt general approach on Market Pillar of Fourth Railway Package – may the Technical Pillar now enter into force as soon as possible!

The Community of European railway and infrastructure companies (CER) closely followed today's deliberations in the Transport Council on the Fourth Railway Package. CER welcomes the general approach adopted by the Transport Ministers on the so-called Market Pillar of the Fourth Railway Package. Now it is time to proceed swiftly with the trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament, and to let the Technical Pillar enter into force as soon as possible. CER also takes the opportunity of today's ministerial lunch debate on rail security to stress the importance of respecting the openness of the railway system when considering potential new security measures.

The general approach of the Council on Directive 2012/34/EU establishing a single European railway area, known as the Recast Directive, and on Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 concerning the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail, referred to as the Public Service Obligation (PSO) Regulation, represents a step forward in achieving a true single European railway area.

The Recast Directive has been amended taking into account most of the concerns expressed in the last months by CER: it has been recognised that different governance models for infrastructure managers can co-exist within a single and ever more open rail market.

The Council also reached a deal on the PSO Regulation, after being successfully guided by the Luxembourg Presidency through some difficult negotiations. Direct award will remain among the options available to the competent authorities for the award of public service contracts, subject to performance targets to be included in said contracts.

CER Executive Director Libor Lochman said: "I wish to congratulate the Luxembourg Presidency for the constructive work done with the delegations of all its fellow Member States. CER sees that, generally speaking, good texts have been found, and that these texts constitute a sound basis for the negotiations with the Parliament, which we expect to start very soon. But I also take this opportunity to ask both Council and Parliament to now proceed with the publication of the Technical Pillar: the rail sector urgently needs

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harmonised authorisation and certification procedures to achieve dramatic cost reductions, it cannot wait any longer!"

Following the thwarted Thalys attack on 21 August, the Transport Council is also discussing how to improve the security of rail passengers in Europe. Over a ministerial lunch debate, the input resulting from an extraordinary meeting of the Commission's Expert Group on Land Transport Security (LANDSEC) on 11 September is being put forward.

Commenting on this debate, Libor Lochman said: "Given the much higher volume of passengers transiting through Europe's rail network, railways cannot have airport-style security measures in place. CER would therefore like to stress that any new measures should acknowledge the key feature of railways as an open-access transport mode."

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About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 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, 80% of the rail freight business and about 96% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers 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 via Twitter at @CER_railways.