

Press Release  
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## Rail sector strengthens collaboration with European Commission to increase rail's climate resilience

The European Commission, the United Nations and the rail sector will further strengthen their collaboration to enhance the rail sector's climate change resilience. This was agreed during the workshop "Climate Change Adaptation: Reality and Prospects for the rail sector" organised by the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) today. All stakeholders present recognised the vulnerability of the rail sector to climate change, hence the importance of prioritising rail transport when mainstreaming climate change adaptation into EU policies.

For the first time, CER members and representatives from the EU and the UN discussed today what the role of the rail sector should be in the upcoming European strategy on climate change adaptation, to be published in 2013.

The rail sector is regularly affected by rigorous weather events, and expects stronger consequences of extreme weather conditions and climate change in the next decades, with growing difference in climate and weather conditions across Europe.

Representatives of the rail sector, including SNCF, VR, JR East, Network Rail, the Association of the European Rail Industry (UNIFE), and the European Federation of European Railway Trackworks Contractors (EFRTC) presented future challenges and their strategies how to prepare for extreme weather events. For example, activities include: research concerning the impact of climate change in the next decades as well as the identification of challenges, constraints, solutions and benefits of adaptation measures.

The European Commission and the United Nations explained their activities and objectives on climate change adaptation. The European Commission focused in particular on its work within the Adaptation Steering Group (ASG) and presented the recently launched European Climate Adaptation Platform (CLIMATE-ADAPT), an interactive web-based tool on climate change adaptation.

A number of speakers highlighted that solutions to adaptation and increased climate resilience of the rail system already exist. The rail sector's current adaptation activities aim at fostering wider benefits since it enables prioritised, targeted investments. At the same time, it was stressed that several constraints remain to be solved, e.g. how to mainstream climate change requirements in current standards for infrastructure.

The fruitful discussion led to the conclusion that the EU and the rail sector will further support each other's initiatives in enhancing the rail sector's resilience, looking in particular at the following areas: funding opportunities in the framework of the discussions on the next multiannual financial framework, inclusion of adaptation into standards for infrastructure and rolling stock, and continuous

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research towards more accurate climate forecasts.

**CER Executive Director Libor Lochman** said: *“CER is glad that the EU and the UN see it as a priority to adapt the rail system and infrastructure to the climate change challenges. Today’s workshop showed that the rail sector is taking measures to face the current and future challenges of more extreme weather events and climate change. This meeting is the first step towards a stronger cooperation with the European Commission and we will support each other’s activities including the identification of funding opportunities. We look forward to further contribute to the EU’s efforts in the preparation of the 2013 European Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.”*

The European Commission is working on the definition of a European strategy on climate change adaptation. To be published in 2013, the strategy will establish a framework for adaptation measures and policies to reduce the EU’s vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 European railway undertakings and infrastructure companies. CER represents the interests of its members towards the European institutions as well as other policy makers and transport actors. CER’s main focus is promoting the strengthening of rail as essential to the creation of a sustainable transport system which is efficient, effective and environmentally sound. For more information, see [www.cer.be](http://www.cer.be)

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