CER
The Voice of European Railways

Position Paper

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Revision of TEN-T Regulation 1315/2013

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Revision of TEN-T Regulation 1315/2013

1. Introduction

Transport infrastructure policy at EU level is essential for the coordination of important transport projects, the overall development of cross-border and regional infrastructure as well as cohesion and social inclusion. It is an important enabler for the European economic growth and provides opportunities for employment.

CER welcomes the revision of the Regulation 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (hereinafter: TEN-T Regulation). In view of the European Green Deal's ambitious climate targets, the TEN-T policy is needed to ensure modal shift thus achieving a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050. TEN-T will be a catalyst for the development of seamless and efficient international railway passenger services. TEN-T policy should support modal shift from air and road connections to a European high speed and conventional railway network. The Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy also sets ambitious targets in terms of high speed network: doubling high-speed rail traffic by 2030 and tripling it by 2050. Rail freight faces also ambitious targets: rail freight is expected to increase by 50% by 2030 and double by 2050. The concerted effort and cooperation of Member States, European Commission and relevant stakeholders is required to achieve these targets and to complete the TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Networks by 2030 and 2050.

With this updated Position Paper, CER wishes to present its position on the revision of the TEN-T Regulation.

2. Technical Specifications

Additional infrastructure requirements should be in line with the rail market needs and should not come as detrimental to the current existing ones. Some of the infrastructure characteristics defined in the TEN-T Regulation for all transport modes have not been properly achieved. For example, the technical requirements of the core network for rail, such as full electrification, ERTMS, and 740 m trains, are unlikely to be implemented by 2030 as foreseen. Characteristics and requirements must remain realistic with regard to the deadlines for the completion of the network, the implementation capacities, socio-economic realities and financing capacities but also to be adapted to the needs of the market in order to promote interoperability for a modal shift to rail. The existing infrastructure criteria for the TEN-T CNC should be clarified and interpreted to facilitate common understanding and smooth international rail traffic.

Since a few decades, intermodal traffic has become increasingly important. In order to fully exploit this traffic and achieve a higher modal share for rail freight, railway undertakings should be able to operate trains with a loading gauge of P/C 400 on the most important traffic routes in Europe. From an infrastructure manager's perspective, however, it can be very challenging financially and technically to upgrade infrastructure lines to the necessary clearance gauge which would allow the operation of trains with a loading gauge of P/C 400. Furthermore, given national specificities and the particularities of the

infrastructure to be upgraded, there may be several methods for achieving a P/C 400 loading gauge compatible infrastructure.

For these reasons, CER supports the inclusion of requirement in the TEN-T Regulation for facilitating the operation of trains with a P/C 400 loading gauge.

We believe that:

- such requirement should only apply to a predefined list of international rail freight routes of the TEN-T core network (which could be the Rail Freight Corridors, or a substantial subset thereof) including their most important rerouting lines to be agreed by Member States based on the consultation with the rail sector. This should be included in the national investment plans. Exceptions should be possible based on a case-by case analysis of market needs and economic viability.
- infrastructure managers are given flexibility in how to ensure that selected infrastructure lines allow operation of P/C 400 trains (i.e. no prescriptive demand for a clearing gauge), thereby optimising costs and minimising line closures due to construction works.
- the transition to ensure the operation of trains with a P/C 400 shall consider the high costs and potentially long construction works. The costs for this transition depends a lot on the clearance gauge that each IM defines to be necessary to permit operations of trains with P/C 400 loading gauge. A common understanding at European level on codification of railway line, combined transport wagon and loading will be needed to ensure pan European operation of P/C 400 trains and to avoid IMs having to face overstated investment costs.
- the deadline for upgrading the selected railway infrastructure lines to enable a P/C 400 loading gauge is 2040 instead of 2030 for core network.
- due to the possible high costs involved, sufficient public financing should be provided both at EU and national level.

Given that the operation of standard trains with a loading gauge of P/C 400 is a demanding new requirement for infrastructure managers, there has to be a high-level of political commitment that it is met with prioritisation and adequate public funding. Without such a commitment, this transition cannot be achieved.

The Commission is considering the possibility of shifting the ERTMS deadline on the Comprehensive Network from 2050 to 2040. CER agrees that the deployment of ERTMS on the core network requires a strong acceleration compared to the pace of deployment of the last years. However, concerning the deployment on the comprehensive network, the deadline of 2050 must be kept. That being said, it is important to support plans for countries wanting to achieve it by 2040.

To speed up ERTMS deployment, it is necessary to improve the financial instruments in place to incentivise large scale investments on ERTMS both trackside and on-board. The limit of 50% (unless notified) of the permissible costs should be increased setting a common threshold (up to 100% including Member State aids) at European level via the intervention of the competent EU decision making bodies and provided this does not alter a fair competition among operators. More flexibility in terms of implementation time frame is needed. More flexibility shall be given in terms of implementation time frame that is currently limited to 5 years.
Full interoperability along the complete network must be the priority, not only from the IM point of view but also from the operators' point of view i.e. the adoption of shared

standards for the on-board equipment that allow smooth operations along the TEN-T must be promoted no matter what technology the operator has acquired.

Moreover, the Commission considers including the introduction of minimum speed to passenger traffic. The implementation of a 160km/h minimum speed limit for passenger trains will not be always feasible and will constitute an increased cost of updating the core network. In addition, it must first be checked whether there is a market need for this requirement. For this it is important that the travel times required by the market between two train stations are achieved. Depending on the topography of a route, this can be achieved using a speed mix that does not necessarily prescribe a minimum speed. It should be taken into consideration that many European countries use systematic/synchronized time tables including nodes, a concept introduced in the topic of international rail passenger services and TEE 2.0. Passenger trains are scheduled to go as fast as required to fit the time table and not as fast as possible. A general 160km/h minimum speed would counteract these systematic time tables.

3. Cross-border missing links and investments

Missing links on the TEN-T Network, in particular on cross-border sections, can cause delays in the completion of TEN-T. The implementation of cross-border infrastructure projects and feeder lines should be sped up so that they generate the intended added value. Investments in interoperable rail infrastructure are crucial to ensure a seamless cross-border rail traffic.

For rail, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is the key financing instrument for bridging missing links, removing bottlenecks and improving harmonization and interoperability on the TEN-T Core Network, thus increasing the competitiveness and market share of the European rail system. CEF funds are needed to complete the TEN-T network (or extend it when justified by market needs), including the finalisation of major on-going TEN-T projects, and to support the digital transformation of rail operations, especially ERTMS on board and on track.

The Resilience and Recovery Facility is another important financial instrument that could help the railways deliver and ensure the Core and Comprehensive Networks.

It is also important to include important missing infrastructure routes and cross-border connections based on a case-by-case analysis in the TEN-T core network. Focus should also be made on last-mile connections in urban areas.

Proper and interoperable rail connections with neighbouring third countries such as the Balkans, Eastern Europe and countries in Asia should be fostered as it is a prerequisite for seamless rail freight and passenger traffic. TEN-T Policy must be extended to the Balkans.

In general, funding for infrastructure development should become more predictable well in advance in order to reduce and better align temporary capacity restrictions to ensure best capacity use. CER Members call the Member States that have not implemented these measures so far to provide multi-annual financing to their infrastructure managers for maintenance and development of rail infrastructure following their consultation with IMs .

4. Coherence

CER strongly welcomes the intention of the European Commission to enhance synergies between rail freight (RFCs) and core network corridors (CNCs) without prejudicing their different roles and competences. Provisions should be included in the revised TEN-T Regulation improving the cooperation between them in order to allow the identification of the investment priorities of the CNC work plans, according to the market needs and prioritisation based on most disruptive bottlenecks, and to reduce gaps and bottlenecks in the rail network.

CNC work plans define the projects to be realised and also should contain general provisions about the dimensioning and planning of infrastructure according to the market needs of the sectors. Projects should be selected by applying a corridor approach. This would accomplish that projects which generate a high European but with a somewhat lower national value are not overlooked at national level.

When planning a mixed use of corridors for freight and passengers an integrated approach must be developed.

5. Core Network nodes and routes

The Regulation has been effective in identifying and defining the most strategic nodes, including nodes connected with multimodal links. However, urban nodes are not sufficiently integrated in the current TEN-T Network. Rail is still missing a significant number of last mile infrastructure for freight and multimodal connections for passengers. This is especially the case for rail freight where the origin and destination terminals are rarely found on the core network. Their link to the CNCs TEN-T corridors should be developed to meet the same technical TEN-T parameters. The TEN-T Regulation needs to address these issues by ensuring sufficient intermodal hubs and access points to conventional rail freight on corridors to allow long-distance transport via the most efficient mode. European urban nodes should be interconnected in a sustainable way. To this aim, it should be further considered how TEN-T can give a relevant contribution to urban mobility through infrastructure projects to address missing links and bottlenecks and deployment of concepts to increase intermodality.

Urban nodes should be made increasingly available for regional and suburban passenger transport. This requires suitable bypasses of nodes for rail freight where it is economically and technically viable.

Besides, smooth connections to ports are essential both in Europe and in third countries. Integrated and effective connections between sea gates and rail corridors in their hinterlands and forelands are needed.

To fulfil these requirements an increased budget will be necessary.

Another challenge is that even in high density nodes, there is not enough capacity available for rail concerning passenger and freight transport. The subject of nodes is essential and yet seems secondary today, both in terms of TEN-T objectives and in the allocated budget. Furthermore, it should be necessary to:

- Define the concept: the term node should be better defined taking into account all the components (quality, capacity, robustness, and performance, intermodality), for both passenger and freight traffic. It should be also necessary to define freight terminals, industrial areas and logistic platforms, including ports.

- Allocate sufficient budget for rail urban nodes, freight bypasses and connections of ports, intermodal freight terminals and relevant industrial sidings/areas with corridors.
- Check the list of the rail urban nodes of the core network and assess whether it should be expanded.

6. Level Playing Field

There is an urgent need to improve the competitiveness of rail transport mode and to create a level playing field for all transport modes e.g. by abolition of VAT on international train tickets in all Member States (as is already the case for international plane tickets). To reduce the air transport emissions, the TEN-T Regulation must therefore promote climate-friendly alternatives like rail and the creation of a European high-speed network that is interoperable, linking European capitals and major cities, connecting urban nodes and airports and supporting the development of international passenger services. The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy aims to create a level playing field between the transport modes with a full internalization of all external costs until 2050. Rail freight transport operators want to reach a 30% modal share, which would avoid 25 million tons of emissions of CO_2 equivalents and approximately 25 billion EUR of external costs from 2030 onwards. Charging schemes for external costs should be more ambitious and toll revenues should be used to a greater extent to support sustainable transport. Setting progressive prices on CO_2 emissions for road transport will also support sustainable transport. Fit for 55 Package shall help achieving these targets. CO_2 pricing for all transport modes is an indispensable prerequisite for a fair level playing field within the transport sector. Electrically powered rail transport is already covered by the EU Emission trading system. From the incentive perspective, companies using renewable energies should be given fiscal or other economic advantages e.g., more favorable financing schemes, "ecobonus" etc.