

Joint Sector Statement on the Czech initiative to support European Rail Freight

The undersigned organisations representing Europe's railway, intermodal, leasing, manufacturing and rail freight sectors warmly welcome and strongly support the initiative from the Czech Republic, also endorsed by Austria, Belgium and Slovakia, to strengthen the European rail freight sector at both national and European level.

At a time when rail freight is facing increasing economic pressures and a decline in its modal share, the initiative sends an important and timely political signal and demonstrates the strong commitment to the future of European rail freight. It correctly recognises rail freight as being essential for Europe's competitiveness, decarbonisation, energy resilience and crisis preparedness.

Against this background, the initiative provides an important impulse for concrete measures enabling rail freight to fully fulfil its vital role across Europe, including sending a firm and immediate political signal towards the European Commission on the importance of continuing the revision of the Combined Transport Directive. In this context, practical measures addressing key bottlenecks and implementation challenges, including measures supporting the operational and digital modernisation of rail freight transport services and relevant aspects identified by the 2023 Special Report of the European Court of Auditors on Intermodal Freight Transport, could further strengthen combined transport in Europe.

The undersigned organisations therefore encourage EU Transport Ministers to support the initiative during the Transport Council meeting on 8 June 2026.

The rail sector is proactively driving efforts to improve the efficiency, quality and attractiveness of rail freight services across Europe and remains fully committed to delivering solutions. We stand ready to continue this work in close cooperation with EU institutions and Member States and welcome any additional national or European measures supporting rail freight competitiveness, encouraging investment, and accelerating modal shift towards sustainable transport.

Signatories



Association of European Rail
Rolling Stock Lessors



Community of European
Railway and Infrastructure
Companies



European Rail Freight
Association



International Union of Wagon
Keepers



International Union for Road-
Rail Combined Transport



European Rail Supply Industry
Association