

## Press Release

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# The European rail infrastructure CEOs discuss about the rail sector's future

Today in Zurich, chief executives from rail infrastructure companies discussed issues of key strategic and political importance to the European railway sector. In particular, the CEOs recognised that the work of the rail infrastructure managers is at the heart of enhancing the rail network in Europe, striving for better services to the benefit of rail transport customers and tax payers. Therefore, they pledge to reinforce this cooperation in the future. Prior to the meeting, Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor from the Swiss Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication, put the Swiss transport sector into the context of a wider Europe by providing insights into Switzerland's sustainable transport system in terms of the environment as well as its financing.

Jointly organised by the Community of European Railways and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers (EIM), the annual meetings between the heads of rail infrastructure companies provide a platform for exchanging information and experiences between rail infrastructure companies, real opportunity for sharing good practice, benchmarking opportunities and lead to joint projects and initiatives

At today's meeting, the CEOs agreed that a stronger dialogue and cooperation between European rail infrastructure companies is necessary in order to meet better the demands of the future. Therefore, they decided to set up a joint task force to identify opportunities for further enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Europe's rail infrastructure over time.

The main aim of this approach would be to help all rail infrastructure managers to achieve the necessary improvements in an accelerated way. Amongst the examples for concrete cooperation are cross corridor coordination, longer and heavier trains for making best possible use of the available track capacity, intermodality projects and benchmarking on key performance indicators, such as punctuality as well as also ERTMS deployment.

The meeting was concluded by a visit to the new SBB Operations Control Centre East (OCC East) organised by this year's host, SBB. SBB aims to operate four such centres in Switzerland by 2014. Bruno Stehrenberger, Head of Operations at OCC East, explained that the aim is to centralise customer information and operational control centres and thereby improve efficiency.

**Federal Councillor from the Swiss Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication Doris Leuthard said:** *"We need a highly efficient European transport system. We cannot afford to have bottlenecks in the European transport corridors. Congestion on the access lines to our large Alpine tunnels - the centerpiece of the European freight corridor 1 - will sooner or later*

*lead to the collapse of the system. Switzerland is doing its part: in 2016 we will be putting the Gotthard Base Tunnel into operation.”*

**CER Executive Director Libor Lochman** stated: *“The annual meetings of rail infrastructure CEOs demonstrate that European topics are on the top of their agendas, and are gaining in importance. These meetings are essential for exchanging views of best practice and allow us to find common solutions for the benefit of the customers.”*

**EIM Executive Director Monika Heiming** stated: *“Today’s meeting was very fruitful for the railway sector: EU rail infrastructure leaders agreed to start working together on a broader range of issues which will be beneficial for corridor and network deployment in the interest of our customers.”*

The 2014 meeting of the rail infrastructure CEOs will be hosted by Trafikverket in Sweden.

For further information, please contact:

Quentin Galland

Press and Communications Manager

phone +32 2 213 08 90

mobile +32 491 16 21 87

e-mail [quentin.galland@cer.be](mailto:quentin.galland@cer.be)

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together 80 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)

For further information, please contact:

Monika Heiming

Executive Director

phone +32 2 234 37 74

e-mail [monika.heiming@eimrail.org](mailto:monika.heiming@eimrail.org)

EIM, the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers, was established in 2002 to promote the interests and views of the independent infrastructure managers in Europe, following liberalisation of the railway market. It also provides technical expertise to the appropriate European bodies such as the European Railway Agency. EIM’s primary goal is promoting growth of rail traffic and the development of an open sustainable, efficient, customer orientated rail network in Europe. To find out more about EIM, visit [www.eimrail.org](http://www.eimrail.org)