

# Position Paper

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## Metal Theft

**European Rail Infrastructure Managers call upon the European Commission to take action**

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## Background

In the wake of a tripling of the copper price on the world market between 2004 and 2006, railways experienced an unprecedented surge in cable and other types of metal theft. Against the background of millions of Euros for the infrastructure managers in direct costs alone and tens of thousands of hours of delays for citizens impacting the national economies, in 2011 – when copper prices peaked – EIM called upon the European Commission to consider the creation of

- an EU regulatory framework on the licensing of scrap metal dealers and
- the introduction of an EU-wide harmonised system of cashless payments for the trade of scrap metal.

In the meantime, EIM's members have undertaken huge efforts to abate the problem and invested huge amounts into countermeasures. In addition, also several governments of EU member states introduced mandatory identification of sellers and/or forbidden cash reimbursements for sold scrap metal.

## Current situation

Despite these legislative measures taken at Member State level, despite EIM members having implemented a wide range of countermeasures, and also despite joint actions within EIM (workshops on countermeasures, creation of the EIM Railway Security Handbook on Metal Theft), the problem largely persists. EIM members established that over the course of the years 2011 to 2014, metal theft cost EIM's members at more than **€ 270 million** in total and caused **4.6 million delay minutes** for society.

While the countermeasures succeeded, where applied, to reduce the number of thefts on the protected infrastructure, a significant effect of crime migration can be observed – perpetrators move towards railway installations in other countries with a still lower level of protection or to other vulnerable infrastructure (energy, telecommunications etc.). As well, the costs of countermeasures and other indirect costs caused by metal theft (e.g. indemnities for delays, unsold train slots) persist.

## Conclusion

The development after 2011 proves that steps taken by the infrastructure managers and national action taken by the member states are not enough.

In order to effectively avoid metal thefts to merely shift from one sector to another and/or from one country to another legal measures must come into force which would effectively dissuade perpetrators from this sort of crime in the European Union in

general. Experiences show that mandatory identification of scrap metal sellers, cashless payments and are a huge deterrent as they allow to trace back the source of metal identified as stolen.

However, the legal patchwork of some countries having introduced these measures and some not, encourages cross-border “crime tourism” while at the same time putting different administrative burden on scrap metal dealers.

EIM would like to repeat its call for a legislative initiative of the European Commission with the aim of making

- **identification** of sellers and
- **cashless payments** mandatory in case of scrap metal sales throughout the European Union.
- Moreover, EIM calls for the European Commission’s support for the creation of an operative **EU-wide, cross-sectorial database** through the linking of existing national reporting systems.

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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 the liberalisation of the EU 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.

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