Brussels, 27th June 2022

Proposal for a Regulation on TEN-T revision
Position Paper

1. Introduction

EIM, the Association of the European Rail Infrastructure Managers[1], highly welcomes the proposal of the European Commission for a revised Regulation for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T)[2]. The new TEN-T Regulation will be crucial to meet the targets of the "European Green Deal" and the "Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy" of the European Commission (EC).

This revision also provides a unique opportunity for all EU Member States and stakeholders to develop a European transport network, which is connected, innovative, competitive, resilient, and sustainable. EIM also takes stock of the declared ambition of the EC to focus in particular on harmonising assets, procedures and processes within and across modes to create a single European network. EIM and its members are keen to continue to contribute to this process.

EIM has identified several key success factors which are crucial to deliver a successful TEN-T reform in the interest of all stakeholders concerned. They address in particular aspects related to funding, governance, operational and technical parameters as well as innovation.

2. Key success factors

a) Funding

The proposal of the EC sets a series of deadlines for the implementation of the Core, the new Extended and the Comprehensive TEN-T network layer including ERTMS. EIM supports the ambitious targets and milestones of the EC but reminds that they also require budget means matching the ambition.

According to the EC, some EUR 1500 billion will be needed to complete the TEN-T rail network. This will require a substantial increase of both national budgets and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funds related to rail and ERTMS as well as a greater synergy of CEF with other relevant EU programmes (e.g. Cohesion Fund, Regional Development Funds, etc.) as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Furthermore, the funding conditions should create sector-wide incentives for all stakeholders (e.g. increase of co-funding rates to decommission "class B" systems, ERTMS maintenance, releases, implementation, etc).

1 https://eimrail.org/

2 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013

Likewise, the deployment of the TEN-T (rail) network should follow a harmonised EU deployment plan endorsed by all Member States to create synergies and priorities.

b) ERTMS

As for the leverage of EU and national funding for the roll out of ERTMS, EIM already suggested the importance of an EU feasibility study to assess a robust and harmonised deployment across the EU, along the deadlines proposed by the EC, i.e. 2040 for the full deployment of ERTMS and the decommissioning of "class B" system on the entire TEN-T network.

To ensure a harmonised shift to ERTMS, EIM suggests to increase the financial resources available today, both for the sector (IMs, RUs, suppliers/manufacturers) but also for the EU Agency for Railways as the ERTMS system authority.

As a general principle, EIM considers that ERTMS and TEN-T depend on the ability to finance the transition from national systems to a truly interoperable, European one. Furthermore, the CCS+ target system should be based on upgradeability from current systems to protect and promote investments in ERTMS. In addition, the current financing system under CEF, restricted to a fixed amount per km or per onboard unit, should be substituted by grants based on real costs.

Given its strategic, overall importance, ERTMS is addressed in various subchapters of this Position Paper.

c) Governance

EIM believes that new and reinforced infrastructure requirements will be instrumental to boost the modal shift. Moreover, the completion of the trans-European network will be essential to develop a multimodal transport system integrating different modes of transport.

In this context, the creation of European Transport Corridors through the integration of Core Network Corridors and Rail Freight Corridors is supported and welcomed. EIM concurs that the European Transport Corridors will facilitate a better coordination of investments in cross-border rail infrastructure and the interoperability among multimodal transport services.

In the case that other corridors (i.e. for passenger traffic) will be set up, their governance should be coordinated with the one of the rail freight corridors to avoid duplication and the related issues.

EIM also welcomes the new role of the European Coordinators of Transport Corridors, who will play a key role in the coordinated and coherent cross-border development of the corridors. However, further explanation is needed from the EC as regards to the actual mandate of the coordinators.

d) Operations

EIM supports the optimisation of infrastructure use, in particular through efficient capacity and traffic management towards more sustainable mobility patterns, including the development of sustainable, attractive and efficient multimodal transport services.

e) ERTMS deployment

The ERTMS deployment constitutes one of the core elements of the Single European Railway Area. Therefore, EIM welcomes the proposal to accelerate its deployment on the entire TEN-T

network. As a matter of priority, the deployment should continue on the Core Network first, followed by the Extended and Comprehensive Networks.

According to the proposal, the deployment of ERTMS will be required on all lines after 2025. EIM suggests to clarify if this obligation will coincide with the start of investment projects (i.e. signing of a contract or starting of a tender procedure) after the established date.

In addition, it will be essential to coordinate the ERTMS deployment with the requirements established under the TSI CCS 2016/919 (i.e. indication of which part of the control-command and signalling system should be upgraded).

The effective deployment of ERTMS on the TEN-T network will also require a stronger coordination among IMs, RUs but also Member States. As already outlined further above, EIM supports a stronger role of the ERTMS European Coordinator, who should promote an overall European vision and deployment of ERTMS on the TEN-T network, in line with the deadlines proposed by the EC.

In particular, EIM suggests that the ERTMS European Coordinator conducts a feasibility study into the various deployment paths to reach the deadlines proposed by the EC. This feasibility study should also address the financial resources needed for ERTMS, its evolution but also the related technical aspects, such as interoperability, traffic management, telecommunications, etc.

The result of this study may also serve as guidance for the EC and the Member States when defining the priorities and related budgets in the National Implementation Plans. EIM believes that in the absence of a clear, shared vision on European level for the successful deployment of ERTMS and the decommissioning of “class B” systems, the new target deadlines proposed by the EC may become unrealistic.

f) Interoperability and decommissioning

IMs, supported by Member States, are investing important resources in ERTMS technology, whose cost optimisation is still far from being reached. Fully interoperable ERTMS components (track-side and on-board) based on a “modular approach” are crucial for innovative, competitive and cost-efficient ERTMS products and services as they will ultimately support the deployment of the technology.

Although EIM supports the proposal of the EC to boost the deployment of ERTMS in a continuous and interoperable manner, it also stresses the need to ensure that this is done without prejudice to the existing ERTMS network and that the return on investments of IMs continue to be safeguarded and optimised as much as possible. This aspect also includes the decommissioning of the “class B” systems, which should be done gradually. EIM underlines that there are cases in which it would be economically and technically convenient for a “class B” to coexist with ERTMS technology for a given transitional period of time. IMs anticipate that the transition period could also run beyond the proposed deadline of 2040.

g) Speed requirements: 100 km/h for freight transport and 160 km/h for passenger transport

EIM highlights the importance of the proposal of the EC to adapt the infrastructure to increase the train speed to 100 km/h for freight trains and to 160 km/h for passenger traffic. This will make rail transport more attractive. To reach this objective in a safe and reliable manner, all relevant rail infrastructure needs to be upgraded – at least where the geographical topology allows it.

EIM would also like to stress that these speed requirements will have a significant impact on rolling stock - especially for freight transport - requiring the retrofitting of wagons.

Furthermore, the upgrading of rail infrastructure requires substantial investments, which need to be matched with the actual uptake of relevant train services. Therefore, EIM suggests to the EC to conduct a study into the actual market needs to ensure that faster rail connections can achieve maximum economic and social benefits. Furthermore, the output of this study could also serve as guideline for the EC, the Member States and the rail infrastructure managers to coordinate national priorities in terms of infrastructure upgrading.

In line with these considerations, EIM can support the proposal of the EC on the technical requirement to adapt the rail infrastructure for a minimum speed of 100 km/h for freight and 160 km/h for passenger, providing exemptions on a case-by-case basis are allowed. In addition, EIM considers it is important to specify if the new speed requirement relates to commercial or operating speed.

EIM also proposes to elaborate a common methodology and KPIs to measure/assess the train average speed on (cross-border) lines. Such methodology should be developed and agreed jointly on EU level, i.e. the EC, rail infrastructure managers (Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers - PRIME) as well as other sector stakeholders.

h) Dwelling time of freight trains

EIM welcomes the proposal of the EC of reducing dwelling time for cross-border freight operations involving both EU Member States and third countries. The increase of rail punctuality is a key element to promote a proper shift to rail.

According to the EC proposal, the dwelling time of all international freight trains should not exceed 15 minutes on average. By the same token, delays of freight trains crossing at least one border of a European Transport Corridor or which have a destination outside the EU should be limited to 30 minutes. EIM highlights that these targets may prove difficult or unrealistic in specific cases, e.g. different track gauges, handling of goods.

EIM would also like to highlight that issues at borders could be caused by different factors. Therefore, there should be a clear division of responsibilities in terms of delays and dwelling times. Therefore, EIM suggests to focus on strengthening international traffic management via the implementation of the Timetable and Capacity Redesign project (TTR project) of RailNet Europe (RNE) - with the cooperation of EIM and other sector stakeholders.

i) Technical parameters

EIM welcomes the proposal for conducting an analysis of the socio-economic costs and benefits of trains with a length of 740 m.

EIM underlines that 740 m long freight trains may be a challenge on certain infrastructure sections, especially across borders. IMs are therefore keen to cooperate with the EC on a cross-border analysis in order to define a framework for a harmonised rollout of an extended train length on TEN-T corridors.

A possible solution could consist in separate passenger and freight TEN-T comprehensive network lines (similar to the Core Networks established by the current TEN-T Regulation). This would mean that 740 m long freight trains would be possible on “freight lines” only. Furthermore, EIM suggests to apply the 740 m criterion to inland port railways on a case-by-case basis, and allow for exceptions where there is an alternative.

In addition, EIM highlights that 740 m long freight trains will also require a thorough analysis of the technical changes needed, especially the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) and related subsystems by the EU Agency for Railways (ERA).

With regards to the required "P/C 400 standard", EIM believes that one needs to distinguish between infrastructure parameters and the loading gauge of trains. In particular, IMs should be entitled to assess the most suitable and affordable way to upgrade their rail infrastructure in order to allow P/C 400 standard trains to run on their lines. This would imply conducting a socio-economic cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of the impact on interoperability.

Therefore, EIM suggests that the P/C 400 requirement is primarily applied to a predefined list of international rail freight routes of the TEN-T core network, based on the market demand and after consultation of the rail freight sector.

j) Innovation

EIM welcomes the fact that the EC highlights the crucial importance of Innovation for railways and the role of the "Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking" via its "Innovation Pillar" and its "System Pillar". The outcome of this work will help develop automatic train operations, advanced traffic management, interoperable digital connectivity solutions based on ERTMS/ETCS and 5G deployment along rail infrastructure.

In addition, EIM also welcomes the deployment of alternative fuel technologies on rail sections which are exempted from electrification requirements.

Last but not least, EIM underlines the strategic importance to digitalise operational processes, such as capacity management and allocation procedures and to develop interoperable applications.

k) Neighbouring countries

EIM welcomes the fact that the EC proposal highlights the importance of enhancing the relation with third countries to strengthen cross-border international transport system. In such a context, EIM supports the recent EC initiative of establishing Solidarity Lanes to cope with the difficult situation in Ukraine.

To ensure the international mobility of passengers and goods it is essential to increase cross-border capacity allocation and management, to remove bottlenecks and to optimise the transport infrastructure.

The abolishment of missing links between EU Member States and neighbouring countries is important to promote connections and interoperability on a wider European scale. This target will contribute to a more competitive European single market and its European single railway area, e.g. by investing in strategic links (e.g. Channel Tunnel, Eurasian land bridge, TEN-T network).

For further information, please contact:	EIM, the association of European Rail Infrastructure Managers, was established in 2002 to promote the interests of the infrastructure managers in Europe. EIM's primary goal is promoting growth of rail traffic and the development of an open sustainable, efficient, customer-oriented rail network in Europe.
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