

Press Release – ERFA Welcomes Parliament Vote on Waiving and Reducing Track Access Charges

17 September 2020

ERFA, the European Association representing the interests of private and independent rail freight companies, welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament of the proposed [European Regulation](#) establishing measures for a sustainable rail market. This Regulation will give Member States the necessary freedom to support the rail freight industry in a neutral, economically justified and transparent way through the waiving or reduction of track access charges.

While rail freight has continued to deliver critical goods and supplies, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic rail freight volumes have experienced a significant decrease of roughly 30% of volume. It is also currently unclear when these volumes will return. This has led to many operators, particularly smaller and private operators, facing significant challenges to continued operations. In the short term it is therefore crucial that support measures are introduced for the entire sector to ensure that the crisis does not lead to systematic damage to a key industry in the flight to bring transport emissions under control.

ERFA has called for such a proposal on numerous occasions since the onset of the crisis. ERFA strongly believes a waiving or reduction of track access charges is the most appropriate mechanism by which Member States can support the entire industry, as opposed to individual operators, as such measures benefit all operators equally. Member States now have an important tool by which to support the rail freight sector and ERFA calls for all Member States to act proactively in implementing the provisions of this Regulation.

ERFA President, Dirk Stahl, commented, *“I am glad that the European institutions have been able to quickly adopt this important Regulation. It is now up to Member States to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this Regulation. In the interest of maintaining and developing an open and competitive rail freight sector, we strongly encourage Member States to do so.”*

ERFA Secretary, Conor Feighan, said “We also welcome that the Regulation has allocated delegated powers to the European Commission to extend the Regulation beyond the end of this year. We do not know when this pandemic will end or what course it will take. It is therefore important that the Commission has the ability to act decisively in extended the Regulation if and when required.”

For more information, you can Contact:

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