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26th March 2015, Brussels

### **ERFA Annual event: ERFA grows stronger and urges acceleration towards a market oriented rail system**

**EU Transport Commissioner, Violeta Bulc, uses the occasion of the ERFA event to highlight the quality and cost challenges in the rail sector. Improving reliability, punctuality and the efficiency of services must be addressed in order to strengthen rail's competitiveness. Commissioner Bulc pledged her support for a 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package that ensures fair competition and removes incentives for discrimination against new entrants.**

**ERFA President Irmtraut Tonndorf confirms the many discriminatory practices and outdated structures that deter growth and investment in the rail sector, as she calls for abuses of dominant position on the European rail market to be investigated. The ERFA President invited EU decision-makers to set the course for a market oriented infrastructure management that supports rail business with a partnership approach.**

At its annual event held in Brussels on 24<sup>th</sup> March ERFA, who represents new entrants on the rail market, urges a move away from a monopoly mind-set in the rail sector towards attractive, dynamic and innovative rail services. Infrastructure managers should act as the business partners of railway undertakings, striving to provide quality services for all operators, and not as detached administrators of a monopoly.

At the ERFA seminar event discussing the contribution of open markets for rail development, the success story of today's separated UK rail model was highlighted by Jeremy Long, CEO for European Business at the MTR Corporation. Strong growth in demand for rail services, highest ever number of services, improved quality of stations and trains, were just some of the successes highlighted in the UK, where fair access to the rail network is the norm.

The advantage of the separated model in releasing the creative energy of the rail sector was confirmed by Dirk Brueckmann from the ETH Institute in Switzerland, while Erich Forster from Westbahn, laid bare the reality of life as a newcomer, where the incumbent has and uses the tools at its disposal to deter competition.

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Denis Choumert, Director of Logistics Ciments Calcia confirmed that the lack of a level playing field on the French rail network, amongst others, was a problem for the customers, as it undermined the competitiveness, innovation and ultimately the attractiveness of the rail sector.

Olivier Onidi, Director for the European Mobility network in the European Commission, concluded the seminar by reiterating the stiff competition rail faces from the other modes of transport. The principle of competition in the rail sector is recognised by every EU Member State, strengthening the European Commission's resolve to conclude a successful 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package. Mr Onidi particularly acknowledged that in cooperation with the Competition authorities the EU needed to adopt a more aggressive approach on financial transparency.

At a critical time in EU decision-making over the fate of railways in Europe, ERFA reiterates its call for policy-makers to support the fundamental principles of transparency, non-discrimination and fair and equal access to the rail network Europe-wide, as proposed by the Market pillar of the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package.

In 2014 ERFA welcomed five new members, among them four passenger operators, as the association joins forces with the passenger sector to strengthen its alliance for a shake-up of the European rail system. ERFA is and will continue to be the driving force behind market opening.

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ERFA - European Rail Freight Association - represents new entrants, i.e. all those operators who want open access and fair market conditions, and sustains their role of pushing forward the development of the railway market. The Association is very much a spin-off of the First Railway Package, adopted by the EU in 2001, and its vision of creating an open and competitive European rail market.

In 2015, ERFA represents 33 members from 16 countries. The members of ERFA all share a commitment to work towards a competitive and innovative single European railway market by promoting attractive, fair and transparent market conditions for all railway companies.

The members of ERFA represent the entire value chain of rail transportation: rail freight operators, wagon keepers, service providers, forwarders, passenger operators and national rail freight associations.