Press Release
Brussels, 26 February

European Parliament paves the way for the future of a healthy European railway sector

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcomes the outcome of today’s European Parliament vote on all aspects of the Fourth Railway Package. The text approved by Parliament today represents a welcome improvement on the Commission’s initial proposals.

In particular, the European Parliament voted on governance and market opening, on the revision of the regulation on public service obligations (PSO) and on the so-called technical pillar consisting of three legislative acts revising the processes of safety certification, vehicle authorisation and giving new power and competences to the European Railway Agency.

CER Chairman Christian Kern commented: “I am very happy to see that the intense dialogue between the Members of the European Parliament and CER has resulted in reasonable legislative solutions. I want to thank all MEPs who dedicated their attention to these dossiers. It is beyond all question that we have to ensure non-discriminatory access to the network and we have to strengthen regulatory rights. Based on that general understanding we can achieve railway reforms in favour of our customers and the European tax payers. With good will from each side it should be possible to reach consent easily.”

Voting on the technical pillar, the Parliament confirmed the view of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) on the regulation establishing the European Railway Agency, on the directive on rail safety and on rail interoperability.

Regarding the PSO Regulation (revising Regulation (EC) 1370/2007), today’s vote confirmed the positive decision reached by the TRAN Committee last December.

On the revision of Directive 2012/34/EC on governance and market opening, the European Parliament introduced vital improvement compared to the Commission proposal. On governance, the amendments tabled by MEPs Frigo (S&D, IT), Ertug (S&D, DE), Pargneaux (S&D, FR), Zeribi (Greens/EFA, FR), Reul (EPP, DE) et al. were supported by a very large majority of Members guaranteeing more flexibility for Member States when it comes to choosing the model of governance for their respective infrastructure managers.

Welcoming today’s result, CER Executive Director Libor Lochman said: “The Parliament’s efforts will enable the Single European Railway Area to develop efficiently, thereby benefitting the European economy and all European citizens. The urgent need now is for legislators to move swiftly forward with the approval of a final text on the Technical Pillar.”
More information on the Fourth Railway Package is available on the CER website.

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 80 members - European railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure companies. The membership covers long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public-sector organisations. CER members represent about 70% of the rail network length, more than 85% of the rail freight business and over 96% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. For more information, see www.cer.be or follow us via Twitter at @CER_railways.