

European Commission confirms continued support for Rail in proposed 2028–2034 EU Budget Framework

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcomes yesterday's adoption by the European Commission of the legislative proposals shaping the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034. In particular, CER appreciates the Commission's continued commitment to the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which remains a cornerstone of EU support for railway infrastructure and digitalisation. In its On Track for Europe manifesto, the rail sector has called for a CEF envelope of €100 billion.

Within the €2 trillion post-2027 MFF, the Commission proposes to maintain a dedicated budget line for European transport with a newly configured CEF. This would ensure continued EU support for the rail sector in addressing major investment needs and delivering on the ambitious targets set for completing the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), including the deployment of digital technologies. In its On Track for Europe manifesto, the rail sector has called for a CEF envelope of €100 billion. The Commission proposes to endow the Facility with a firepower of €81 billion, €51.5 billion of which will be dedicated to the transport envelope, including €17 billion for military mobility.

Under the proposal, the future CEF will finance cross-border infrastructure and dual-use military mobility projects and will cover projects of common interest that contribute to the development of a smart, sustainable and resilient European transport network. CER commends this strategic approach, which acknowledges the critical funding requirements facing the rail sector. Importantly, the scope of CEF looks set to include the completion of the TEN-T network, key rail technologies such as the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) and Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC), as well as the development of European the high-speed rail network.

CER also welcomes the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) as a complementary instrument to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, energy-efficient, climate-neutral and resilient transport system.

At the same time, CER stresses the need for improvements during the upcoming interinstitutional negotiations. Key priorities include:

- Securing an adequately sized MFF to meet the EU's policy ambitions;
- Ensuring that the proposed flexibility in budget allocations does not undermine funding predictability for long-term infrastructure planning;
- Clarifying the process for defining CEF and ECF work programmes by also including structured stakeholder consultations, with the direct involvement of the rail sector, in the programming and implementation phases.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola stated: "I would like to thank the Commission for the solid foundation of support for transport that we find in the planned EU budget. The Commission's decision to continue the Connecting Europe Facility

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beyond 2027 reflects a clear commitment to completing the TEN-T network and recognises the urgency of the task in the current geo-political context. The objective is within reach, but to ensure we get there, the rail sector has been calling for €100 billion in CEF funding. We therefore count on the co-legislators to raise the ambition of the CEF endowment accordingly. As a strategic enabler of the Union's competitiveness, connectivity, and climate goals, rail should find a fitting place within the EU's long-term budgetary commitments."

Contact person

Laura Henry
CER Head of Communications
E: laura.henry@cer.be
M: +32 491 16 21 73

About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 78% of the rail network length, 81% of the rail freight business and about 94% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on X [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer-railways).