JOINT DECLARATION by the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and Eurocities on Connecting Europe at High Speed

Brussels, 5 November 2025

CER and Eurocities welcome EU commitments to triple high-speed rail (HSR) traffic by 2050 and the political momentum currently driving these ambitions forward.

In recent years, the European Commission, together with the European Parliament and Member States, has placed sustainability and accessibility of transport firmly on the agenda through the European Green Deal, the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy, and the revision of TEN-T. Concrete progress has been made, for instance, with the €5.64 billion in railway investments under the latest CEF–Transport call, and now the EU Action Plan for a European High-Speed Rail Network.

HSR revolutionises the way we evaluate distance, empowering people to reach opportunities further away. Linking cities and regions drives economic growth, supports sustainable transport, and strengthens EU integration. Shrunken travel times on corridors like Milan-Rome-Naples, Madrid-Barcelona-Valencia or Lyon-Paris-Brussels and Amsterdam-London are boosting demand for business and leisure travel. These are reasons why the 2024 Letta Report on the state of the EU Single Market features HSR development as an enabler of economic integration, territorial cohesion and sustainable travel.

The net economic benefits of enhanced proximity to and between economic hubs resulting from completing the HSR Network are estimated at around €750 billion. The induced modal shift from road and aviation to rail, the most sustainable mode per passenger-kilometre, is expected to save 11.6 billion barrels of oil, corresponding to 5 billion tonnes of CO_2 by 2070. With transport responsible for 25% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, the climate impact of these savings is considerable. They will also positively affect the European trade balance by reducing the import of oil.

Cities and metropolitan regions in particular stand to gain. Quick and reliable transportation between European cities and major urban areas is crucial for economic and industrial development and the functioning of the internal market. Moreover, rail transport of passengers provides a favourable alternative to air transport as the rail network is more far-reaching and denser than other modes of long-distance transport. Complemented by an efficient local public transport system, it provides sustainable door-to-door transport opportunities for passengers in Europe.

CER members already provide widespread HSR connections and invest to expand their networks, especially on cross-border services. For an EU-wide HSR Network to succeed, infrastructure plans must be matched by solid financing instruments and market and technical enablers to ensure scalability, competitiveness and smooth user experience.

Mayors gathered within Eurocities and Railway CEOs gathered within CER call for:

- **A Viable and Coherent European HSR Network** - Europe must complete the TEN-T network and include all capitals and cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants, as endorsed by 11 EU Member States in a joint letter to the President of the European Commission, even though a proper threshold must be defined for each Member State. HSR services need to be fast, frequent, and commercially viable. New lines for high-speed day services will also provide extra capacity for night trains and freight and ensure that rail offers a full-scale alternative to aviation for medium- and long-distance travel across Europe. For this, integration with lower-speed networks, flexible operating models, and investment in stations, rolling stock, and service capacity are crucial to further develop urban nodes and properly serve commuters and long-distance passengers alike. Moreover, the EU needs to facilitate a more systemic cooperation between railway stakeholders and city planners to ensure that new lines effectively integrate with local mobility services.

- **Long-Term, Sustainable Funding** - We are confident that the Commission's proposal for a Connecting Europe Facility worth €51.5 billion will live up to the HSR Masterplan's ambition. However, cooperation with private institutions is crucial as total investments are expected to amount to €546 billion by 2050: public investment, private capital, innovative financing, and targeted use of EU ETS revenues are among the options. Track access charges must be competitive both for Railway Undertakings and Infrastructure Managers, and predictable to support operators' viability and investor confidence. Investments must also focus on improving the integration between long-distance and local mobility services within urban nodes, which is why the EU must maintain references to urban nodes in the 2027 CEF Transport.

- **Seamless and Passenger-Friendly Ticketing** - To compete with air travel, rail ticketing is continuously improving, implementing solutions that comprehensively cover the passenger experience when planning, booking and travelling internationally by rail. Cooperation with local governments is needed to ensure that tickets for local transit legs of longer journeys are easily accessible to users during the planning stages.

- **A Level Playing Field with Other Modes** - Reform is needed to align energy taxes and address uneven coverage of infrastructure cost and externalities, so that high-speed rail services can compete on an equal footing with road and air travel. In addition, the EU should regularly monitor cross-border railway connections to ensure that services continue to improve and expand in a fair way.

With this Declaration, we commit ourselves to support these aims and work with the EU Institutions and Member States to achieve our common goals: a comprehensive, pan-European HSR network that connects cities, regions, and citizens, strengthens the internal market, boosts competitiveness, and delivers on the EU's climate targets.

Alberto MAZZOLA
CER Executive Director

André SOBCZAK
Secretary-General of Eurocities

LIST OF ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES TO THE DECLARATION ON CONNECTING EUROPE AT HIGH SPEED from the membership of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and Eurocities

Alan Beroud
CEO
PKP S.A.

Álvaro Fernández Heredia
Chairman & CEO
RENFE

Andreas Matthä
CEO
ÖBB-Holding AG

Artis Grinbergs
Chairman of the Board
State Joint Stock Company "Latvijas dzelzceļš"

Christian Specht
Mayor
City of Mannheim

Christophe Fanichet
CEO
SNCF Voyageurs

Dr. Kormányos László
CEO
MÁV Passenger Transport Co.

Dušan Mes
Director General
SŽ

Egidijus Lazauskas
CEO
LTG

Gergely Karácsony
Mayor
Budapest

Hanna Zdanowska
Mayor and Member of the European Committee of the Regions
City of Łódź

Flemming Jensen
CEO
DSB

Ivan Bednárik
Director General
ŽSR

Jan van Zanen
Mayor
The Hague

Jiří Svoboda
Director General
Správa železnic

Kaido Zimmermann
Chairman of the Management Board
Estonian Railways Ltd

Kristina Meidė
CEO
LTG Link

Laura Castelletti
Mayor
City of Brescia

Marko Kivila
CEO and Chairperson of the Management Board
RB Rail AS

Matthieu Chabanel
Chairman and CEO
SNCF Réseau

Melanie van der Horst
Deputy Mayor
City of Amsterdam

Michael Peterson
CEO
DB Fernverkehr AG

Michal Krapinec
CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors
České dráhy

Miha Butara
Director
SŽ-Potniški promet

Oliver Wolff
CEO
VDV

Pedro Miguel Sousa Pereira
President
Comboios de Portugal

Peter Helexa
Chairman of the Board and CEO
ZSSK

Pierre Sandberg
Managing Director
Association of Swedish Train Operating Companies (ASTOC)

Réka Németh
CEO
MÁV Infrastructure Co.

Roelof Bleker
Mayor
Netwerkstad Twente (City of Enschede)

Sophie Dutordoir
CEO
SNCB-NMBS

Stefano Antonio Donnarumma
Chief Executive Officer and General Director
Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane S.p.A.

Wouter Koolmees
CEO
Nederlandse Spoorwegen

Zsolt Hegyi
CEO
MÁV Co.