

Van: Frank Menger

Onderwerp: Lelylijn HSL Amsterdam - Groningen - Hamburg /Wunderline/Nedersaksenlijn; Is ook EU spoorbeleid en ook de regionale overheden hebben een taak

Datum: vrijdag 11 juni 2021 09:26:35

Bijlagen: [EU Council adopts important rail conclusions_RailFreight.com.pdf](#)
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Geachte leden van de staten en gemeenteraden,

Op 4 juni 2021 stond dit artikel in de vakwebsite Railfreight: <https://www.railfreight.com/policy/2021/06/04/eu-council-adopts-important-rail-conclusions/>

Tot op heden gebeurt op bepaalde gebieden te weinig in de noordelijke regio om meer vracht naar de trein te krijgen. Blijkbaar omdat de verkeerde conclusies bij de bestuurders en uitvoering getrokken worden. Want de zeehavens van Harlingen, Delfzijl en Eemshaven zijn niet alleen van 'nationaal belang' maar ook van 'Europees belang'.

Het is raadzaam deze documenten te lezen en ze benutten voor bijvoorbeeld de visies op Mobiliteit die in de regio geschreven worden. Zijn ze wel houdbaar als er over de modaliteit spoor geschreven wordt?

Met vriendelijke groet,

Frank Menger



EU Council adopts important rail conclusions

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The European Transport Ministers, gathered virtually at their EU Council meeting, adopted two important sets of Council Conclusions on EU rail and on the EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility this Thursday. The mobility strategy aims to double rail freight and to triple high-speed rail passenger transport by 2050.

“With these conclusions we, the Transport Ministers, are sending a clear political message regarding our commitment to a more sustainable, inclusive, intelligent, safe and resilient transport system”, says Pedro Nuno Santos, Portuguese Minister for Infrastructure and Housing, and President of the Council.

“This transformation is essential and will be a major contribution to meeting the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement”.

What do the conclusions entail?

The text of the adopted conclusions touches upon issues of key importance to the development of the sector: the impact of COVID on EU mobility and on railways, the need for supporting rail Research & Innovation, the role of modal shift, the importance of TEN-T and rail freight corridors. Also, the revamping of night trains, the need to boost long-distance and cross-border (high-speed) passenger rail services, ERTMS, and the efforts being made to further digitalise passenger and freight services.

The conclusions are adopted by the Council of the EU, mostly known as EU Council. It is the institution representing the member states' governments, and where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. Council resolutions usually set out future work foreseen in a specific policy area. They have no legal effect but they can invite the Commission to make a proposal or take further action.

European Year of Rail

In response to the conclusions, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) especially appreciates the work of the Portuguese Government, which has produced the Council Conclusions. CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: "This is likely the most appropriate way to celebrate the first semester of the European Year of Rail and I must congratulate the Portuguese Presidency and the whole Council for agreeing unanimously on a text that is ambitious and clear in its objectives."

"The Council Conclusions are a clear call for being bold about modal shift and the policies that should make it a reality. We expect this to represent a true political agenda that the Council, together with the other EU institutions, will keep as a reference in the near and distant future – starting with the next revision of the TEN-T Regulation".

Polluter pays

Regarding the Council Conclusions on the Commission's Sustainable and Smart [Mobility Strategy](#), CER underlines the pivotal importance of its sixth paragraph – calling for the "polluter-pays" and "user-pays" principles to be reflected in transport policy measures for and across all modes of transport.

Mr Mazzola further stated: "It is unavoidable at this point that hopes are raised on a more constructive position of the Council on important dossiers such as the ongoing revision of the Eurovignette Directive, the road user charges for heavy goods vehicles".

You can read the full conclusions adopted by the EU Council here:

- ["Putting Rail at the Forefront of Sustainable and Smart Mobility"](#)
- ["Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility Smart Mobility"](#)

Tags: [EU Council](#), [Mobility Strategy](#), [modal shift](#), [Shift to rail](#)



Author: Esther Geerts



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REPORT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
No. prev. doc.:	8652/21
Subject:	Council conclusions on the Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy - Approval

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 11 December 2020, the Commission presented the Communication entitled 'Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future'. It aims to put the EU on the path to creating the sustainable, smart and resilient mobility system of the future and bringing about the fundamental changes needed to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal.
2. Given the important objectives of the Strategy, the Presidency organised a number of discussions at informal videoconferences of the Intermodal Transport Working Party that aimed to provide an insight into the different areas covered by the Strategy, and decided to develop Council conclusions on this subject.

II. WORK WITHIN THE COUNCIL

3. Consequently, the first draft of the conclusions was presented at the informal videoconference of the members of the Working Party on Transport - Intermodal Questions and Networks of 20 April¹, and further discussions were held on 28 April and 5 May 2021. In addition, Member States were asked to submit written comments.
4. The last discussion took place on 12 May, where the members of the Working Party examined a revised Presidency compromise text. At this meeting, the vast majority of delegations supported most parts of the compromise text, while some delegations expressed diverging views or put forward drafting proposals on some of the issues captured in the conclusions, especially in relation to paragraphs 5 and 10.
5. Following the comments and concerns expressed at the last informal videoconference of the members of the Working Party, the Presidency prepared a revised version of the conclusions that aimed to address delegations' suggestions or concerns expressed at the meeting of 12 May.
6. Subsequently, the draft was presented to the Permanent Representatives Committee, which, at its meeting on 19 May, confirmed agreement on the draft Council conclusions set out in the Annex to this report and decided to submit them to the TTE Council on 3 June 2021 for approval.

III. CONCLUSION

7. The Council is therefore invited to approve the conclusions on the Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy set out in the Annex to this report.

¹ ST 7891/21 and its revisions.

Draft

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on the

Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

HAVING REGARD TO:

- the European Council conclusions of December 2019² and December 2020³, as regards climate change;
- the European Council conclusions of October 2020⁴ and the statement of the Members of the European Council of March 2021⁵, as regards digital issues;
- the Council conclusions on policy considerations for a pandemic and other major crisis contingency plan for the European freight transport sector⁶;
- the Council conclusions on compliance with the necessary hygiene and infection control measures to ensure cross-border collective passenger transport⁷;
- the Council conclusions on the progress of implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for transport⁸;

² EUCO 20/19

³ EUCO 22/20

⁴ EUCO 13/20

⁵ SN 18/21

⁶ ST 12391/20

⁷ ST 9699/20

⁸ ST 15425/17

- the Council conclusions on “Priorities for the EU’s maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster”⁹;
- the Council conclusions on the digitalisation of transport¹⁰;
- the Council conclusions on “EU Waterborne Transport Sector – Future Outlook: Towards a carbon-neutral, zero accidents, automated and competitive EU Waterborne Transport Sector”¹¹;
- the Council conclusions “Towards a hydrogen market for Europe”¹²;
- the Council conclusions on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union to ensure the energy transition and the achievement of energy and climate objectives towards 2030 and beyond¹³;
- the Council conclusions on making the recovery circular and green¹⁴;
- the Council conclusions on "Putting Rail at the Forefront of Smart and Sustainable Mobility"¹⁵.

⁹ ST 9976/17
¹⁰ ST 15431/17
¹¹ ST 8648/20
¹² ST 13976/20
¹³ ST 10592/19
¹⁴ ST 13852/20
¹⁵ ST 8790/21

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1. WELCOMES the presentation by the Commission of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy¹⁶, which includes a medium- to long-run vision for a more environment- and climate-friendly, digitalised, resilient, fair and competitive transport and mobility system.
2. SUPPORTS the Commission's vision to make European transport more sustainable, inclusive, intelligent, safe and resilient, and to ensure a major contribution by the transport sector to meeting the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement, as well as the binding target of a net domestic reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the EU of at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990.
3. In this respect, CONSIDERS that, in parallel with a shift to more sustainable modes, all transport modes should contribute to a substantial reduction in the transport sector's emissions by 2030 and by 2050 in a way that preserves their competitiveness and takes into account their emission reduction potential. In this context, INVITES the Commission to assess, in line with the Better Regulation requirements, how each measure envisaged in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy will ensure that transport modes can best contribute to the achievement of the above-mentioned 2030 and 2050 targets, including by conducting an in-depth examination of the environmental, economic and social impact at Member State level.
4. In addition, UNDERLINES that efforts to achieve the emission reduction targets should be delivered collectively in the most cost-effective manner possible, with all Member States participating in those efforts, taking into account considerations of fairness and solidarity and Member States' different starting points and specific national circumstances, including those of island Member States and islands, while leaving no one behind.

¹⁶ Communication from the Commission, Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future (ST 14012/20 + ADD 1)

5. With a view to substantially reducing the consumption of and dependence on fossil fuels, IS OF THE VIEW that an ambitious but balanced shift towards zero-emission vehicles, vessels, aircraft systems and fleets, promoting awareness among and predictability for all parties, from suppliers to consumers, requires an update of the EU legislative framework, in line with the principles of a functioning internal market, to facilitate the placing on the market and the take-up of alternative propulsion systems, such as those powered by electricity or hydrogen, complemented by an extensive roll-out of supporting infrastructure, including the deployment of recharging and refuelling points for alternative fuels. CONSIDERS in this context that low-emission solutions and low-carbon or renewable transport fuels may provide effective solutions for the transition, and that efforts to avoid the placing on the market of the most polluting means of transport should be stepped up for each transport mode.
6. STRESSES that the ‘polluter pays’ and ‘user pays’ principles should be reflected in transport policy measures for and across all modes of transport. EMPHASISES that incentives to promote the take-up of more sustainable transport should be put in place, including for the renewal and retrofitting of vehicles, vessels, aircraft systems and fleets.
7. STRESSES that digitalisation and the promotion of innovation in green technologies are key driving forces behind the long-term global competitiveness of the EU transport system, as they can improve sustainability, including by reducing pollution, bring greater efficiency, safety, security and comfort, and promote an integrated multimodal transport ecosystem, and in this context CALLS for the approach identified in the Passau Declaration of 29 October 2020, ‘Smart Deal for Mobility – Shaping the mobility of the future with digitalisation – sustainable, safe, secure and efficient’, to be taken up when transport and mobility policies are developed. RECALLS that multimodality requires multimodal and interoperable travel information, ticketing and payment.

8. RECALLS the importance of research and innovation activities to reinforce the sustainability, digitalisation and resilience of the transport and mobility system and WELCOMES in particular the contribution that partnerships established under the Horizon Europe programme should make in that regard, while emphasising that, in addition to the development and deployment of innovative climate-neutral technologies, behavioural changes by users of the transport and mobility system are also required to that end.
9. STRESSES that research and innovation efforts in cooperative connected and automated mobility should cover all transport modes in a manner that results in improvements in transport safety and efficiency, reduces congestion and contributes to climate and environment objectives, while also fostering interoperability and data protection at the stage of deployment, and providing for inclusive, accessible and affordable use cases. RECALLS the need to prepare the infrastructure to support automation.
10. CALLS for the swift adoption of an initiative on an EU mobility data space, which should ensure fair, reliable and secure access to and interoperability of data for improved transport efficiency, including to promote seamless multimodal transportation for passengers and freight, while also aiming for interoperability of data with other related data spaces. OBSERVES that the development of intelligent transport systems should continue to be based on a broad set of electronic communication technologies, such as mobile and Wi-Fi technologies, as well as services and infrastructure which are strategically critical, such as Galileo and EGNOS.

11. EMPHASISES that completing the Single European Transport Area remains a cornerstone of EU transport policy and STRESSES that a precondition for realising that goal and for achieving sustainable and smart transport and mobility is to have resilient, up-to-date, high-performance multimodal transport infrastructure to help connect and integrate all the Member States and regions of the EU, including remote, outermost, insular, peripheral, mountainous and sparsely populated ones, with a view to improving the free movement of persons, goods and services. In this context, RECALLS the importance of completing the core and comprehensive trans-European transport network within the established timeframe, including by addressing missing links and bottlenecks, and welcomes the further integration of urban nodes.
12. LOOKS FORWARD to the presentation by the Commission of the forthcoming Urban Mobility initiative and UNDERLINES in this context the importance of promoting active mobility such as cycling and walking, the use of public transport and new mobility services, effective mobility management, multimodality and sustainable means of transport in all transport modes (road, rail, waterborne and air), as called for in the Graz Declaration of 30 October 2018, ‘Starting a new era: clean, safe and affordable mobility for Europe’. RECALLS in this context that public transport has been seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis and that the policy response to the crisis should aim to restore confidence in and improve the resilience of public transport, accelerating its sustainable transformation and modernisation, while ensuring transport affordability, given the essential role of public transport in social and territorial cohesion.

13. **UNDERLINES** that, while becoming more sustainable, digitalised and automated, the transport and mobility system should remain user- and human-centric. EU transport policy should be inclusive, promoting availability and accessibility to all, including to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities, as well as to children. Affordability should be ensured so as to combat transport poverty, and transport safety should be stepped up, including in active mobility. EU transport policy should also continue to improve social conditions across all modes, including working conditions, improve reskilling opportunities and enhance job attractiveness in the sector. **UNDERSTANDS** that EU transport policy should aim to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality, as well as rights and equal opportunities for all. The mainstreaming of these objectives is expected to be taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation, implementation and monitoring of transport policy measures. **HIGHLIGHTS** the need for effective public engagement and social dialogue in order to adequately reflect in transport and mobility policies the changing needs of people and stakeholders.
14. **STRESSES** the need to ensure that transport and logistics fully recover from the current COVID-19 crisis. **UNDERLINES** that the economic response to that crisis offers an opportunity to accelerate the sustainable transformation and modernisation of the transport and mobility system, and **INVITES** the Commission to swiftly present the progress made in preparing a contingency plan for transport to better address pandemics and other major crises, as requested by the Council in its conclusions on policy considerations for a pandemic and other major crisis contingency plan for the European freight transport sector.

15. STRESSES the importance of also bearing in mind the international dimension of transport policy with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of the EU transport sector, as well as its sustainability and efficiency following global developments, and of playing an active role in international fora, most notably in the context of establishing global standards and maintaining a level playing field.
16. TAKES NOTE of the Commission's estimate, contained in its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, of an overall financing gap of around EUR 230 billion per year until 2030 in relation to the measures needed to achieve the vision for a more resilient sustainable and smarter transport and mobility system, including transition efforts. UNDERLINES that an appropriate level of EU financing, as well as of public funding at national, regional and local levels and private resources, is crucial to address the significant investment needs stemming from an increased smart and sustainable ambition across modes. In this context, WELCOMES the EIB Group's ongoing revision of its financing policy for transport in the broader framework of the Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025 and STRESSES the need to align that financing policy with EU transport policy objectives along the lines set out in these Council conclusions.
17. CALLS for the Commission to monitor on a regular basis whether the policy actions envisaged in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy are sufficient for the realisation of those EU transport policy objectives, or whether additional measures might be necessary.



Brussels, 25 May 2021
(OR. en)

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TRANS 291

REPORT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
No. prev. doc.:	ST 8642/21
Subject:	Council conclusions on "Putting Rail at the Forefront of Smart and Sustainable Mobility" – Approval

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Linked to the European Year of Rail (2021), the Presidency organised an informal meeting of transport ministers, through videoconference, on 30 March 2021, dedicated entirely to rail. The aim of that meeting was to take stock of the various political and operational initiatives underway to improve rail transport services and achieve a real modal shift, and to reassess the role of this transport mode in view of its resilience during the pandemic and in view of the urgent need of de-carbonisation.
2. Based on the discussion during that meeting and on previous initiatives launched jointly by transport ministers, the Presidency suggested to prepare Council conclusions on rail which should encompass the many aspects currently under discussion.

II. WORK AT THE COUNCIL PREPARATORY BODY

3. The Presidency presented draft Council conclusions on rail to the Working Party for Land Transport on 28 April 2021. They were structured according to the topics 'modal shift', 'resilience', 'passenger transport', 'freight transport', and 'networks'. Delegations expressed support for the initiative and made suggestions for changes or additions in all chapters, also in writing. The draft conclusions were further refined in informal meetings on 4, 11 and 17 May 2021.
4. The Permanent Representatives Committee reviewed the draft conclusions on 19 May 2021. It confirmed agreement with them and referred them for approval to the TTE Council (Transport) on 3 June 2021. Some delegations noted the difficulty of finding a common statement for the section dealing with national approaches in organising rail passenger services.

III. CONCLUSION

5. The Council is invited to approve the conclusions with the title "Putting Rail at the Forefront of Smart and Sustainable Mobility", as set out in the annex.

Putting Rail at the Forefront of Smart and Sustainable Mobility

-Draft Council conclusions-

HAVING REGARD TO:

1. the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019 which endorsed the objective of achieving a climate-neutral European Union by 2050¹ and the Commission's Communication of 11 December 2019 on a European Green Deal² ;
2. the EU transport ministers' continued commitment to rail³, as expressed last year in
 - a) the political statement supporting a European agenda for international passenger rail transport presented at the informal video conference of EU transport ministers on 4 June 2020, and
 - b) the ministerial declaration on innovative transport in rail freight corridors of the Berlin conference on 21 September 2020;
3. the Commission communication of 9 December 2020 on a 'Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future'⁴ with its intention to double rail freight and to triple high-speed rail passenger transport by 2050;
4. Decision (EU) 2020/2228 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 on a European Year of Rail (2021)⁵;

¹ EUCO 29/19.

² COM(2019)640 final, ST 15051/19 + ADD 1.

³ The transport ministers of Norway and Switzerland regularly participate.

⁴ COM(2020) 789 final, ST 14012/20 + ADD1.

⁵ OJ L 437, 28.12.2020, p. 108.

5. Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility⁶, and the forthcoming adoption of a second Regulation establishing the Connecting Europe Facility;
6. the EU transport ministers' informal video conference of 30 March 2021, where ministers took a stance on the Portuguese Presidency's non-paper 'How to Accelerate Modal Shift to Rail: different paths to a common goal';

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7. NOTES that the EU's railway systems have undergone fundamental regulatory reforms through four legislative packages adopted in 2001⁷, 2004, 2007 and 2016. WELCOMES the positive effects of these reforms in market opening and technical harmonisation that have been partially achieved and are partially awaited;
8. ACKNOWLEDGES that the regulatory framework at EU and national level is highly complex and diverse, and UNDERLINES that further efforts need to be undertaken to ensure the economic and operational benefits of technical harmonisation, in particular for cross-border rail services, while acknowledging the different starting points in the Member States and their varying organisational structures. EMPHASISES the importance of fully implementing the existing Union legislation, UNDERLINES that future Union legislative proposals should be based on careful analysis of the current state of play and should also aim at simplification wherever possible;
9. RECOGNISES that some Member States do not provide connectivity through railways, and therefore smart and sustainable mobility can only be achieved through other modes of transport; RECOGNISES also that in other Member States networks are isolated and efforts to increase interoperability do not, therefore, improve performance;

⁶ OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17.

⁷ The first railway package was recast in 2012 by Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, OJ L 343 14.12.2012, p. 32.

10. STRESSES that further technical harmonisation with a view to the increased interoperability of national networks will support the single market for international rail services, the Union rail systems and efficiency; STRESSES, furthermore, the contribution of rail to the Union's economy and its industrial base, including its global competitiveness, which will benefit likewise from research, innovation and technical harmonisation. LOOKS FORWARD, therefore, to the new Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking which should play a vital role in research on the new digital technologies in rail, thereby delivering a coordinated approach with the sector to the overall evolution of the railway systems. This should also lead to a more rapid development of the technical regulatory framework, taking into account the time that was necessary to deploy previous standards;
11. CONSIDERS that the need both to strive for climate-neutral, environmentally friendly⁸ mobility and to ensure a resilient and interconnected transport system, notably in times of crisis, as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, places railways in a key position within the future transport offer;
12. UNDERLINES the importance of a continuous dialogue between public authorities, relevant stakeholders, employers, workers and rail transport users in order to ensure that everyone enjoys the benefits of rail transport; NOTES in this context the European Economic and Social Committee's exploratory opinion of 24 March 2021 on 'The Single European Railway Area' requested by the Portuguese Presidency⁹;
13. LOOKS FORWARD to the planned revision of the Union legislation on the rail freight corridors¹⁰ and on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)¹¹;

⁸ Railway provides for a low carbon footprint, low emissions, low land use and a long lifecycle of its rolling stock, while it reduces congestion and increases air quality in urban areas.

⁹ EESC TEN/727, ST 7614/21.

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 22.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

I. Modal shift

14. STRESSES that rail transport is responsible for just 0,4% of transport-caused CO₂ emissions, despite having a share of 8% of passenger transport and 19% of freight transport across Europe.¹² For that reason, a modal shift from carbon-intensive modes to rail is likely the most effective way to decarbonise transport in large parts of the Union's territory;
15. NOTES that the considerable efforts towards market opening and technical harmonisation undertaken to date have stabilised the share of railway transport services in a fast-growing market in which customer expectations have also grown, but that a marked shift to rail has not yet been achieved, despite the progress made in individual market segments;
16. ACKNOWLEDGES that making progress towards a modal shift will require the attractiveness and competitiveness of rail to be strengthened through the improvement of rail services adjusted to customer demands and the effective optimisation of multi-modal solutions between rail and other transport modes; progress should also be facilitated by effective cooperation among relevant Member States and among infrastructure managers. Overall, a true modal shift will require growth in rail traffic volumes that outpaces economic growth;
17. CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT for regular policy evaluations which measure the degree of effective market opening and technical harmonisation to be supplemented by analysis of policy impacts on the modal shift, economic and social cohesion, environmental performance, system efficiency, infrastructure charges, service levels and working conditions;
18. WELCOMES, in this context, the initiatives underway to produce a forward-looking and more operational analysis of the modal shift by assessing the progress possible under given conditions and assuming specific improvements in infrastructure quality and connectivity, taking into account all forms of domestic and international traffic, as well as the Commission's commitment to develop a 'rail connectivity index'; ENCOURAGES the evaluation of the medium-long distance connections between major cities;

¹² See European Commission, Statistical pocketbook 2020, tables 3.2.12, 2.3.3 and 2.2.3 (excluding transport by pipeline).

II. Resilience

19. NOTES that transport has been one of the sectors hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, with economic damage caused by steep reductions in travel and tourism, supply chain disruptions, income loss to railway operators, and reduced connectivity across the EU. This has caused significant economic loss for railway undertakings and infrastructure managers, and had its most severe impact on rail passenger transport, where it may have delayed or blocked projects for new investment and services. At the same time, rail has proven to be the most resilient mode of transport, especially in the form of unaccompanied combined transport;
20. NOTES that focused action by the transport ministers in cooperation with the European Union and all relevant stakeholders helped the rail sector to cope with the adverse economic effects caused by the crisis, which has brought some stakeholders to the very brink of collapse, thereby ensuring the survival of this essential service and public good;
21. CONSIDERS that this crisis has exposed the need to strengthen resilience and contingency measures and to improve availability, coherence and coordination in the rail network and give higher priority to the improvement of cross-border links as part of a trans-European rail network that would constitute the backbone of resilient and sustainable mobility routes; INVITES the Commission to outline the progress made in preparing a Contingency Plan for transport to better address the pandemic and other major crises;

III. European rail passenger transport

22. EMPHASISES that while the share of international rail passenger transport within the overall EU rail passenger market is low¹³, there are encouraging signs from both the supply and the demand side which suggest that a considerable increase is possible over the next decade. The projects underway, for instance those aiming to revive European night trains, show enthusiasm and variety;
23. NOTICES wide variations in how international railway passenger services, infrastructure and networks are developed in different parts of Europe, as a result *inter alia* of customer demand, political choices, geography, population density, and economic integration between cross-border regions;
24. WELCOMES the creation of, and the practical steps taken by the Platform for International Railway Passenger Transport (IRP), which involves wide range of stakeholders, and NOTES the evolution of the Trans Europe Express 2.0 (TEE 2.0) concept; WELCOMES the Commission's intention to present, in the course of this year, an action plan to boost long-distance and cross-border passenger rail services, UNDERLINES the need for cooperation between Member States and the European Union to remove market barriers and INVITES the Commission to present a progress report by next year reflecting on the deliverables of its action plan;
25. ENCOURAGES further development of European rail passenger transport. In the short and medium terms this should be achieved by complementing existing services and focusing on passenger experience, fair competition, comprehensive route planning and ticketing offered by railway undertakings and third party ticket vendors, direct links with regional, local and urban transport, and capacity allocation procedures, without prejudice to the competences of Member States and infrastructure managers in this regard, and the removal of technical and operational barriers, particularly in cross-border sections and terminals;

¹³ 7% of overall passenger-km; European Commission, Statistical pocketbook 2020, table 3.2.12.

26. ACKNOWLEDGES that further development of this segment requires the removal of the remaining infrastructure bottlenecks in the Union rail system, the realisation of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network, development of a high-speed network, the purchase of interoperable rolling stock and full implementation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) as detailed in the national implementation plans, thereby minimising traffic interruptions;
27. ACKNOWLEDGES the diversity of national approaches in organising rail passenger services and EMPHASISES that open access services in response to market demand are instrumental in extending the modal shift to rail, which must be combined with a broad culture of innovation and a dynamic rail economy. RECOGNISES that in certain cases, Member States may consider the use, on their territory, of public service contracts for international rail passenger services, in addition to domestic ones, to generate the desirable transport offer. In this context, LOOKS FORWARD to the Commission's revision of the interpretative guidelines concerning Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007¹⁴;

IV. European rail freight transport

28. EXPECTS that progressing towards completion of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) core network within the established timeframe, the widespread deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), both trackside and on-board, accompanied by the gradual decommissioning of legacy signalling systems, and the further harmonisation of technical and operational requirements will lead to more efficient, less costly and better integrated rail transport, thus enabling the continued growth of rail freight;

¹⁴ Interpretative guidelines concerning Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road, OJ C 92, 29.3.2014, p. 1.

29. EXPECTS rail freight to be further boosted by the coordinated deployment of new innovations, especially in the field of digitalisation and automation, as long as their deployment contributes, from a cost-benefit perspective, to increasing the rail sector's competitiveness; NOTES that the digital exchange of information, including tracking systems, will represent a major step towards integrating rail freight into the supply chain, making rail freight a more reliable choice for shippers;
30. As regards the European Green Deal, in which the European Commission lists rail freight as a top priority, EXPECTS that this initiative will build on all the experience gained and the best practice already developed through the rail freight corridors, while also fostering innovation in new technologies, digitalisation and operational concepts in order to achieve a more integrated operating network for competitive rail freight;
31. NOTES that the Union rail network for competitive freight, formed by the rail freight corridors, has proven to be very effective in developing concerted actions and common measures among stakeholders in charge of operations, whilst facilitating, amongst other things, the enhancement of rail freight's resilience in the event of major crises and the implementation of necessary contingency measures;
32. RECOGNISING the work already accomplished by the rail freight corridors, WELCOMES the Member States' commitment to continue their cooperation with the European Commission and the coordinators of the TEN-T core network corridors, UNDERLINES the importance of developing further infrastructure capacity and the routes of the rail freight corridors in accordance with market requirements and customer needs, and ENCOURAGES strengthening the functioning of the rail freight corridors in a coordinated way;

V. Networks, investment and connectivity

33. NOTES the fact that the TEN-T network has been extremely important for developing a coherent high-capacity interoperable rail network across the Union, and also for connecting it to ports, airports and road and inland waterway terminals. Although it has not been able to singlehandedly overcome the large asymmetries in rail network coverage and density, through the Connecting Europe Facility and other EU financing instruments, the TEN-T network has allowed many Member States with smaller investment capacities to steadily, albeit slowly, upgrade and to improve the connectivity of their networks;
34. UNDERLINES the importance of a coherent TEN-T policy with projects that foster the development of high-speed and international services for rail passenger transport between the main urban hubs and facilitate a more competitive rail freight transport; STRESSES that this is one of the prerequisites for achieving the objectives of the Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility; ENCOURAGES initiatives that aim to offer rail connections which can replace short-distance flights, when possible;
35. BEARING IN MIND the political aim of a climate-neutral economy, ACKNOWLEDGES that national budgets in many Member States remain under strain from the previous economic crisis and the current pandemic, and that public investment in transport in those Member States has remained barely at the level required to ensure maintenance;
36. STRESSES that the rail sector will need to make the best possible use of EU financing instruments. Railway transport infrastructure has been identified as the segment most in need of investment to finalise the TEN-T network and modernise the existing network. WELCOMES, accordingly, the fact that Member States plan to use resources being made available by the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 to enhance the competitiveness of the rail sector and support related investment in rail infrastructure;

37. UNDERLINES that systemic integration with other transport modes, including maritime, inland waterways, air and road transport, urban transport offers and active mobility, is essential to keep territories connected and achieve the modal shift. As a result, an increase in intermodal transfer opportunities, enlargement of the capacity of existing transfer and transshipment facilities, and better intermodal traffic management are necessary;
38. RECOGNISES that major investment by the sector in international long-distance rolling stock is required. Financing could be supported through guarantees at Union level, so as to make use of innovations, upgrade to new technical specifications, increase flexibility, safety and comfort, and diversify the service offer; RECOGNISES also that investment is urgently needed from the private sector and REMINDS Member States of the existence of international agreements and treaties which facilitate private investment, such as the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention¹⁵;
39. CALLS on the Commission to study eventual European-level schemes to support rail operators in a non-discriminatory manner, and present the findings to the Council; TAKES NOTE, having regard to the specificities of the rail sector, of the Commission's intention to review the rules for granting state aid.

¹⁵ Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock, OJ L 331, 16.12.2009, p. 4.