

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



EUROPEAN RAIL FREIGHT ASSOCIATION

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## President's Foreword

2019 has been a year of transition in Europe. We have seen the end of the Juncker Commission and the beginning of the von der Leyen Commission. Furthermore, we have seen a new College of Commissioners take up their portfolios as well as a newly elected European Parliament.

ERFA has undergone a similar transition during this period. On 20 November, I was elected as new President of ERFA. I am very honoured to have been elected to this position and I am committed to working constructively with all actors to ensure rail freight has a strong voice in Brussels.

2019 also saw the arrival of a new Secretary General, Conor Feighan, to ERFA. We are happy to have Conor on board as he brings with him a wealth of experience in the freight sector and, more particularly, representing its interests in Brussels.

I would like to sincerely thank my predecessor, Lindsay Durham, for overseeing this transition period whilst also ensuring that ERFA continued to function in a good manner. I would also like to thank ERFA's outgoing Secretary General, Julia Lamb, and acting Secretary General, Carole Coune, who departed ERFA in 2019, both played an important role in representing rail freight over the past years.

I am happy this transition period is now complete, both for the European institutions and ERFA, as there is a lot of important work to be undertaken. The sector needs an ambitious programme that meets the needs of the rail freight industry. It is clear that business as usual will not put rail freight in a position to compete effectively with other modes of transport, something which is crucial if we are to succeed in getting transport emissions reduced to a sustainable level.

As President of ERFA, I look forward to working together to ensure that rail freight can play its role in the creation of a green and sustainable freight logistics chain.

We have already seen some unexpected challenges for the industry in 2020 arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to ensure that these challenges do not impact the progress of years of good work undertaken towards building a strong and competitive rail freight network. We, as an industry and as governments, need to remain alert and ready to continue to support this vision.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dirk Stahl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dirk Stahl**  
President

## Secretary General's Foreword

Although 2019 has been a year of transition, it has also been a constructive and busy year. A lot of work has gone into ensuring ERFA is well positioned to play a meaningful role over the coming years. Amongst the tasks undertaken, ERFA identified a number of areas where we believe that industry and governments need to work constructively together to ensure that this European Commission delivers for rail freight.

**Firstly**, we need to work towards ensuring that running an international freight train across borders is as easy as running a truck across European borders. This will only happen with an international approach that gives rail freight rights and a clear international framework under which to operate.

**Secondly**, State Aid rules for railway undertakings need to be modernised. We need a framework which is clear, ensures that there is no competition distortion through State Aid – be it direct or through cross-subsidisation – and that legitimate aid, such as interoperability aid, is allowed.

**Thirdly**, we need an international approach to infrastructure developments. Rail freight can only be competitive if infrastructure developments and upgrading are planned and coordinated at an international level. The services we offer are international and the network we run on needs to reflect this.

On top of this, 2019 has also seen the completion of some important work. Amongst this work is the completion of the Railway Undertaking Handbook for International Contingency Management. This Handbook will ensure that railway undertakings are well placed to cooperate in the case of an international incident.

For 2020, we believe that we need open minds for complex issues. If it was possible to achieve significant growth in rail freight volumes with simple solutions or slight changes to how we do business, it would have been achieved by now. 2020 must signal the beginning of a new and ambitious approach to rail freight. We are ready to work together to ensure this becomes a reality.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Conor Feighan'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Conor Feighan**  
Secretary General

## About ERFA

ERFA today represents 28 members, active in the whole value chain of rail transportation operating across the European network.

The Association was established in Brussels in 2002 by a handful of new rail freight operators, intended to act as the voice of new entrants in supporting the European vision for a liberalised railway market.

All ERFA members share a commitment to work towards a non-discriminatory, competitive and innovative Single European Railway market by promoting attractive, fair and transparent market conditions for all rail enterprises.

ERFA aims to achieve the best conditions for a competitive rail freight sector. Creating a more business-friendly environment and with a strong focus on the customer is key to rail's development. Our mission is to promote rail freight transport as a first and viable choice for customers and to ensure full market opening of rail across all of Europe.

ERFA's objective is to represent the voice of private and independent rail freight companies in Europe. We support the EU decision-making process with a focus on policy and technical affairs. Our focus is on generating growth for demand in rail freight services and shifting more goods onto eco-friendly rail.



## Board of Directors and ERFA Staff

### ERFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President and Vice-President



President  
**Dirk Stahl**  
CEO  
*BLS Cargo*



Vice-President  
**Maciej Gladys**  
Office Director  
*IGTL*

#### Directors



**Lindsay Durham**  
Head of Rail Strategy  
*Freightliner Group*



**François Coart**  
Strategy Director  
*Europorte*



**Tony Berkeley**  
European Advisor  
*Rail Freight Group*



**Irmtraut Tonndorf**  
Communications Director  
*Hupac*



**Markus Vaerst**  
Managing Director  
*Railmind GmbH*



**Andreas Mandl**  
CEO  
*LTE logistics and transport*



**Bruno Silva**  
Executive Director  
*MEDWAY*



**Ralph Schmitz**  
Board Director  
*Netzwerk Europaeischer Eisenbahnen*



**Matthias Knüpling**  
Head of Business Development  
*VTG Rail Europe GmbH*



**Yuriy Maslikov**  
Director  
*Ost-West Logistik*

### ERFA STAFF



Secretary General  
**Conor Feighan**  
*From August 2019*



Policy and  
Communications Officer  
**Sophia Krügel**  
*From November 2019*

# ERFA Members

ERFA today represents 28 members, active in the whole value chain of rail transportation operating across the European network.



# Who we work with

## Other organisations



## European institutions







## ERFA'S MAIN OBJECTIVES

1

REMOVE REMAINING  
MARKET ACCESS  
BARRIERS

2

IMPROVE THE QUALITY  
AND PERFORMANCE  
OF RAIL SERVICES

3

REDUCE THE COST  
OF RAIL

4

CREATE A LEVEL  
PLAYING FIELD  
BETWEEN ROAD  
AND RAIL

# 1

## Remove remaining market access barriers

- **Vehicle legal obligations and authorisation** – In the long-term, harmonisation of authorisations and legal obligations for vehicles would be welcome. The existence of divergent rules within various national legal systems for vehicle authorisation creates significant market access barriers.

However, the initial investment required by railway undertakings is significant and consideration has to be given to how the industry can be supported in the transition from existing national authorisations to European authorisations. This process should be as seamless as possible.

- **Language requirements** – The various language requirements place a significant burden and introduce additional costs on operating freight trains across borders. These requirements make rail freight less competitive than other modes of freight transportation which do not have such language requirements.

It is crucial for the development of rail freight that a European standard for communication across the entire network is agreed upon. This should ensure that a driver can drive in all EU member states once the driver complies with this European standard.

- **Implementation of the Fourth Railway Package** – Full implementation of the Fourth Railway Package is crucial to finally remove existing market access barriers. This must include total independence of infrastructure managers.

# 2

## Improve the quality and performance of rail services

- **International Timetabling** – For rail freight to be able to provide an internationally competitive offer, it needs an international timetabling system. Existing national timetabling can lead to non-optimal capacity allocation for both railway undertakings and infrastructure managers.

Ongoing industry initiatives on the development of an international timetable should continue to be supported.

- **Temporary Capacity Restrictions** – When works are required on networks, it is crucial that there is a strong level of coordination between infrastructure managers so as to ensure these works are coordinated at an international level.

There needs to be a strong focus on ensuring not only that works are coordinated across Member States, but also that freight can continue to flow. This may require coordination by agreeing alternative routes in the case of temporary capacity restrictions.

- **Rail Freight Corridors** – The Rail Freight Corridors Regulation needs to be revised and strengthened so as to ensure that the rail freight corridors meet the needs of the rail freight industry.

Crucially, the Regulation needs to ensure that rail freight has a sufficient quantity and quality of capacity along corridors, that rail freight has pre-defined rights along corridors and that all corridors have common standards (P400 compatible, 750 meters, etc.).



# 3

## Reduce the cost of rail

- **MFF EU budget for rail** – The EU has long supported investments in the more sustainable modes of transport, with rail being a key beneficiary. In the run-up to the next EU budget framework, it is vital that there is an increase, or at minimum, a maintaining of the current EU investment levels for rail and better targeting of funding to support superior quality of rail services.
- **ERTMS/ECTS** – The deployment and development of infrastructure should be included in upcoming CEF calls. These calls should also include deployment of ERTMS as well as ECTS systems within trains.

The deployment of ECTS is a significant financial burden for operators. One that may lead to increased costs for rail freight and adding to the uneven playing field. Financing for ECTS is crucial.

- **Track access charges** – Infrastructure managers need to ensure that track access charges allow railway undertakings to be competitive with other modes of transport. High track access charges have the potential to lead to less rail freight and subsequently less revenue received through charges.



# 4

## Create a level playing field between road and rail

- **Green Deal** – The European sector of railway undertakings calls for an ambitious Green Deal to implement the 'user pays' and 'polluter pays' principles. Rail freight as a competitor to road transport would therefore benefit from a resubmitted, strong Eurovignette Directive.

The EU's transport emissions have increased by 28% since 1990. Increasing the market share of rail freight transport from 17% today to 30% in 2030 (as suggested by the Rail Freight Forward Initiative), more comprehensive road charging and ending subsidies on aviation would support the EU's endeavours to reach the Paris Agreement's climate goals.

- **State Aid Guidelines** – The State Aid Guidelines for Railway Undertakings should be revised to provide a clear legal framework for the sector on when and where state support is possible. The rail freight sector is a competitive sector and it is imperative that the State Aid Guidelines for Railway Undertakings make clear that companies active in the sector cannot receive operational aid, either directly or through cross-subsidisation, which has the potential to distort the market.

The revised Guidelines should also look to ensure that State Aid that is of common good to the sector continues to be permitted. The aid should focus on infrastructure use, aid reducing external costs and interoperability aid.



# ERFA



# Highlights 2019

## 14 FEBRUARY

### German aid scheme to reduce track access charges

ERFA strongly welcomes Germany's decision to reduce track access charges in order to make rail freight transport more competitive with the other modes of transport. The European Commission's recent approval of the German State Aid scheme sends a clear message to other EU national governments: reduction of track access charges and a transfer of those lower costs to end customers is a positive step forward for getting more goods onto rail! In this paper ERFA highlights concerns regarding track access charges and actions that can be taken to ensure that rail charging schemes support a more competitive rail freight sector.



## 20 FEBRUARY

### Siemens-Alstom merger

ERFA welcomes the decision of Mrs Vestager to reject the Siemens-Alstom merger in her role of guardian of the Treaty and its competition rules. Such a merger would have increased costs for European industry at a time when railway undertakings are redoubling their efforts to achieve excellence. But our European industry must be protected by a real reciprocity of the market access conditions.

## 12 MARCH

### 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Antwerp Rail School

ERFA was invited to the 6th edition of the Antwerp Rail School to speak about "creating a competitive environment for rail freight". Competition is always good for the market, in fact it encourages companies to be more efficient, to innovate and improve the quality of their services.

## 20 MARCH

### Freight Traffic Coordination Conference 2019

Silvia De Rocchi and Wolfgang Groß had the opportunity to speak at Forum Train Europe FTE Freight Traffic Coordination Conference 2019, present ERFA and its priorities, explain what ERFA stands for and how we support our members. Many thanks Peter Jäggy for letting us participate in such a interesting event!



## 3 APRIL

### ERFA Annual Event

The ERFA Annual Event, which took place in Warsaw this year, drew attention to the success stories and remaining access barriers in the rail freight market in Eastern Europe. About 70 people attended the event, coming from more than 15 different countries and in particular from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Czech Republic.

[> See page 18 for more info](#)

## 2 JULY

### The new EU Parliament held its constituent session

On 8 July, ERFA and ALLRAIL joined forces to show the way ahead with a special letter sent to the MEPs at the starting point of the new legislative period. In preparation for the first meeting of the EU Parliament's Committee for Transport and Tourism, the two independent rail company groups submitted in a special letter their wish list of changes and improvements that must be done to the rail sector and infrastructure if freight and passenger traffic is to grow.

## 26 AUGUSTUS

### Conor Feighan appointed new Secretary General

Conor Feighan has worked within the transport sector in Brussels for the past 8 years. Mr. Feighan is joining ERFA directly from FEPOR, the European Association representing terminal operators and private port companies.

20.03.2019

03.04.2019

02.07.2019

26.08.2019



#### 4 SEPTEMBER

### ERFA stresses the need for continued independence of infrastructure in order to facilitate growth of freight traffic

ERFA expresses its concerns regarding the recent suggestion of the Belgian minister of Transport, Mr François Bellot, to revert to the situation before the rail unbundling implemented in 2005 and to re-integrate the two State owned companies SNCB, the passenger railway undertaking, and Infrabel, the infrastructure manager.



#### 1 NOVEMBER

### Sophia Krügel joins ERFA Secretariat as Policy and Communications Officer

#### 20 NOVEMBER

### The ERFA Board of Directors unanimously elected Mr. Dirk Stahl (BLS Cargo) as the new ERFA President

Mr. Dirk Stahl is currently the CEO of BLS Cargo, a leading rail freight transport company focusing on Alpine transit with international block trains. Mr. Stahl has extensive experience in the international rail freight market and knows the needs of the rail freight sector. Mr. Maciej Gladyska was elected as the Vice-President of ERFA.

**21 NOVEMBER**

## **ERFA Strategy Days**

The strategic workshop consisted of an open discussion for all members on the latest legislative developments in Brussels and an overview of the actions taken by ERFA during the last months. Participants focused on the revision of the Rail Freight Corridors and the Revision of the State Aid Guidelines. Mr. Maurizio Castelletti (Head of Unit – Single European Railway Area – European Commission) and Ms. Sophie Moonen (Head of Unit – State Aid Transport – European Commission) then joined to openly discuss the legislative priorities of the European Commission for the upcoming legislative term.



**5 DECEMBER**

## **ERFA calls for modernisation of State Aid Guidelines for Railway Undertakings**

ERFA believes it is crucial that the State Aid Guidelines for Railway Undertakings are modernised to take into consideration developments in the rail freight sector over the past eleven years. ERFA therefore calls upon the incoming the European Commission to work towards a revision of the Guidelines for Railway Undertakings.



**19 DECEMBER**

## **Rail Freight coalition publishes Contingency Management Handbook to avoid a second Rastatt**

The Handbook outlines harmonised international contingency measures and describes how railway undertakings should cooperate with each other and with infrastructure managers whenever major disruptions happen on the European railway network.

01.11.2019

05.12.2019

19.12.2019

ERFA

## ERFA Annual Event, 3 April 2019, Warsaw

The ERFA annual event, which took place in Poland in 2019, drew attention to the success stories and remaining access barriers in the rail freight market in Eastern Europe.

Over 70 people attended the event, coming from more than 15 different countries and in particular from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Czech Republic.

Tomasz Buczynski, Director of Railway Transport Department in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Kamil Wilde, Vice President of Railway Office UTK – Polish National Safety Authority and Regulatory body gave a broad overview of the rail investments as well as ongoing and forthcoming regulatory developments in Poland.

Gintautas Lukauskas, Commercial Director of Gargzdu Gelezinkelis described the rail freight market situation in Lithuania, in particular the slow market opening and the high level of track access charges which could represent a barrier to newcomers once the market opens.

Konstantin Skorik, CEO of Freightliner Poland and Germany, presented the success story of his company, highlighting that efficiency of railway undertakings is not enough for the sector to be successful, and the necessity for better external conditions. Strong engagement of infrastructure managers is a must for the improvement of the rail sector's competitiveness.

2019 was an important year, given the nomination of a new European Commissioner for transport, and Lindsay Durham, President of ERFA, stressed that it is important that rail freight is able to deliver the right message to the future Commissioner, in particular the importance of investing and supporting rail freight growth as well as guaranteeing its competitiveness.

Highly appreciated was also the detailed overview of the "state of play" of rail freight market since the opening of the railway market as well as pillars of the growth and European policy outlook given by Annika Kroon, Deputy Head of Unit of the Single European Railway Area at European Commission.

## ERFA says goodbye...



Policy & Regulatory Manager  
**Silvia De Rocchi**  
*Until June 2019*



Acting Secretary General  
**Carole Coune**  
*Until August 2019*



Secretary General  
**Julia Lamb**  
*Until February 2019*



## Election of New ERFA President, 20 November 2019

During the ERFA Board of Directors meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November, the ERFA Board of Directors unanimously elected Mr. **Dirk Stahl** (BLS Cargo) as the new ERFA President. Mr. **Maciej Gladyska** was elected as the Vice-President of ERFA.

Mr. Dirk Stahl is currently the CEO of BLS Cargo, a leading rail freight transport company focusing on Alpine transit with international block trains. Mr. Stahl has extensive experience in the international rail freight market and knows the needs of the rail freight sector.

Mr. Maciej Gladyska is currently the Office Director of IGTL (Land Transport Chamber of Commerce of Poland). Mr. Gladyska currently represents operators of various sizes within the Polish rail freight market.

Upon his election, Mr. Stahl said, *"I am very honoured to have been elected by my colleagues in the rail freight industry to take up the position of ERFA President. As President, I want to influence European transport policy in order to develop and simplify rail freight transport, improve quality and provide customers with reliable services. This will also convince new customers of the benefits and effectiveness of rail freight. We are facing into a crucial few years where we need to grow the rail freight sector in order contribute to the European Union's climate objectives. Rail is the greenest means of freight transport and it is therefore important that we can build a legislative framework that meets the needs of the rail freight industry"*.

*"This legislative framework needs to ensure that we have a competitive and international rail freight market. Private rail freight undertakings and new entrants take an important role in the modal shift and have to face equal and fair conditions on the market. The best way to achieve growth in the rail sector is the creation of a truly European and competitive rail freight market"*, continued Mr. Stahl.

*"I am looking forward to working with ERFA Secretary General, Mr. Conor Feighan, and the ERFA team in achieving these goals. I believe ERFA has a key role to play in promoting the views of the rail freight sector at European level"*, concluded Mr. Stahl.



## Nomination of new ERFA Secretary General, 26 August 2019

ERFA welcomes a new Secretary General recently nominated by its Board of Director after a rigorous selection procedure.

**Conor Feighan** has worked within the transport sector in Brussels for the past 8 years.

Mr. Feighan is joining ERFA directly from FEPORT, the European Association representing terminal operators and private port companies. Within FEPORT, Mr. Feighan has gained extensive experience in representing the interests of private industries within the transport sector.

Prior to working for the Port industry, Mr. Feighan also worked in the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee. Mr. Feighan holds a Masters Degree in European Politics from University College Dublin.

Carole Coune, ERFA Acting Secretary General: *"I'm happy to announce that Conor Feighan, the new ERFA Secretary General, starts today on the 26th of August and to pass him the torch."*

Conor Feighan, ERFA Secretary General : *"I am looking forward to representing ERFA Members at European Union level at this exciting moment, given that we are facing into a new legislative cycle in which concrete action must to be taken to make all sectors of the European economy, including transport, sustainable. ERFA has a crucial role to play in this transition."*

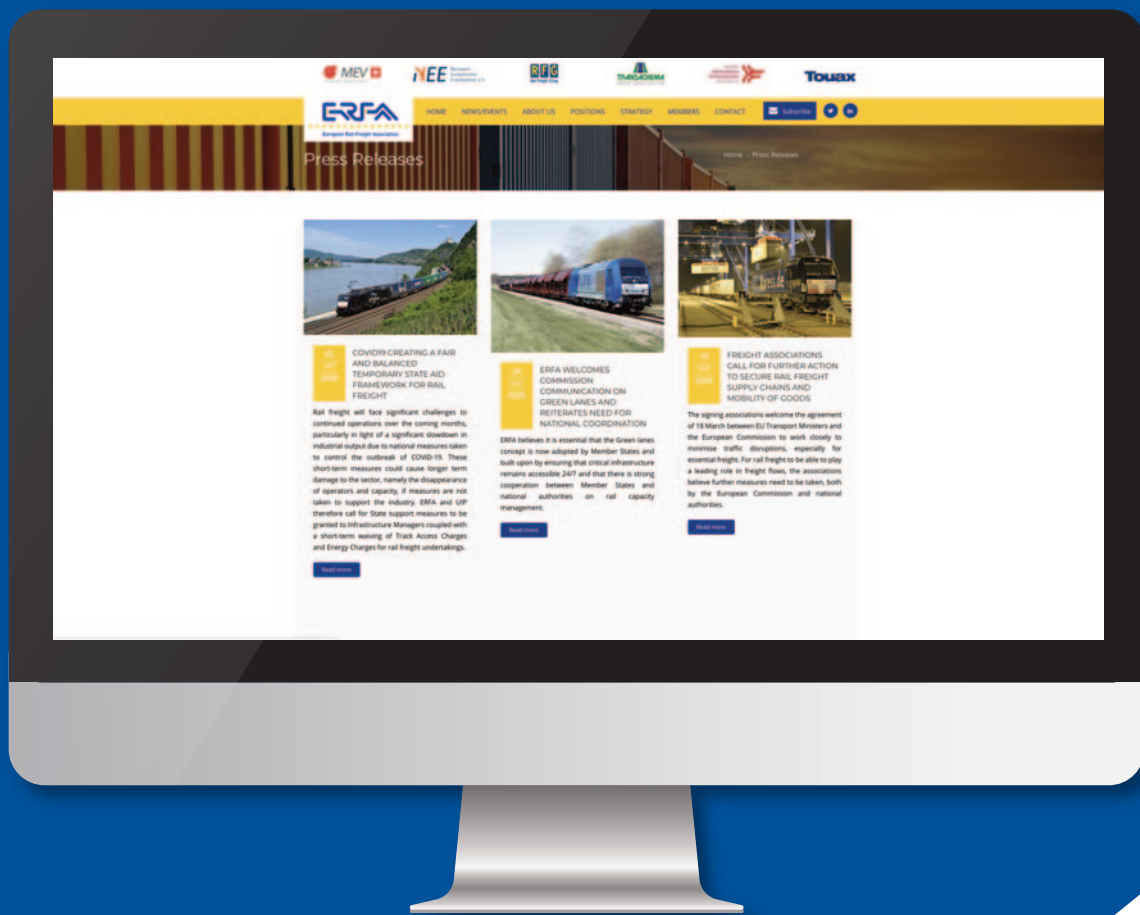




# Press Releases



Find all our press releases on:  
[www.erfarail.eu/news-events/press-releases](http://www.erfarail.eu/news-events/press-releases)









# ERFA Strategy in a nutshell

## BASIC OBJECTIVES

We aim at solid financials based on satisfaction and involvement of members

## OFFER FOR MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

We actively support the political processes aimed at railway liberalization

We contribute to the technical and administrative development of railways

## OUR OPERATIONAL FOCUS

We follow political dossiers which are crucial for rail market opening

We cover technical dossiers which are cost- and discrimination-sensitive

## OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

We are a strong voice for a full market opening and promoting a competitive rail freight sector

**We want to achieve adequate framework conditions for a competitive railway sector**

**We seek opportunities in the field of EU funding**

**We help our members to represent their interest in Brussels' politics**

**We manage relationships with internal and external stakeholders efficiently**

**We assure strong visibility to our positions**

**We want to acquire new members in order to strengthen our position**

# ERFA

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 @ERFA\_Rail



ERFA,  
THE VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENTS  
ON THE RAIL FREIGHT MARKET.