



Rail Freight in the European Union

European Rail Freight is facing multiple challenges

Organising rail freight is time-consuming

Rail freight customers often experience long reaction times from freight railways when they want to organise

their transport chain. Long coordination procedures lead to unattractive non-market-oriented rail offers.

Consignment tracing and tracking need more transparency

Rail freight is not the first option for freight forwarders because they cannot get reliable and up-to-date information about the positioning, the state-of-the-art

and estimated time of arrival of their wagons and consignments.

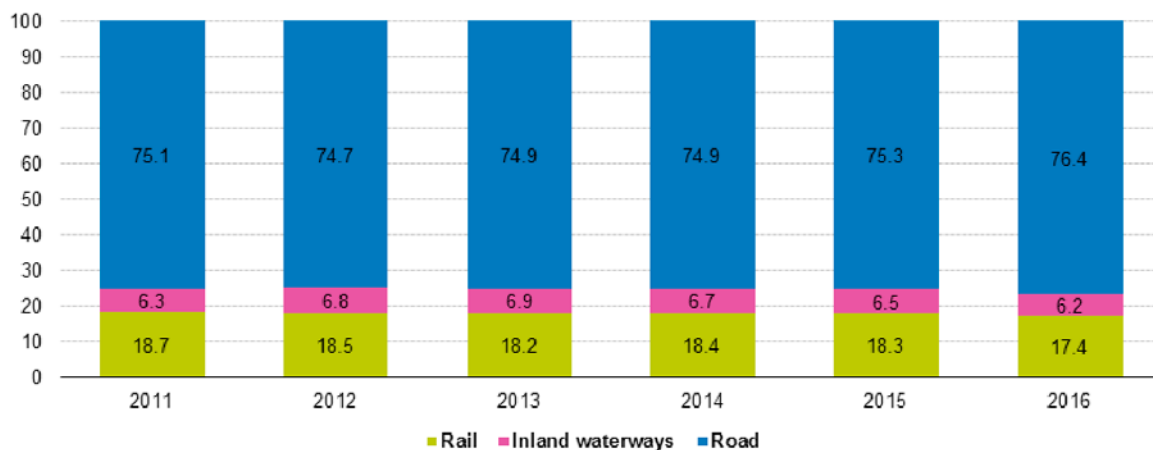
Rail freight needs better integration with other transport modes

Combined transport is inevitably linked to rail: goods need to be carried to and from the station. Often the first and last mile within the transport chain are not

performed by railways. This issue plays a central role when considering to shift from road freight to lower emission transport modes like rail.

Figure 1: Market share of the different transport modes.

Freight transport in the EU-28: modal split of inland transport modes (% of total tonne-kilometres)



Note: EU-28 includes rail transport estimates for Belgium and Croatia and does not include road freight transport for Malta (negligible).

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tran_hv_frmod)

Waiting times at borders and handovers are too long

Smooth and quick operation across certain border points, particularly on some Rail Freight Corridors remains difficult. This situation persists while some Member States continue to rely on national rules, including those on tests and checks. This means that the train can often be stopped at one border awaiting an official to come and undertake the necessary checks. Whereas in another Member State the train can pass unimpeded because that country

relies on the safety management system of the railway undertaking instead of (old) national rules to cover such issues in their risk control measures (i.e. company rules).

This situation leads to increased costs for the rail freight customers and uncertainty on when they will be able to deliver to the customer. The knock-on effect is potential loss of business to the road sector.

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The public is concerned about rail freight noise

The public opposes further development of the railway network and/or increase of rail freight traffic on the existing railway network due to fear of increased strain by rail freight noise.



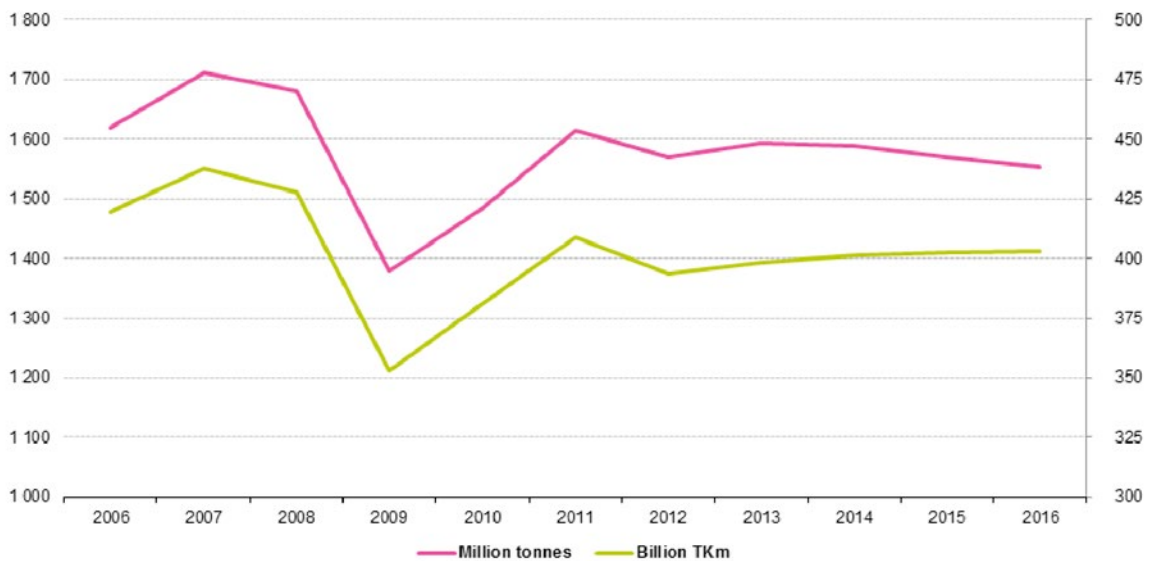
The public is concerned about the transport of dangerous goods by rail

Regulators and the general public show increasing concerns with the safety of dangerous goods carriages. However the perception of actual risks is often biased by the lack of reliable information, harmonised estimation tools, quality and effective communication.

As a result the market share of rail freight is stagnating since years

The above mentioned factors inhibit an increase of market share for rail freight compared to other modes of transport which offer often quicker and more reliable services and perform in a the more transparent way. Rail transport volumes remain lower than before the 2009 crisis.

Figure 2: Performance of the European rail freight sector – expressed in tons and in ton-kilometers.



Note: Data for Belgium for period 2013-2015 have been estimated.

Source: Eurostat.

European Union Agency for Railways' answers to the challenges in rail freight



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Drafting EU Rail Legislation to achieve technical harmonization

The EU Agency for Railways developed Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) with the aim to create a Single European Rail Area, without technical barriers for rail freight transport. All the TSIs are publicly available in English on the Agency's website (era.europa.eu) and in all EU languages in the official Journal of the

EU (eur-lex.europa.eu). The TSIs cover locomotives and passenger rolling stock, noise, wagons, infrastructure, energy, control command and signalling, persons with reduced mobility, safety in railway tunnels, operation and traffic management, telematics applications for passenger and freight services.

Harmonisation of European operational rules to reduce waiting times at borders / handovers

Waiting times and handover operations are still an issue across certain border points. This is also true for particular Rail Freight Corridors. One of the causes is the continued reliance by some Member States on national rules, including those on tests and checks, train composition and use of the brake. This means that the train can often be stopped at one border to perform a specific test/check or redo document preparation.

The impact for freight is increased costs and uncertain journey time. The Agency has taken an active role in solving this issue by supporting the development of a harmonized European legal framework and facilitating meetings with all the players involved.



European Union Agency for Railways' answers to the challenges in rail freight



Harmonisation of European freight vehicles and their authorisation to open the market for the vehicle supply industry

The wagon TSI, drafted and implemented by the Agency, harmonises requirements on freight wagons in the European Union in line with the principle of

interoperability (safe and interrupted movement of trains, which accomplish the required levels of performance).

Developing digital solutions to improve rail freight services

The Agency contributes together with the European Rail Sector to enhance - through standardised telematics message interfaces - the European rail freight product offering and tracing (such as e-Consignment Note, Enhanced Electronic Capacity offering to customers and Electronic real time Tracing of consignments /wagons). This includes in particular

the successful implementation of the European Path Coordination System for rail capacity allocation, a real time Train Information System, an Improved Service Reliability system for wagon tracking, and the Electronic Data Exchange of the Consignment Note Data between the co-operating rail freight actors.



European Union Agency for Railways' answers to the challenges in rail freight

Creation of a European Vehicle Register to ensure access to the registration data of individual freight vehicles for all appropriate actors.

The Agency in coordination with Member States is implementing a centralised register to ensure a traceability and history of vehicles.



Mandatory retrofitting of existing wagons with quieter brake blocks as a precondition for their operation on quieter routes to reduce noise strain for residents

The Agency has recommended to the European Commission the classification of certain railway lines in the European Union as quieter routes, on which only wagons equipped with quieter brake blocks may be operated.

Facilitating combined transport photo improve the integration between the land transport modes "rail" and "road".

The Agency, together with the European rail sector associations, has developed a report aimed at facilitating the Combined Transport through appropriate consideration into the EU legislation on railways. The report contains an analysis of the issues that are currently affecting the combined transport and proposes a number of solutions to mitigate these issues and to be implemented into the EU legislation. More information on era.europa.eu

Developing a multimodal harmonised risk management framework for Inland Transport of Dangerous Goods to enhance safety

In collaboration with international experts on the transport of dangerous goods the Agency has developed a framework for the management of TDG risks on roads, railways and inland waterways. This framework includes a sustainable process for improving the access and transparency of data and

reference material for risk estimations. It establishes also harmonised methods for decision-making and risk estimations. This framework is accessible from the DG MOVE website and can be applied for multimodal logistic chains or single mode operations.



European Union Agency for Railways' answers to the challenges in rail freight

Description of the European rail infrastructure data to check compatibility between rail freight vehicles and the route



The Agency has set up and is managing a web based, computerised common user interface that enables Member States to describe their railway network in a same way and to publish its technical characteristics. The European Register of infrastructure (RINF) is publicly available and accessible via the

Agency website (<http://www.era.europa.eu/Core-Activities/Interoperability/Pages/RINF.aspx>). RINF will be updated in 2019 to publish the values of all the network parameters necessary to check the technical compatibility between vehicle and the route.



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Making the railway system work better for society.



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