



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Rail safety: Commission welcomes significant progress achieved at Transport Council

The European Commission welcomes the "general approach" agreement reached at today's Transport Council on a recast of the rail safety directive. This recast is the second part of the so-called [Fourth Railway Package](#) – proposed in January 2013 – with the aim of eliminating existing administrative and technical barriers by developing further the Single European Rail Area, thereby contributing to the competitiveness of the rail sector versus other means of transport.

Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas, responsible for transport, said: "I am pleased to see that we have made good progress on this aspect of the rail package, under the Lithuanian presidency. It's a crucial piece of the puzzle for better and more competitive railways in Europe. We will continue to do our best to make rapid progress on the other parts of the package as well."

The main driver for the recast is the simplification of the process of granting safety certificates to railway undertakings (RU), with a migration from the current system towards a single EU safety certificate valid in all Member States where the applicant intends to operate.

The "general approach" includes other improvements with respect to the present legal framework, such as:

- a clarification of roles and responsibilities of all actors,
- a new article on obligations of national safety authorities in terms of supervision activity,
- clear provisions on the link between supervision and certification.

The Commission regrets however the delayed implementation of the revised directive (transition period of 5 years) requested by the Member States. The Commission has proposed 2 years, considering that the implementation period must be strictly limited to the agency's need to prepare itself for the new tasks. Any longer delay is not justifiable since the sector urgently needs the reform.

The EU railway market has seen important changes, with three legislative 'railway packages' gradually opening up national markets and making railways more competitive and interoperable at EU level. The Commission proposed the Fourth Railway Package to remove the remaining obstacles and ultimately improve EU rail services.

Next steps:

The European Parliament is expected to conclude its first reading on all the elements of the package at the beginning of next year.

In the meantime, discussions at the Council will progress on the next elements of the package, more specifically on the new Regulation for the European Railway Agency.

More information:

[IP/13/65](#) - European Railways at a junction: the Commission adopts proposals for a Fourth Railway Package

[MEMO/13/45](#) - European Rail: Challenges Ahead

Watch the video The Future of Rail in Europe:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GHz-stzCso>

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