



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wrocław European Rail CEO Summit Joint Declaration on “Strengthening EU Competitiveness through Transport Decarbonisation and Sustainable Mobility based on Rail”. Wrocław, Poland – 30 April 2025

The Wrocław European Rail CEO Summit Joint Declaration represents a **unified appeal to the leaders of the European Union and its Member States to urgently adopt and implement the necessary measures to establish a legal and financial framework that enables rail to unlock its full potential.** Rail must play a central role in achieving the European Union’s strategic objectives related to competitiveness, resilience, sustainable mobility, and climate neutrality.

This declaration underscores the vital importance of rail transport in making these objectives attainable by providing the safest, most energy-efficient, resilient, and sustainable mobility option within the EU. At the same time, it draws attention to the substantial barriers that currently hinder the development of rail, rendering the achievement of EU transport decarbonisation and climate goals extremely challenging — if not unattainable.

Key Messages

- **Rail is the greenest, safest, and most energy-efficient mode of transport, with a minimal carbon footprint and external costs.** It offers the most effective solution to meet the EU’s 2030 target of reducing emissions by 55% and is uniquely positioned to lead the transition toward sustainable mobility.
- **The railway sector plays a pivotal role in Europe’s shift to a greener and more energy-efficient transport system.** It supports the sustainable development of the internal market and strengthens the EU’s strategic autonomy, reindustrialisation, and supply chain security.

- **Rail unquestionably strengthens the competitiveness and resilience of the European economy and society by ensuring the continuity of passenger and freight flows, even in times of crisis.** It has proven effective in mitigating the socio-economic impacts of a series of major disruptions in recent years and plays a strategic role in both civil protection and military mobility.
- **Investment in rail delivers strong returns.** According to the IMF, every additional 1% of GDP invested in rail infrastructure can generate a 1.5% increase in GDP over four years.

Challenges Highlighted

- **A significant gap remains between the EU's climate and decarbonisation goals and the current reality.** The transport sector is the only sector within the EU where emissions continue to rise. The shift toward more sustainable modes like rail is progressing far too slowly. The increasing demand for mobility and goods transport is being absorbed primarily by polluting transport modes, contradicting the EU's decarbonisation goals.
- **Chronic underfunding of rail infrastructure**, delays in enacting effective EU regulations, and unfair competition—stemming from the **incomplete application of the “polluter pays” and “user pays” principles**—undermine the competitiveness of rail and jeopardize the attainment of the EU's ambitious targets for decarbonisation and clean mobility.

Calls for Action

- **Establish and enforce a robust EU regulatory framework that ensures a level playing field and promotes competitive balance across all modes of transport**, thereby enabling clean modes like rail to grow.
- **Secure sufficient, long-term, and stable funding and financing for the rail sector** to realise the ambitions and objectives set out in key EU transport policies and strategies.
- **Elevate rail to a high priority within EU and Member State transport and decarbonisation policies**, as well as in the implementation of related measures.

Rail Sector Commitment

The European rail sector is committed to intensifying and enhancing technical and operational cooperation within the boundaries of EU law, with the goal of increasing competitiveness, cost-efficiency, and resilience. In doing so, it aims to position rail as a leading force in the achievement of the EU's goals on decarbonisation, clean mobility, and competitiveness.