

The further liberalisation and expansion of the European railway market

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party convening in Palermo, Italy on 23-25 November 2011

Noting that

- The European railway market does not function properly;
- This is mainly caused by the fact that the European rail market is not yet fully opened, neither for passengers nor freight;

Considering

- The initiatives of the European Commission on the revision of the First Railway Package (the Recast) and the recently published White Paper on the Future of Transport;
- The lack of investments with sufficient added value in the European railway market; emphasising the fact that different EU member states invested large budgets in the construction and the expansion of a national railway system over the last decades, without taking into account the needs of Europe as a whole, which has led to too many missing links in the system; and deploring therefore the conservative and protective attitude of EU Member States in this regard;
- The various advantages of existing national and international railway transport, and in particular the High Speed lines, especially as regards the environment but also taking into account efficiency and the comfort of the traveller over short distances;

Urges the European Commission to

- Keep the opening of the railway market as a main priority;
- Increase its efforts to liberalise the national passenger rail market, coming forward with a proposal as soon as possible;
- Improve the functioning of the freight and international passenger transport market, already opened under previous European legislation;
- Come forward with a proposal on complete separation between the infrastructure manager and the railway undertaking as quickly as possible;

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- Work in close cooperation with the European Parliament on all legislative proposals on rail related subjects;
- Make sure that every Member State has a national regulator which is fully independent and has the necessary means to monitor the market in a profound and efficient way, emphasising the need for a European regulator as an appeal body in case of irregularities and as a market control authority for rail related companies;
- Take initiatives, together with the EU member states and the different
- Companies that are active in this field, to connect existing national networks in order to create a cross-border, European railway system, with an emphasis on High Speed lines and economically and industrially relevant lines, highlighting in this regard the importance of focusing on the elimination of missing links and European added value;
- Promote the use of High Speed trains for passenger transport, by focusing on the positive consequences for the environment, the decreased time for short trips and the user-friendliness of passenger travel by train, especially in comparison with short distance flights;
- Support initiatives that aim to improve the connection of the different transport modes for passengers, especially between air-rail and rail-road, for example by promoting the construction of high speed lines connecting major commercial centres with main airports;
- Investigate in this regard the possibilities for a European rail ticketing system that would allow train passengers to plan their international rail journey and buy their tickets more easily.
- Remember the importance of freight rail transport and the capacity limits it faces. In particular welcomes the Ferrmed initiative to provide a high-speed freight network for the transport notably of perishables, throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Investments in rail infrastructure should therefore not solely focus on high-speed passenger transport, but equally need to modernize freight rail infrastructure.

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