



Fighting Climate Change: Railway Community Aspiration

1.

The evidence of climate change is becoming clearer and so is the potentially substantial detrimental impact on the environment for future generations. The need for urgent action has been recognised in the Communication from the Commission, concerning limiting global climate change to 2 degrees Celsius, seeking a 20% reduction of CO₂ emissions by 2020.

The Railway community welcomes the European Union's 'call for action' and outlines below how the railways could assist global society and the overall transport sector to reduce its CO₂ emissions; a sector being responsible for a quarter of total CO₂ emissions in Europe.

2.

The Railway system is currently the mode of transport with lowest specific CO₂ emissions on average. Thus, **the most significant contribution to the EU climate change policy for transport would be "modal shifting" from road and air to rail.** Simple example: every train journey instead of car ride in Germany saves two thirds of CO₂ emissions; train journey compared to a flight even 70 % (per passenger).

The railways have significant environmental advantages in general but suggest capturing more traffic from road and air in three segments in particular:

- ❖ Passenger traffic in agglomerations and city centres.
- ❖ High speed passenger services - up to 1000 km.
- ❖ Freight traffic on medium and long distances, as part of intermodal traffic/logistic chains.

3.

Despite its obvious CO₂ advantage, the railway sector is not complacent and seeks on the contrary to improve its position as the lowest CO₂ emitter. This is done by implementing continuous improvement programmes, ranging from operational to technological solutions. A number of European railways, over the last few years have already started energy-saving programmes showing specific CO₂ emission reductions by up to 25%.

Moreover, the European railway community would jointly engage to fix targets by the end of 2007 for the improvement of the environmental and energy performance of railway services in Europe until 2020.

4.

Railways have considerably improved their transport performance and reliability in recent years.

The passenger sector has stabilised, the high-speed rail system is growing rapidly and innovative metro and light rail systems, have significantly improved the image, use and modal share of rail in many cities. The rail freight business has started to grow again and in some countries the market share of rail freight is increasing after years of decline.

5.

Railways have improved in spite of the unfavourable and unbalanced competitive framework conditions in Europe. In a normal market economy demand and supply are balanced by market driven prices.

However, this basic mechanism does not work in the European transport sector, as prices are distorted by the political framework such as taxation, subsidies etc. **The principle of ‘polluter pays’ with the inclusion of externalities is commonly agreed - but still does not apply in practice for transport.**

At present, European legislation does not allow for adjustment to prices in the transport sector reflecting real market conditions; environmental cost factors can only be taken into account in specific situations, not in principle. Perhaps this distortion is the main reason why the transport sector is the fastest growing ‘polluter’.

6.

In summary the European Railway Community is fully committed to improving its own environmental credentials, but **the only way to make significant CO₂ emissions reductions in the European Transport sector is to actively support modal shift.**

The European Railway Community therefore calls upon the European Member States, European Parliament and European Commission to take the following decisions:

Fighting Climate Change - the Railway Community Aspiration:

- ❖ Policy measures should make environmental advantages & improvements price effective
- ❖ Setting fair infrastructure charging in the framework of the “Eurovignette Directive” by:
 - ending the current unbalanced legal prohibition on including climate change and pollution costs in road infrastructure charging in the EU.
 - including adequate taxation and tolls for car traffic in agglomerations and city centres & earmarking these funds for improving regional and local public transportation
 - internalising the external costs for road freight traffic pricing & earmarking these funds for rail-related infrastructure/TEN projects
 - speeding up the Eurovignette timetable i.e. presenting the previously announced Commission impact studies and the necessary legislative proposals by the end of 2007 (instead of June 2008)
- ❖ Removing unsustainable political treatments, such as **aviation fuel tax exemptions.**
- ❖ Creating legal instruments to move significant portion of **hazardous goods** from road to rail.
- ❖ Correcting the **European Emission Trading Scheme** that, currently, penalises the electrified and environmental friendly railways and make it an effective system of “cap and trade” for polluting modes of transport.
- ❖ Utilising **campaigns to raise awareness** regarding the impacts of transport on the environment.
- ❖ Setting **economical incentives** for shippers who move to environmental friendly modes.

7.

Recalling the title of the Commission's White Paper on European Transport Policy for 2010: It is “time to decide” - to decide and to act now. **The European Railway Community is united in signing this aspiration and represented by the following railway associations:**

CER

Community of European Railways and
Infrastructure managers

Johannes Ludewig, Executive Director

UITP Euroteam

International Association of Public Transport

Brigitte Ollier, Director

EIM

European Rail Infrastructure Managers

Michael Robson, Secretary General

UNIFE

The Association of European Railway Industries

Michael Clausecker, General Director

UIC

International Union of Railways

Luc Aliadière, Chief Executive