

Press Release

- 14 July 2011 -

High administrative costs of up to 5,8 billion EUR could threaten successful rail noise abatement

At present, different support programmes and incentive regimes are being discussed on the EU and national level to retrofit freight wagons to reduce their noise. A study commissioned by important rail associations (VDV, VPI, UIP, ERFA, UIC) and rail companies (AAE, DB Netz, DB Schenker Rail) has shown that all models will cost up to 5,8 billion EUR all over Europe in administrative costs in addition to the actual retrofitting and higher operational costs. Rail freight wagon keepers, railway undertakings, national and European associations agree that these costs *cannot* be borne by the sector but require subsidisation.

Therefore, VDV, ERFA, CER, UIP and AAE met the European Commission on 12th July to present the findings of their study and to request the EC to consider an alternative approach, i.e. a direct funding scheme hosted on EU level. This model would consist in a mileage-related bonus for converted freight wagons paid directly to the wagon keepers. It would reduce the high administrative costs as the bonus will be paid directly to the actor in charge of the retrofitting. Such a model is also much more likely to help achieving the primary objective of all: reducing the noise of rail freight.

In contrast this objective cannot at all be achieved with a measure based on a noise-related track access charge, involving the infrastructure manager, the railway undertaking and then only the wagon keeper. Moreover, implementing such systems on national levels will result in an European patchwork of heterogeneous models despite the fact that a huge volume of rail freight is cross boarder, i.e. international.

The European Commission welcomed the study and will also consider potential measures to prohibit non-retrofitted wagons in the EU in the future.

The outcome of the study will also be submitted to the European Parliament.

The study can be downloaded from www.erfa.be, www.vdv.de, www.uiprail.org and www.uic.org.

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