

VTG AG POLICY BRIEF

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NETWORKED EUROPE: WHY THE RAIL SECTOR NEEDS A EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY

Dear Sir or Madam,

Remember when you had to show your documents every time you crossed a border going on vacation? I think we are all glad such time-consuming and expensive inspection procedures are a thing of the past! Unfortunately, what has long since been the norm for road transport just isn't as simple on track: complex rules and, above all, the lack of consistent, uniform standards throughout Europe substantially hinder cross-border rail transport. This policy brief illustrates how a European transport policy has the potential to strengthen the position of rail overall.



I hope that you find the brief to be an interesting and stimulating read.

Sincerely,

Dr. Heiko Fischer
Chairman of the Executive Board


51%
of rail freight transport in Germany crosses national boundaries – the rail network connects Europe

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, BOOST RAIL TRANSPORT: UNIFORM STANDARDS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS IN EUROPE

INFRASTRUCTURE


EXPAND EUROPEAN FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

When it comes to rail track priority, passengers take precedence. Separate corridors for freight transport help to safeguard the smooth transport of cargo. We need more of these corridors – especially on major European transport axes.



INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE 740-METER NETWORK


Long trains make rail freight transport more efficient and, therefore, more economical. Yet, unfortunately, there are still train paths in Europe which are unable to accommodate trains which are 740 meters in length. These gaps urgently need to be filled.



REGULIERUNG


INTRODUCE A COMMON LANGUAGE

At an international level and in almost all economic areas, English is the *lingua franca*. A major exception to this is rail transport, where every locomotive driver has to be able to demonstrate knowledge of each national language. This complicates cross-border transport significantly.



SIMPLIFY ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

Safety naturally comes first, but many document obligations which apply to rail transportation could be simplified considerably. What's more, digital technologies are able to facilitate such processes, as many documents still have to be processed analogously and kept at hand.



THE EUROPEAN TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEM (ETCS) – HARMONIZING RAIL FREIGHT TRANSPORT IN EUROPE

The newspaper, *Die Welt*, summarized the situation perfectly: “Every rail transport across the globe can only run as well as the respective network permits, and in Germany its completely overloaded.” A new signal system, the European Train Control System (ETCS), offers a solution to the problem. The industry has high hopes for digital technology to automate train control. It is estimated that the system could increase rail (freight)transportation by up to 20 percent.

CURRENT SYSTEM: LINEAR TRAIN CONTROL (LZB)

The entire rail track network is divided into blocks according to specific capacity. If this capacity level is reached, no other train can enter the block. If there is a delay in a particular block, all of the rolling stock following behind are forced to wait.



FUTURE SYSTEM: EUROPEAN TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEM (ETCS)

Signals will become redundant: special balises send route information (e.g. speed) directly to trains which react automatically (e.g. by braking), thus enabling even more precise transport timing.



The ETCS will replace 20 signal systems which have been used to date. This represents an important step towards unifying rail transport in Europe and offers welcome relief for cross-border rail transportation. The system has already been implemented successfully in many countries and VTG is delighted that the federal government has held out a prospect of funding this future technology in its coalition agreement. Introducing the ETCS system on a large scale would improve the efficiency and sustainability of rail transport in Germany and strengthen the position of rail as a mode of transportation, both at a nationwide and European level.

CONTACT VTG

Let's engage in active dialog!
Feel free to contact us with all of your rail freight transport-related questions and queries.
We would be glad to assist you and provide you with the facts, figures and estimates you may require.

YOUR CONTACT PERSON

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