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4th EU Railway Package

An important step for the European railways

The European Commission today published the long-awaited 4th EU Railway Package. It contains proposals on EU-wide certification and safety procedures, stricter rules for the separation of infrastructure and operations as well as on access to domestic passenger markets. **Michael Cramer**, transport spokesperson of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, stated:

"The European Commission has finally revealed its long-awaited 4th Railway Package.

At the heart of the Commission's proposal are stronger requirements for the separation of railway infrastructure and operations. We support the objective of financial separation because it is essential for preventing companies from using public funds as they please. We encourage the Commission to make use of the possibility to prevent companies that do not respect these requirements from entering foreign passenger markets in the future.

Of course Member States remain responsible for ensuring a necessary degree of coordination when it comes to the development of the entire sector, investments, ticketing and information to passengers.

For the proposed opening of domestic passenger markets a race to the bottom with regard to social, environmental and safety standards has to be avoided.

The proposals also herald the possibility of a real breakthrough in the area of procedures relating to safety and certification. It is long overdue that the multitude of over 11,000 national rules is replaced by a one-stop shop at EU level. This would save time and money and put rail transport on equal footing with other modes of transport where such harmonisation already exists. The European Railway Agency is the right body for this role - but it needs an appropriate level of competences, financing and staff to fulfill these responsibilities."

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Michael Cramer

Member

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