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Press release | 14.12.2021

Rethinking mobility means prioritising rail and active travel

Efficient and Green Mobility package

Today, the European Commission presented its legislative package on sustainable and intelligent mobility. This package includes a revision of the Trans-European Transport Network, a proposal on Intelligent Transport Systems, an Urban Mobility Framework, and an action plan to promote long-distance rail passenger transport in the European Union, in particular with regard to cross-border transport. Rail's market share in the EU is just 7.8%.

The action plan comes at the end of the European Year of Rail 2021 and paves the way for future steps to advance rail in the EU. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the European Commission's action plan and calls for concrete commitments to prioritise rail in European transport policy.

Ciarán Cuffe MEP, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the Transport Committee, comments:

"Climate change, air pollution, transport poverty - all of these issues force us to completely rethink our transport system. Having 2021 as the European Year of Rail has certainly helped to put rail on the political agenda and we welcome the Commission's action plan and proposals on TEN-T and urban mobility. It is essential however that these put modal shift and environmental safeguards front and centre.

"There are too many gaps in the European rail network across borders, too many closed or missing small cross-border rail links. We must think of rail beyond national frontiers and move from a patchwork of domestic networks to a genuine European rail network where citizens can easily book tickets, travel door to door quickly, or bring their bikes onboard.

"We've heard about modal shift for decades now but nothing has really changed. Without a significant shift to rail and active travel, we will not achieve the EU's environmental targets. I look forward to working on these proposals, and to further measures stemming from the action plan on rail, so that the potential of public transport, rail and active travel are fully realised."

Jakop Dalunde MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the implementation of the TEN-T report, comments:

"We need greater EU action on rail policy across Europe. Today, a train cannot travel easily from Stockholm to Paris. Red tape, lack of interoperability and capacity mean long journey times and high costs. European coordination is needed to solve this. We support the Commission's proposals to examine national infrastructure plans and for important projects to be backed up with EU legislation.

"We need rail as an alternative to short-haul flights. The night train network in the EU needs to be expanded quickly, while investments into new tracks and rolling stock must increase. We also have to cut down the jungle of tariffs for international rail tickets. We call on EU Member States to prioritise rail over road in the EU."

More:

This revision is one of the key actions promoted by the European Commission under the European Green Deal and the EU Sustainable Mobility Strategy. The TEN-T is expected to contribute to the EU's objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The Commission also proposes to integrate freight corridors into the TEN-T.

The European Parliament has repeatedly stressed the need for massive investment in infrastructure and improved governance.The revision of the Intelligent Transport Systems Directive is also part of this package. For the Greens/EFA group, it is essential to guarantee the right to personal data protection.

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