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Why the subject matters (1/2)

CO₂ emissions per tonne-kilometre

Source: ECA based on European Environment Agency 2012 data for the EU
Why the subject matters (2/2)

- The mobility of goods is essential for the EU internal market, growth and jobs creation
- BUT can have negative impacts on environment and quality of life of EU citizens

Increasing **rail freight** would contribute to reducing pollution and congestion:

- Shifting freight from road to rail is an EU transport **policy objective**
- **Funding** for rail infrastructure: €28bn allocated during the period 2007-2013
The questions we asked

Are EU actions effective in enhancing rail freight transport?
- Has the performance improved since 2000?
- Strategic and regulatory framework?
- EU funds properly targeted?

- Five Member States: Spain, France, Germany, Czech Republic and Poland

- 18 rail infrastructure projects selected accounting for a total EU contribution of €2bn
What we found

Rail freight transport performance (1/2)

- The performance of rail freight transport remains unsatisfactory overall:
  - the objective of shifting goods from road to rail not reached
  - Road remains the leading mode of freight transport in the EU
  - Poor performance of rail freight transport not helped by low speed of trains
BUT, some Member States have managed to increase the proportion of goods transported by rail, including one of the Member States we visited - Germany, due to:

- its central location and high level of industry
- the early liberalisation of its rail freight market
- the introduction of a road toll for heavy vehicles
- its relatively strong and independent regulatory body
Many strategic and regulatory factors prevent rail freight from being more competitive

Some efforts by the Commission, **BUT**:  
- A single European railway area is still far from being achieved – system of 26 separate national networks, interoperability issues (ERTMS)
- Uneven progress of rail freight market liberalisation in Member States – still significant market share of incumbent freight operators
Strategic and regulatory framework (2/2)

- Traffic management procedures are not adapted to rail freight needs (path allocation)

- Unlike rail, road infrastructure is not always subject to charges for every kilometre used

- Administrative and technical constraints hamper the competitiveness of rail freight (4th railway package)

- Lack of transparency on the performance of the sector has not stimulated improvements in customer service
EU financial support

- EU funding has not properly targeted the needs of the rail freight sector:
  - Overall more EU funds were allocated to roads than to rail…
  - …when allocated to rail, EU funds did not specifically target rail freight needs
  - Co-financed projects: outputs delivered, but no general improvement in rail freight performance
  - Poor maintenance of lines used mainly by freight trains affects performance of EU-funded infrastructure
What we recommend (1/3)

EC and the MS should make the rail freight more competitive and attractive by:

- Addressing the strategic and regulatory issues (Recommendations 1 to 5)
  - 1: Ensure that national regulatory bodies have the power and independence they need, in particular to prevent anti-competitive practices
  - 2: Adapt the traffic management rules to the needs of the rail freight sector
What we recommend (2/3)

- **3:** Simplify and harmonise procedures for vehicle approval and for safety certificates, and simplify the language requirements for train drivers

- **4:** Monitor progress and evaluate user satisfaction to promote good quality service

- **5:** Promote a level playing field between the different methods of transport
What we recommend (3/3)

- Better targeting the available EU funding (Recommendations 6 to 8)
  - 6: Allocate **EU funding in line with EU transport policy objectives** and monitor how much EU funding is actually invested into rail freight
  - 7: **Improve the coordination** of rail investments to maximise their effectiveness and avoid development in a piecemeal fashion
  - 8: Ensure **proper maintenance** of the rail network, in particular rail freight corridors
Other Special Reports and Opinion (1/2)

- **SR 31/2016** Spending at least one euro in every five from the EU budget on climate action: ambitious work underway, but at serious risk of falling short

- **SR 23/2016** Maritime transport in the EU: in troubled waters - much ineffective and unsustainable investment

- **SR 1/2015** Inland Waterway Transport in Europe: No significant improvements in modal share and navigability conditions since 2001

- **SR 21/2014** EU-funded airport infrastructures: poor value for money
Other Special Reports and Opinion (2/2)

- **SR 1/2014** Effectiveness of EU-supported public urban transport projects

- **SR 5/2013** Are EU Cohesion Policy funds well spent on roads?

- **SR 1/2013** Have the Marco Polo programmes been effective in shifting traffic off the road?

- **Opinion 2/2016** EFSI: an early proposal to extend and expand
Thank you