

**6 December 2016**

The vote in plenary on the market pillar of the fourth railway package scheduled for December 2016 puts the spotlight on a set of policy measures to improve the competitiveness of EU rail and the quality of its services. Indeed, the measures on markets and governance aim to enhance the level playing field between operators, including for domestic operations, and cost-efficiency of rail services. The technical part of this package, already adopted, is intended to facilitate the access of companies to rail markets. But as the EU considers that rail can play a significant role in shifting towards greener and more sustainable transport, while boosting employment and the wider economy, its policy encompasses a broader range of areas such as measures and financial means to develop high-speed rail networks and services, to reduce rail noise, to strengthen rail security, to guarantee a harmonised level of protection and assistance and to foster research and innovation. This Topical Digest offers a list of recent publications, as well as some graphics on these themes, produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

[The fourth railway package: Another step towards a Single European Railway Area](#)

In-depth Analysis by Damiano Scordamaglia (with the contribution of Ivana Katsarova), maps and graphics by Christian Dietrich, March 2016

Put forward by the European Commission in 2013, the fourth railway package comprises six legislative proposals to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of rail across the EU. It aims to remove the remaining institutional, legal and technical obstacles, and create a liberalised and truly integrated European Railway Area. Once implemented, the fourth railway package is expected to give a new impetus to rail services throughout the EU, and contribute to meeting the objectives of the Commission's 2011 White Paper on Transport.

[The European Union Agency for Railways](#)

At-a-glance note by Damiano Scordamaglia, June 2016

Established in 2004 and based in Valenciennes (France), the European Railway Agency was set up with a view to revitalising the rail sector and creating a Single European Railway Area by eliminating regulatory and operational differences across EU rail systems. The Commission's 2013 legislative proposals, forming the technical part of the 'Fourth Railway Package', were adopted by the European Parliament in April 2016 after long negotiations with the Council. They include a new regulation on the Agency, renamed the EU Agency for Railways, which, with two modified directives, also has expanded powers.

[Rail passenger rights in the European Union](#)

At-a-glance note by Damiano Scordamaglia, December 2016

The European Union has set out rights to give rail passengers a minimum harmonised level of protection, assistance and services. These rights also aim to facilitate mobility and encourage the use of public transport. An assessment of EU rail passenger rights is relevant today, in view of the planned plenary vote on the market pillar of the fourth railway package in December 2016. When implemented, this package should accelerate competition and lead to increased efforts from rail companies and Member States to meet passengers' expectations and rights.

[High-speed rail in the EU](#)

Briefing by Damiano Scordamaglia, graphics by Giulio Sabbati, September 2015

The EU started supporting high-speed rail (HSR) projects with the establishment of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) in the early 1990s, and it promotes HSR development through other means, such as technical harmonisation measures, security systems and funding instruments. HSR importance has increased over time in the EU in terms of network length, number of passengers carried and modal share. The sector's future depends on a diverse range of political, economic and technical challenges, which have led public authorities in some EU countries to question HSR's overall added value.



Further reading

[Rail passenger rights and obligations](#)

Briefing - Implementation appraisal by Milan Remáč, November 2016

[EU policy on railway noise reduction](#)

At-a-glance note by Damiano Scordamaglia, January 2016

[Rail security in the EU](#)

At-a-glance note by Damiano Scordamaglia, September 2015

['Shift to Rail' – Research for EU rail transport](#)

At-a-glance note by Damiano Scordamaglia, March 2015

[The Cost of Non-Europe in Transport](#)

Briefing - Infographic by Monika Nogaj and Eulalia Claros, March 2015

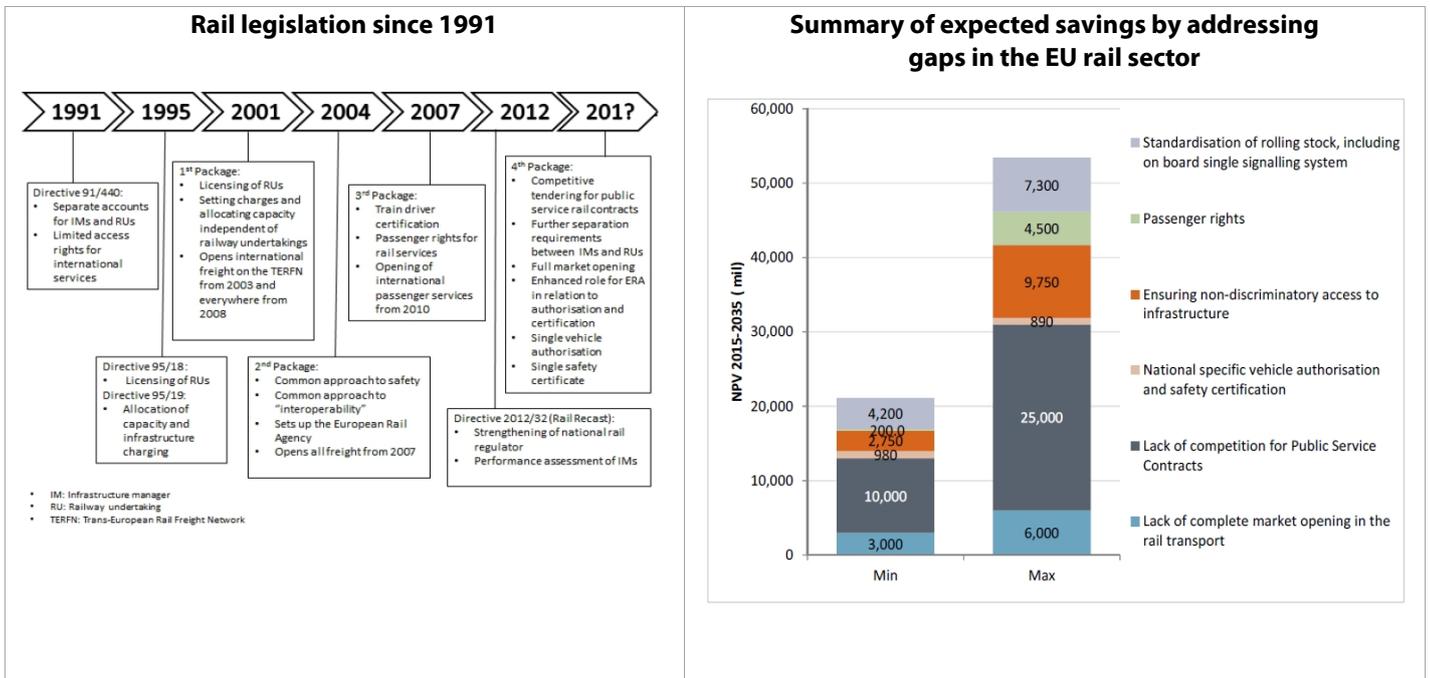
[The Cost of Non-Europe in the Single Market for Transport and Tourism](#)

- [Cost of Non-Europe Report](#)
Study by Monika Nogaj, October 2014
- [Annex I: Road Transport and Railways](#)

[Codification of Passenger Rights: Cost of Non-Europe Report](#)

Study by Monika Nogaj, July 2015

More in the [Graphics Warehouse](#)



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