



**2020/0035(COD)**

19.5.2020

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council  
on a European Year of Rail (2021)  
(COM(2020)0078 – C9-0076/2020 – 2020/0035(COD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Martina Michels

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## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

On 4 March 2020 the European Commission proposed 2021 to be the European Year of Rail to promote rail as sustainable, innovative and safe means of transport, through the organization of events, campaign and initiatives at national, regional and local level.

In its communication of 11 December 2019, the European Commission set out a European Green Deal aiming at achieving climate neutrality by 2050. As transport accounts for a quarter of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, the rail sector will play a crucial role in the realization of this target.

Therefore the Commission is studying a strategy based on sustainable and smart mobility with the priority to shift into rail and inland waterways a substantial part of the 75% of inland freight carried today in Europe.

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the entire EU with a major impact on transport and connectivity in the EU. The European Year of Rail could represent the chance to open a constructive debate on the future challenges that all modes of transport will face and on the necessary measures to be implemented to protect the health of transport workers and passengers.

Your rapporteur welcomes the Commission proposal to declare 2021 “European Year of Rail” and its objective to encourage and support the efforts of the Union, the Member States, regional and local authorities and other organizations to increase the share of passengers and freight moving by rail.

Your rapporteur believes, that creating and enhancing sustainable, environmentally friendly and energy-efficiency transport modes is a crucial part of EU's strategy to tackle climate change. In this context, the rapporteur underlines the important role played by cohesion policy in improving EU internal and cross-border railway networks, in particular in the less developed regions.

Your rapporteur considers the European Year of Rail as a key opportunity to explore strategies to enhance EU railways policies, especially in rural and border areas where local rail networks and train stations continue to be dismantled. A particular focus should be given to the accessibility for elderly and disadvantaged persons and the improvement of the passenger's rights, a better booking and ticket system, investments in infrastructures and services.

In your rapporteur's view, rail transport should be a real alternative to individualised modes of transport and to short and medium distance flights. The cross-border dimension of rail brings citizens closer together, allows them to explore the Union in all its diversity and cultural richness. The cross-border dimension of rail should foster also social, economic and territorial cohesion, in particular under the post 2020 cohesion policy objectives for a greener and more connected Europe.

Your rapporteur believes that the European Year of Rail in 2021 could help also to increase awareness for the need to modernise rail including its digital infrastructure and services across

the Member States.

Your rapporteur proposes further concrete measures to achieve the objectives of the European Year of Rail such as *inter alia*: the reactivation of local, regional and interregional passenger and freight railway lines, the re-introduction of a European network of night trains, that reaches out to all Member States and neighbouring countries, the development of a unified ticket booking system valid in all Member States and for all rail companies operating in the Union.

## AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to take into account the following amendments:

### Amendment 1

#### Proposal for a decision Recital 1

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(1) In its Communication of 11 December 2019<sup>1</sup>, the Commission set out a European Green Deal for the European Union and its citizens. The European Green Deal is a new **growth** strategy that aims to transform the Union into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic **growth** is decoupled from resource use.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal

##### *Amendment*

(1) In its Communication of 11 December 2019<sup>1</sup>, the Commission set out a European Green Deal for the European Union and its citizens. The European Green Deal is a new **strategy with an environmental ambition to transform the Union's economy and society and to put it on a more sustainable path. This** strategy that aims to transform the Union into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic **development** is decoupled from resource use.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal

## Amendment 2

### Proposal for a decision Recital 2

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(2) In its conclusions of 12 December 2019<sup>2</sup>, the European Council endorsed the objective of achieving a climate-neutral European Union by 2050.

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<sup>2</sup> European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019

#### *Amendment*

(2) In its conclusions of 12 December 2019<sup>2</sup>, the European Council endorsed the objective of achieving a climate-neutral European Union by 2050, ***in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.***

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<sup>2</sup> European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019

## Amendment 3

### Proposal for a decision Recital 3

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(3) In its resolution of 15 January 2020<sup>3</sup>, the European Parliament welcomed the Commission's communication on 'The European Green Deal' and called for the necessary transition to a climate-neutral society by 2050 at the latest.

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<sup>3</sup> European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal (2019/2956(RSP))

#### *Amendment*

(3) In its resolution of 15 January 2020<sup>3</sup>, the European Parliament ***underlined the urgent need for ambitious action to tackle climate change and environmental challenges, in order to keep global warming below 1.5 °C, and to avoid massive loss of biodiversity and*** welcomed the Commission's communication on 'The European Green Deal' and called for the necessary transition to a climate-neutral society by 2050 at the latest.

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<sup>3</sup> European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal (2019/2956(RSP))

## Amendment 4

### Proposal for a decision Recital 3 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(3 a) The European Green Deal is not just an enhanced climate policy, but represents an investment plan that should fully transform the economy and society and position it firmly on an ecological pathway that upholds social rights and improves life for all Union citizens. On the basis of the European Green Deal, all Union policies will be measured against their contribution to the objective of sustainable development that combines social rights, environmental integrity, regional cohesion and sustainability to the benefit of all.***

Or. en

## Amendment 5

### Proposal for a decision Recital 4

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(4) In line with the objectives set out in the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal, there is a need to transform the Union economy and to rethink policies, in particular in the field of transport and mobility, which implies accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility. Transport accounts for a quarter of the Union's greenhouse gas emissions, and still growing. To achieve climate neutrality, a 90% reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050. Achieving sustainable transport means putting users first and providing them with more affordable, accessible, healthier and cleaner alternatives to their current mobility habits. The European Green Deal implies to accelerate the shift to sustainable

(4) In line with the objectives set out in the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal, there is a need to transform the Union economy and ***industry and*** to rethink policies, in particular in the field of transport and mobility, which implies accelerating the shift to sustainable, ***zero-emissions*** and smart mobility. Transport accounts for a quarter of the Union's greenhouse gas emissions, and still growing. To achieve climate neutrality, a 90% reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050. Achieving sustainable transport means putting users first and providing them with more affordable, accessible, healthier and cleaner alternatives to their current mobility habits. The European Green Deal

and smart mobility to address these challenges. In particular, a substantial part of the 75% of inland freight carried today by road should shift onto rail and inland waterways.

implies to accelerate the shift to sustainable and smart mobility to address these challenges. In particular, a substantial part of the 75% of inland freight carried today by road should shift onto rail and inland waterways.

Or. en

## Amendment 6

### Proposal for a decision

#### Recital 5

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(5) Rail has a significant role to play as a game changer to achieve the climate neutrality objective by 2050. It is one of the most environmentally friendly and energy-efficient transport modes. Rail is largely electrified and emits far less CO<sub>2</sub> than equivalent travel by road or air, and is the only mode that has consistently reduced its greenhouse gas emissions and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 1990. In addition, rail has decreased its energy consumption between 1990-2016<sup>4</sup> and increasingly uses renewable energy sources.

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<sup>4</sup> DG MOVE Statistical Pocketbook 2019 “EU transport in figures” (source: Eurostat)

*Amendment*

(5) ***Mobility is one of the key pillars of the European Green Deal and*** rail has a significant role to play as a game changer to ***in order to decarbonise the Union economy and*** achieve the climate neutrality objective by 2050. It is one of the most environmentally friendly and energy-efficient transport modes. Rail is largely electrified and emits far less CO<sub>2</sub> than equivalent travel by road or air, and is the only mode that has consistently reduced its greenhouse gas emissions and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 1990. In addition, rail has decreased its energy consumption between 1990-2016<sup>4</sup> and increasingly uses renewable energy sources.

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<sup>4</sup> DG MOVE Statistical Pocketbook 2019 “EU transport in figures” (source: Eurostat)

Or. en

## Amendment 7

### Proposal for a decision

#### Recital 5 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(5 a) In the context of the Union’s commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Green Deal, regional and local***

*authorities and public authorities in cooperation with the railway sector are key players for the implementation and delivering of the set goals.*

Or. en

## **Amendment 8**

### **Proposal for a decision Recital 5 b (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

*(5 b) Creating and improving sustainable, environmentally friendly and energy-efficient transport modes is a crucial part of the Union's efforts to fight climate change. Given significant differences between Member States in terms of rail networks and related infrastructure, cohesion policy, namely ERDF, CF and CEF, plays an important role, particularly in less developed regions and rural areas, by improving Union internal and cross-border railway networks. Cohesion policy also offers a continued and reinforced role for investments towards a greener Europe for all. However, modernisation of rail transport, with specific attention for the public investments in transport infrastructures, that will contribute to Union climate targets, innovation, safety, decent green and modern employment and efficiency will require additional resources.*

Or. en

## **Amendment 9**

### **Proposal for a decision Recital 6**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(6) By connecting the Union's main transport routes with its peripheral regions

(6) By connecting the Union's main transport routes with its peripheral regions



and territories, the rail sector contributes to social, economic and territorial cohesion.

and territories *and by connecting rural areas with each other and with urban centres* the rail sector contributes to social, economic and territorial cohesion.  
*However, the liberalisation of rail transport within the Union has not succeeded in creating better connections for all or in increasing the modal share of rail. Less profitable local rail networks and train stations continue to be dismantled particularly in rural and border areas and investment in the network, rolling stock and service varies greatly between Member States. Therefore, strategies to further improve Union railway policies should be explored, fostering the cooperation of rail transport companies rather than competition between them.*

Or. en

## Amendment 10

### Proposal for a decision

#### Recital 7

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(7) While the share of passenger rail in the Union land transport has only slightly increased since 2007, the share of freight has decreased. Many obstacles remain to achieve a true Single European Rail Area, including in respect of the need to minimise noise. Overcoming these obstacles together with cost reduction and accelerated innovation will allow rail to realise its full potential. Rail therefore needs a further boost to become more attractive to travellers and businesses alike.

##### *Amendment*

(7) While the share of passenger rail in the Union land transport has only slightly increased since 2007, the share of freight has decreased. Many obstacles remain to achieve a true Single European Rail Area, including in respect of the need to minimise noise. Overcoming these obstacles together with cost reduction and accelerated innovation will allow rail to realise its full potential. Rail therefore needs a further boost to become more attractive to travellers and businesses alike.  
*In order to secure a more coherent and attractive rail transport throughout Europe emphasis should also be placed on improving passenger rights, on better booking systems and ticket systems, on investments in infrastructure, on more night trains and on the implementation of the 'polluter pays' principle in a socially*

*balanced way.*

Or. en

## Amendment 11

### Proposal for a decision Recital 8

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(8) In order to promote rail transport in line with the objectives set out in the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal, including with regard to sustainable and smart mobility, the year 2021 should be designated as European Year of Rail. 2021 will be an important year for the Union rail policy, it will be the first full year where the rules agreed under the Fourth Railway Package will be implemented throughout the Union, namely on the opening of the market of domestic passenger services and on reducing costs and administrative burden for railway undertakings operating across the Union. There is a growing public interest in railways, including in night trains, in a number of Member States, as also illustrated by the popularity of #DiscoverEU. Moreover, the international arts festival 'Europalia' will dedicate its 2021 edition to the influence of railways on the arts and highlight the role of rail as a powerful promotor of social, economic and industrial change.

#### *Amendment*

(8) In order to promote rail transport in line with the objectives set out in the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal, including with regard to sustainable and smart mobility, ***and in support of the Union's commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***, the year 2021 should be designated as European Year of Rail. 2021 will be an important year for the Union rail policy, it will be the first full year where the rules agreed under the Fourth Railway Package will be implemented throughout the Union, namely on the opening of the market of domestic passenger services and on reducing costs and administrative burden for railway undertakings operating across the Union. There is a growing public interest in railways, including in night trains, in a number of Member States, ***particularly among young people***, as also illustrated by the popularity of #DiscoverEU. Moreover, the international arts festival 'Europalia' will dedicate its 2021 edition to the influence of railways on the arts and highlight the role of rail as a powerful promotor of social, economic and industrial change.

Or. en

## Amendment 12

### Proposal for a decision Recital 8 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

**(8 a) *The European Year of Rail in 2021 will help also to increase awareness for the need to modernise rail including its digital infrastructure and services across the Member States.***

Or. en

## **Amendment 13**

### **Proposal for a decision**

#### **Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point a**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(a) promote rail as a sustainable, innovative **and** safe mode of transport, in particular by highlighting the role **of rail** as a game changer to help reaching the Union's climate neutrality objective by 2050 and by reaching out to the wider public, especially youth;

(a) promote rail as a sustainable, innovative, safe mode of transport **for all**, in particular **by using more silent, green and energy efficient rolling stock, by stimulating a European debate on developing rail transport as a real, accessible and universal alternative to individualised modes of transport and to short and medium distance flights**, by highlighting the role as a game changer to help reaching the Union's climate neutrality objective by 2050 and by reaching out to the wider public, especially youth;

Or. en

## **Amendment 14**

### **Proposal for a decision**

#### **Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point b**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(b) highlight the European, cross-border dimension of rail, that brings citizens closer together, allows them to explore the Union in all its diversity, fosters cohesion and contributes to integrate the Union internal market;

(b) highlight the European, cross-border dimension of rail, **including in rural and remote areas**, that brings citizens closer together, allows them to explore the Union in all its diversity, fosters **social, economic and territorial cohesion under the post-2020 Cohesion**

***Policy objectives for a greener and more connected Europe in close collaboration with local and regional authorities (LRAs) and local communities*** and contributes to integrate the Union internal market;

Or. en

## Amendment 15

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point c

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(c) enhance the contribution of rail to Union economy, industry and society, covering in particular aspects related to regional development, industrial ***competitiveness***, sustainable tourism, innovation, employment, education, youth and culture, and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities;

##### *Amendment*

(c) enhance the contribution of rail to Union economy, industry and society, covering in particular aspects related to ***sustainable regional, urban-rural and cross-border local*** development, ***climate protection***, industrial ***transition***, sustainable tourism, innovation, ***social inclusion***, employment, education, youth and culture, and improving accessibility for ***elderly people, disadvantaged groups and*** persons with disabilities;

Or. en

## Amendment 16

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point d

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(d) contribute to promoting rail as an important element of the relations between the Union and neighbouring countries, ***in particular*** in the Western Balkans, building on the interest and needs in partner countries and on the ***Union's*** expertise in rail transport.

##### *Amendment*

(d) contribute to promoting rail as an important element of the relations between the Union and neighbouring countries, ***such as those*** in the Western Balkans, ***Scandinavia, the Eastern Neighbourhood countries and the UK*** building on the interest and needs in partner countries, ***border regions and municipalities*** and on the ***exchange of*** expertise in rail transport.

Or. en

## Amendment 17

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 3 – paragraph 1 – point a

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(a) initiatives and events to promote debate, raise awareness and facilitate citizens, businesses and public authorities' engagement to attract more people and goods to rail as a means to combat climate change, through multiple channels and tools, including events in Member States;

*Amendment*

(a) initiatives and events to promote debate, raise awareness and facilitate citizens, businesses and public authorities' engagement to attract more people and goods to rail as a means to combat climate change, **and to foster cultural exchange and sustainable tourism**, through multiple channels and tools, including events in Member States, **particularly at the local level**;

Or. en

## Amendment 18

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 3 – paragraph 1 – point c

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(c) sharing experience and good practices of national, regional and local authorities, civil society, business and schools on promoting the use of rail and on how to implement behavioural change at all levels;

*Amendment*

(c) sharing experience and good practices of national, regional and local authorities, **social partners**, civil society, business and schools on promoting the use of rail and on how to implement behavioural change at all levels;

Or. en

## Amendment 19

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 3 – paragraph 1 – point d

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(d) the undertaking of studies and innovative activities and the dissemination of their results on a European **or** national scale; **and**

*Amendment*

(d) the undertaking of studies and innovative activities and the dissemination of their results on a European, national **and regional** scale;

Or. en

## Amendment 20

### Proposal for a decision Article 3 – paragraph 1 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***1a. The Union shall identify and explore key projects and measures it will promote at different levels that can help reach the objectives in the long term, such as:***

***(a) the reactivation and multiplication of local, regional and interregional passenger and freight railway lines, local train stations and connections from local rail lines to high speed and long distance train lines;***

***(b) a European joint effort to reintroduce a network of modern night train lines at affordable prices, that reaches out to all Member States and to neighbouring countries;***

***(c) the development of a unified ticket booking and advantage pass system for European rail enabling consumers to buy a single ticket from any European station to any other, independently of the rail company, with guaranteed passenger rights and at the most advantageous price;***

***(d) sustainable long-term models for free local public transportation;***

***(e) promotion of railways by preferential VAT rates at national level;***

***(f) integrating the goals of green, innovative, digital, safe and accessible railway networks and services into the Union industry strategy, including its role for cohesion, skilled and decent employment and cultural exchange;***

Or. en

## Amendment 21

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 5 – paragraph 1

*Text proposed by the Commission*

1. The Commission shall regularly convene meetings of the national coordinators in order to coordinate the running of the European Year. Those meetings shall also serve as opportunities to exchange information regarding the implementation of the European Year at national and Union level; representatives of the European Parliament **may** participate in those **meetings as observers**.

*Amendment*

1. The Commission shall regularly convene meetings of the national coordinators in order to coordinate the running of the European Year. Those meetings shall also serve as opportunities to exchange information regarding the implementation of the European Year at national and Union level; representatives of the European Parliament **shall be invited to** participate in those **exchanges**.

Or. en

## Amendment 22

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 5 – paragraph 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

2. The coordination of the European Year at Union level shall have a transversal approach with a view to creating synergies between the various Union programmes and initiatives that fund projects in the field of rail transport or that have a rail dimension.

*Amendment*

2. The coordination of the European Year at Union level shall have a transversal approach with a view to **identifying existing and to** creating **new** synergies between the various Union programmes and initiatives that fund projects in the field of rail transport or that have a rail dimension, **bearing in mind that additional policy objectives require additional resources rather than mere reallocations**.

Or. en

## Amendment 23

### Proposal for a decision

#### Article 5 – paragraph 3 – subparagraph 1

*Text proposed by the Commission*

The Commission shall convene regular

*Amendment*

The Commission shall convene regular

meetings of stakeholders and representatives of organisations or bodies active in the field of rail transport, including existing transnational networks ***and*** relevant NGOs, as well as of youth organisations and communities, to assist it in implementing the European Year at Union level.

meetings of stakeholders and representatives of organisations or bodies active in the field of rail transport, including existing transnational ***and transregional*** networks, relevant NGOs, ***social partners*** as well as of youth organisations and communities, to assist it in implementing the European Year at Union level.

Or. en