

# Reforming Europe's Railways – An assessment of progress



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COMMUNITY OF EUROPEAN RAILWAY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANIES  
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**Foreword**

The European rail market has been the subject of fundamental reform in the last decade. Some countries started on this process over 10 years ago – in the case of Sweden, almost 20 years; whilst others have only just embarked. Several different basic models of market organisation are emerging. Views differ on what has worked, and what remains to be done, to stimulate a rail sector that can compete effectively with other modes of transport.

In our daily work in Brussels, we regularly have the pleasure of meeting national rail experts. But, in our view, there are few people who have a comprehensive overview of developments across Europe as a whole. The sheer pace of reform, plus the fact that much material only appears in the national language, makes it difficult for a busy monolingualist to keep up.

In this book, we try to bridge this gap, by inviting distinguished national experts to write a short overview of reforms within their country. In particular, we asked them for their opinion on what has worked, and, perhaps more interestingly, what has not. We are honoured to publish the work of 9 academics; 1 former Minister of Transport; 3 senior administrators; and, for the case of Switzerland, so-often the exception in Europe, the CEO of SBB. Inevitably, given the differences in backgrounds and cultures, the chapters differ in emphasis, approach and conclusions. Such diversity only seems to reinforce the different ways in which Member States have organized their rail markets.

We are also pleased to include a chapter on reforms outside of Europe. The danger of focusing only on Europe should be clear to all – arguably the greatest successes in recent times in shifting traffic from road to rail have come about in the Americas – North, Central, and increasingly South America. Moreover, this has often been based on a strikingly different model of reforms than has been applied within much of Europe.

This is also a relevant book for the European political process. Before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006, the European Commission has to report to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on the impact of the so-called ‘First Railway Package’. Our view – also reflected in many of the chapters below – is that much progress has been made on introducing competition within the European rail freight market. Indeed, by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, it will be fully open. However, far less progress has been made on introducing socially efficient pricing across the transport modes, nor on providing adequate funding for a modern European rail network. Indeed, important amendments to the principles of tolling trucks in Europe (Eurovignette Directive) were only tabled