



The Voice
of European
Railways



Press Release

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EU-Japan Industrial Dialogue on Railways to give momentum to FTA negotiations

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the European Rail Industry Association (UNIFE) actively participated in the first meeting of the EU-Japan Industrial Dialogue on Railways, which took place on 27 March in Brussels. The Industrial Dialogue was organised by the European Commission and the Japanese government and facilitated exchanges on critical topics addressed in the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, including technical regulations and safety standards, railways markets and market access issues.

The Industrial Dialogue meeting was held at a critical timing, since it will be directly followed by the fifth round of the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement negotiations (31 March-4 April), which will mark the end of the first year of negotiations. Later in April, the European Commission will take stock of the implementation of the commitments taken by Japan on the elimination of non-tariff barriers, in particular in the railway sector, and decide whether or not negotiations should be pursued.

CER and UNIFE support setting up an Industrial Dialogue as an additional channel for discussions with both the public and private sector to ensure effective and comparable rail market access conditions between the EU and Japan. Moreover, CER and UNIFE support the involvement of DG MOVE and the European Railway Agency in the discussions and call for further similar exchanges to facilitate the negotiating process.

UNIFE emphasised that the first Industrial Dialogue meeting built upon several previous workshops and events; in spite of this, many open points remain with respect to the Japanese regulatory and procurement system. During the workshop on market access, UNIFE called upon the Japanese government to live up to its commitment to ensure a transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory application of the Operational Safety Clause. UNIFE also made concrete recommendations for improvements in procurement procedures (e.g. information on upcoming and past awarded tenders made available on the websites of Japanese operators, etc...).

CER stressed that railway and infrastructure managers in Europe are positive towards an EU-Japan FTA provided it opens up opportunities for market players from each side. CER believes there is a need to intensify the level of mutual recognition between the EU and Japan in order to alleviate the process of accessing a market without already being established in it.

UNIFE Director General Philippe Citroën stated: *“The Industrial Dialogue should give impetus to the ongoing negotiations in the rail sector as it provides a platform to monitor commitments. In this respect, UNIFE has high expectations for the fifth round of negotiations set to take place next week, and expects a comprehensive set of measures to be agreed upon to achieve a level playing field between the European and Japanese rail markets.”*



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CER Executive Director Libor Lochman said: *“European railway companies are open to a discussion with Japanese enterprises. CER members provide a lot of services of interest to Japanese operators, such as feasibility studies and staff training. I am therefore convinced that the FTA will bring business opportunities for our sector. European railway undertakings are definitively in a position to make use of them.”*

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 80 members - European railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure companies. The membership covers long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public-sector organisations. CER members represent about 70% of the rail network length, more than 85% of the rail freight business and over 96% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. For more information, see www.cer.be or follow us via Twitter at [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways)

UNIFE

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UNIFE represents the European Rail Industry in Brussels since 1992. The Association gathers more than 80 of Europe's leading large and medium sized rail supply companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. A further one thousand suppliers of railway equipment partake in UNIFE activities through 17 national rail industry associations. UNIFE members have an 80% market share in Europe and supply more than 50% of the worldwide production of rail equipment and services. www.unife.org