

UNECE

Railway Reform in the ECE region



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RAILWAY REFORM IN THE ECE REGION

Final report



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Disclaimer:

Views expressed in this document are of the consultant and of the participants of the Workshop on Railway Reform in the ECE region held in conjunction with the seventy-first session of the Working Party on Rail Transport. They should not be considered as the views of UNECE or as binding on any United Nations entity.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	vi
<i>Introduction</i>	vi
<i>History of railway reform</i>	vi
<i>Railway reform implementation</i>	vii
<i>Conclusions</i>	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
Introduction	1
History of Railway Reform	3
Background and Introduction	3
History of Railway Reform in the European Union	5
Initial reform attempts	7
The First Railway Package	7
The Second Railway Package	8
The Third Railway Package	9
Recast of the First Railway Package and the Fourth Railway Package	9
History of Rail Reform in other UNECE countries	11
Switzerland	12
Norway	12
SEETO countries	13
Turkey	14
Russian Federation	15
Kazakhstan	17
Ukraine	18
Uzbekistan	18
Other former republics of the Soviet Union	19
Rail Reform implementation	20
Transposition of EU legislation	20
The role of rail regulators within the EU	23
Rail reform implementation indexes	28

Separation of the rail incumbent	30
Separation arrangements in EU Member States.....	32
Separation arrangements in Non-EU countries	35
Market opening	38
Access models	39
New entrants in the freight and passenger markets	40
Market access arrangements in EU Member States	43
Market access arrangements in non-EU countries	46
Interoperability and technical harmonization.....	49
Effects of reform on railway performance	51
Rail reform implications on cost and efficiency measures.....	51
Effects of rail reform on prices, customer satisfaction and quality	53
Modal share of passenger rail transport	54
Conclusions.....	56
Annexes	57
Annex 1. Statistical database	57
Annex 2. The Tunisian railway reform.....	63
Bibliography.....	65

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

As part of the ongoing work of the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), the seventy-first session of SC.2 hosted the Workshop on Railway Reform across the ECE region attended by member States, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. As an output to this workshop, this study has been prepared to summarise railway reform across the region.

HISTORY OF RAILWAY REFORM

When looking to the **European Union Member States** (EU Member States), the paper outlines the evolution of EU rail legislation with respect to three major areas, namely separation of infrastructure management and service operations; market opening and liberalization of the rail services; and promotion of interoperability and technical harmonization to encourage the development of an integrated rail system leading to a single European rail area. The EU approach to reform has been based on the idea that greater competition makes for a more efficient and customer-responsive industry.

In the early stages of reform, rail proved to be reluctant to pursue liberalization, especially when compared to other modes of transport. Directive 91/440/EC — that is the first important measure of the European Commission concerning the rail sector — had little impact, as was shown by the small number of new operators or services being added to the market. In the following years, the four regulatory “**Railway Packages**” that had been approved in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2016, were aimed at countering this lack of progress. The packages consecutively brought together previous Directives, updated them, and facilitated market development.

The **Fourth Railway Package** — which includes a “Technical Pillar” for rail safety and interoperability, and a “Market pillar” for the governance of railways and the opening of the passenger market — was proposed by the European Commission in 2013, and was originally intended to remove all remaining legal, institutional and technical obstacles to create a single European Railway Area.

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