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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
Council on 8 June 2026
Competitiveness of the EU rail industry
- Information from Croatia, Portugal and Spain

Rail is essential for Europe's decarbonisation, territorial cohesion, cross-border connectivity, military mobility and the resilience of our transport networks. But rail is also a major European industrial asset.

During the Informal Meeting of Transport Ministers of 29 April, held at the initiative of the Presidency of Cyprus, Member States discussed the need to improve railway certification and authorisation processes and reaffirmed the strategic importance of a competitive, innovative and resilient European rail industry for the future of European transport.

In this context, several Member States underlined that lengthy development, testing, certification and authorisation cycles are no longer only an administrative concern. They have become a strategic challenge for the competitiveness of the European rail sector, in particular for manufacturers of rolling stock.

Today, European manufacturers of rolling stock face growing pressure from skyrocketing demand, rising costs, fragmented requirements, insufficient access to testing facilities and train paths, complex conformity assessment procedures, evolving technical standards and increasing international competition.

In some cases, the full cycle from design to entry into service of new rolling stock may take eight to ten years.

This is not compatible with Europe's climate ambitions, with the need to renew fleets, nor with the goal of preserving a strong European manufacturing base.

Strengthening the competitiveness of the EU rail industry must become a shared European priority. This requires action not only at the final stage of authorisation, but throughout the entire value chain: design, testing, conformity assessment, certification, authorisation, deployment, innovation and industrial production.

Therefore, Spain, calls on the European Commission to place the competitiveness of the European rail industry, and in particular of rolling stock manufacturers, at the centre of the EU transport and industrial agenda, recognising rail manufacturing as a strategic European sector for decarbonisation, connectivity, resilience, dual-use mobility and technological sovereignty.

We would also like to encourage the Commission and the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) to launch, together with Member States and industry, a structured high-level dialogue on the competitiveness of the EU rail industry, with a particular focus on reducing time-to-market and time-to-service for new rolling stock, while fully preserving safety and interoperability.
