

Making rail transport attractive in the EU and globally



**The left group in the European Parliament THE LEFT and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Brussels invite you to this online conference:
Friday, 29 October 2021, at 12 noon CEST**

Friday, 29 October 2021, at 12 noon CEST (Berlin, Brussels, Amsterdam).

Languages: German, English, Czech

Programme

Keynote: *Cornelia Ernst*, member of the left group THE LEFT in the European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (confirmed)

Panel 1 From Road to Rail

Lorelei Limousin, Greenpeace Europe (confirmed)

Sabine Trier, Deputy General Secretary, European Transport Workers' Federation (to be confirmed)

Panel 2 Decent Work, Good for the Climate

Wol-San Liem, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) (former International Director of Korean Public Service and Transport Workers Union, Korea (confirmed)

Kateřina Konečna, Member of the left group THE LEFT in the European Parliament, Committee on Transport and Tourism (confirmed)

Facilitator: *Manuela Kropp*, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels

To register, please send an email to:

Manuela Kropp manuela.kropp@rosalux.org

Contact:

Dr. Cornelia Ernst, MdEP, Fraktion THE LEFT in the European Parliament
cornelia.ernst@ep.europa.eu

Stephen Schindler, Mitarbeiter MdEP Dr. Cornelia Ernst
stephen.schindler@ep.europa.eu

Manuela Kropp, Projekt Manager Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussel
manuela.kropp@rosalux.org

Recent floods, heavy rain events, heat waves and forest fires demonstrate: governments of this world must finally act and drastically reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in order to meet the 1.5 degree limit of the Paris Climate Agreement on time.

The transport sector is the only sector in which greenhouse gas emissions have increased unchecked in recent years. Worldwide, about 23 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from the transport sector, mainly from the combustion of fuels in cars, lorries, buses and two-wheelers in road transport. Rail transport accounts for only 0.4 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions and is electrified in many places making it the only mode of transport that has been able to reduce its CO2 emissions since 1990.

Already in 2018 the report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) called for urgently needed action towards climate protection. It is necessary to reduce the number of journeys overall and to switch to less CO2-intensive modes of transport (modal shift) away from the roads to more rail-bound transport and local public transport, especially in rural areas.

At the beginning of 2021, the EU declared the „European Year of Rail“ to promote the shift from road and air to rail-based transport. But what does this mean in concrete terms for freight transport in Europe and globally, and how will rail and road-based freight and passenger transport complement each other in the future?

With the climate protection package „EU Fit for 55“ of July 2021, the European Commission's proposal extends, among other things, the EU CO2 emissions trading scheme (ETS) to the transport sector. Higher CO2 prices would favour the transition to rail. At the same time, the use of hydrogen and a corresponding refueling infrastructure might reduce emissions in the road freight transport.

Hydrogen can fulfil many functions of fossil fuels without requiring a systemic change. For example, it can be used in fuel cells. But are the high hopes placed in the alleged miracle cure hydrogen justified in the transport sector?

On the one hand, there is a danger that valuable, „green“ hydrogen will be wasted in heavy goods transport, and on the other hand that CO2-intensive „grey“ or „blue“ hydrogen will also be used, which makes no contribution to climate protection. In addition, the switch to rail-bound freight transport will be further delayed and postponed by the use of hydrogen in lorries.

The competition to rail is fierce and, above all, cheap. Due to dumping of wages and working conditions, road freight transport is often cheaper and often the preferred option. Good progress has been made here in Korea through the use of „safe rates“. In the EU, the so-called „mobility package“ was adopted a year ago to improve working conditions in heavy goods transport. However, there are still problems with the actual implementation.

Cost dumping in road freight and passenger transport must be stopped. On the one hand, to achieve good working conditions for the workers and higher road safety for all of us, but also to increase the attractiveness of rail compared to road. Transport is a public good and must not be dependent on the short-term interests of private companies. Transport companies must return to public ownership.

The upcoming technological changes in road-based freight and passenger transport, such as new propulsion systems and driverless freight transport, pose additional challenges for workers.

In this online conference we would like to discuss the following questions:

- How can rail transport be strengthened compared to road transport? What results did the European Year of Rail bring here? What climate-friendly logistics concepts exist and how must the „division of tasks“ between rail and road-bound freight and passenger transport look in the future? What demands must civil society make for the upcoming COP26?
- How can long distance rail transport be promoted internationally and across borders? What are the proposals of the International Transport Workers' Federation? How should the working conditions of employees improve?
- How can the working conditions of workers in road freight and passenger transport and in rail transport be improved? What initial successes have already been achieved internationally (e.g. „safe rates“ in Korea) and what is needed to achieve this in other regions of the world?
- What is the status of the implementation of the „mobility package“ to fight social dumping for truck drivers in the European Union and what needs to be improved here?
- Which technological challenges do workers face globally, and how can they be overcome? Do we need Just Transition plans for the transition from road to rail? How can a just transition for workers be achieved?