

# Political context and meeting objectives

*8<sup>th</sup> UIC Railway Noise Workshop*

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*Libor Lochman*



- Noise is a **top environmental priority** for railways although the perceived annoyance is much higher for air and road traffic
- Key objective is to **ensure the continued acceptance of railways**: rail sector has put much effort over the past 50 years to achieve significant progress
- European railways are committed to **continue the progress** through noise abatement solutions
- What is the challenge?: the **affected population is not evenly distributed** and depends on geography, density of population and amount of traffic
- Noise from existing freight wagons is increasingly becoming a **major political issue** in the EU mainly driven by concerns in two Member States (Germany, the Netherlands)

- Noise measures can be divided into **source-related measures** and **infrastructure-related measures**
  
- Railways continuous efforts on noise mitigation led to a package of noise **abatement solutions**:
  - Retrofitting with K-blocks/LL-blocks
  - Wheel absorbers
  - Track absorbers
  - Combination of wheel and track
  - Acoustic rail grinding
  - Operational
  - Noise barriers
  - Noise insulated windows
  
- Measures most often implemented are **Noise barriers and insulated windows**

- With the **natural renewal rate of the freight wagon fleet**, the noise problem will be gradually solved within the next **25 years' time**
- However, the EU's objective is to reduce noise emitted from freight wagons **before the end of their natural life-cycle**.
- Therefore, the sector has put much efforts to develop the **K and LL blocks** for retrofitting wagons equipped with cast-iron brake blocks:
- The rail sector (UIC) spent so far **about 15 Million €** on the whole development process for K and LL brake blocks
- **What is the challenge now? In case retrofitting programmes are imposed, It is key to ensure appropriate incentive schemes and funding to make retrofitting economically viable**

- **Noise creation** (emissions) is legislated on a European level, **noise reception** at national level
  
- **Measures at source**
  - Technical Specification for Interoperability for Rolling Stock (high speed rail): adopted 2002
  - Technical Specification for Interoperability for Noise (conventional rail): adopted 2005, revised 2011
  
- **Noise reception**
  - Directive 2002/49/EC (Environmental Noise Directive)
  - Could be revised as early as 2014

*As mentioned in the presentation of the European Commission*

## ■ Recast of the first railway package

- Optional introduction of noise-differentiated track access charges (NDTAC)
- Implementation discussions to start in September 2013

## ■ Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

- a substantial budget is expected to be earmarked to rail projects
- EU to co-funding existing freight wagons with silent brake blocks (max 20% of eligible costs)
- Proposal still under discussion in trilogue

## ■ TSI Noise revision

- Commission's adoption planned for end 2013/beginning 2014
- Conclusion of the decision-makers expected in 2015

## ■ Germany

- Measure to cover up to 50% of the reduced TACs but **capped at €152 million** in total for wagons operated in Germany (other 50% paid from the increased level of TACs). So **significant cost borne by the sector**.
- Unfortunately discussions are on-going on possible traffic restrictions or temporary bans for existing freight wagons on specific lines

## ■ Switzerland

- Unfortunately a 'de facto' ban by 2020 on cast-iron rail freight vehicles to be adopted this year
- Swiss authorities may consider a postponement of such a ban until 2022, if similar EU-wide solutions are agreed in Brussels

## ■ The Netherlands

- A NDTAC scheme is already in place
- Not effective enough (too low incentives for retrofitting)

- **2008 - Communication on Rail noise abatement measures addressing the existing fleet**
  - Aim was to overcome obstacles for retrofitting of freight wagons
  - A combination of NDTAC, noise emission ceilings and voluntary commitments was identified as the most appropriate solution
  - Commission is now looking for additional measures to increase to renewal rate for freight wagons
- Commission to carry out an **impact assesement on a set of policy options** in 2014. An external commissioned support study is ongoing.
- A **new legislative proposal could be adopted as a consequence of the study**. The process overlaps with the implementation of Directive 2012/34/EU (recast Directive) on the matter of **noise-differentiated track access charges**

1. Status quo (baseline scenario - including voluntary implementation of NDTAC)
2. Increased financial support for retrofitting of existing wagons with low-noise blocks [[incentive approach](#)]
3. *Noise-differentiated track access charges ["[NDTAC approach](#)"] (unclear how this differs from Option 1)*
4. *Mandatory application of TSI-Noise limits to all existing railway wagons ["[TSI Noise approach](#)"] (de facto a ban on non-compliant wagons from a certain date)*
5. *Introduction of a noise limit along the TEN-T railway Network ["[TEN-T approach](#)"]*
6. *Introduction of a general maximum transport-related cumulative noise exposure ["[environmental health approach](#)"] (inter-modal)*
7. Generalised version of Option 5 (TEN-T), but not restricted to the TEN-T network, and computed on the basis of the [density and quantity of the exposed population](#). This would imply the use of barriers and/or traffic restrictions in hot-spots

*As mentioned in the presentation of the European Commission*

CER favours rail noise reduction efforts that are **technologically feasible**, **economically sound**, and **fair with respect to other modes**, with **reasonably long transition periods**

## *Subject to:*

- Upholding the Single Market: no new impediments to the free circulation of rail vehicles across the Union
- No loss of competitiveness against other modes
- No distortion to competition between railway undertakings & wagon keepers

## *Using:*

- A well-chosen combination of mechanisms (one or more of the options listed by the Commission, possibly others) that:
  - Minimises disruption and costs to rail sector actors
  - Respects differences between Member States, e.g. scope differentiation, different timeframes / transition periods, existing schemes and incentives

- The rail sector has demonstrated, not least with the development of LL blocks, that **noise is taken seriously by the sector** : new technology is now available!
- But, rail noise from existing freight wagons **is not a major issue for most EU countries**, but is mainly localised central countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland): i.e. only very few Member States are expected to provide funding for retrofitting programmes
- Unilateral national solutions such as bans on existing freight wagons, **risk to jeopardise the competitiveness of rail transport** and are **not acceptable from a Single Market viewpoint**
- Any forced retrofitting programme **has to provide in parallel funding from outside the rail system**

Thank you for your attention!



The Voice of European Railways

→ Libor Lochman  
CER Executive Director  
Email: [libor.lochman@cer.be](mailto:libor.lochman@cer.be)

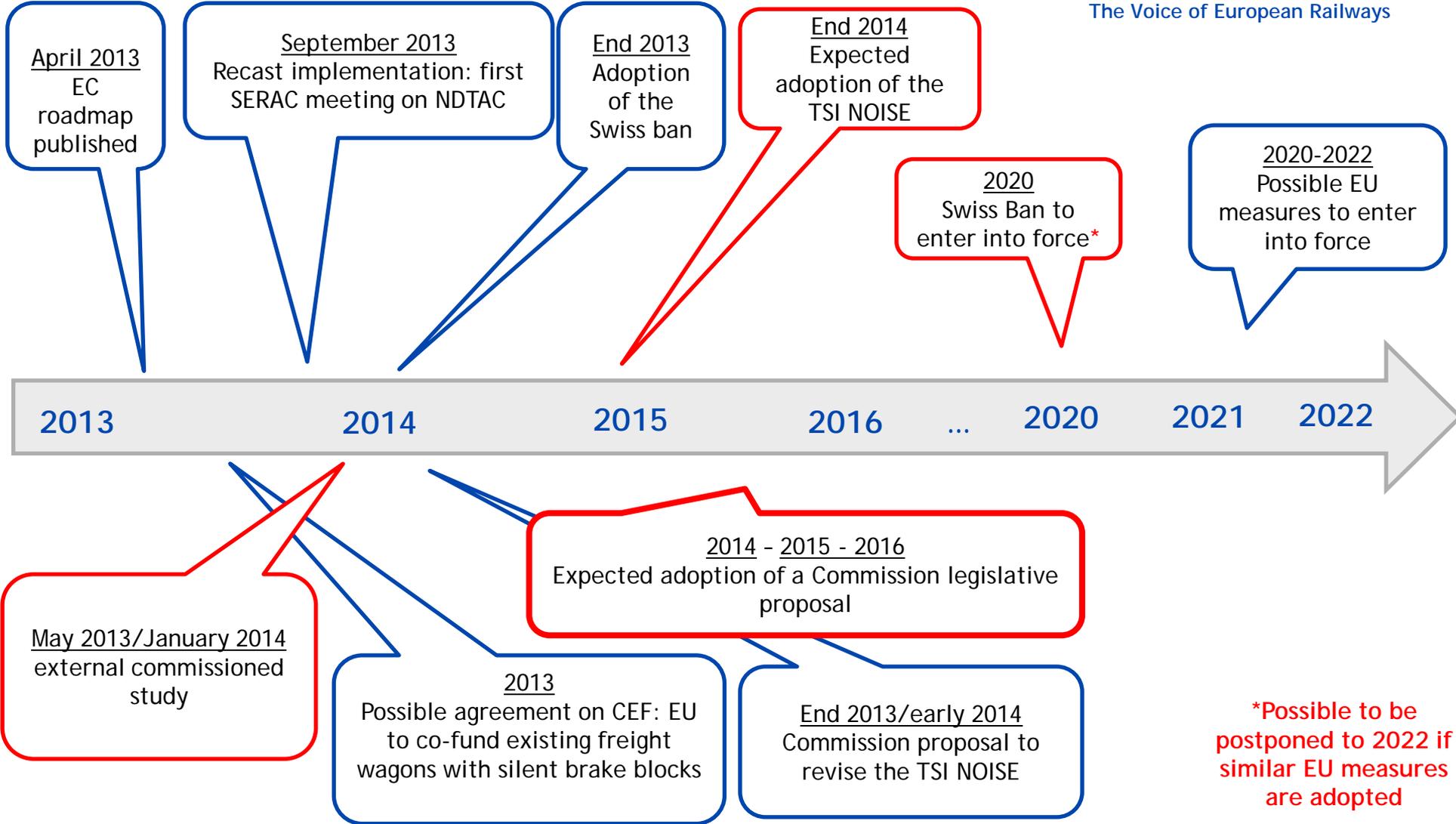
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# Political timeline - Review of the EU policy on rail noise



The Voice of European Railways



\*Possible to be postponed to 2022 if similar EU measures are adopted

- **Age distribution of existing fleets**
  - Residual life-time and hence residual value of the vehicles that may have to be retrofitted or be banned or face traffic restrictions from a certain date
- **Mileage per year: average and distribution within a fleet**
  - Determines how an NDTAC system or other distance-based incentives would affect company behaviour and company bottom-line
- **Chosen cut-off date, if any, if a ban on cast-iron blocks is introduced**
  - E.g. 2040, would have essentially no adverse effect; E.g. 2020, would be very costly - *having our own numerical simulations would be useful*
- **Localisation constraints, e.g. hot-spot approach, TEN-T network scope**
  - Would require monitoring and verification of location of wagons
- **Overall noise constraint, i.e. environmental health approach or generalised rail noise exposure approach**
  - Would lead to traffic restrictions, would require dynamic management of wagon use by type (i.e. noisy versus silent)
- **Up-front and O&M costs of installing and using LL-blocks**
  - The effects on both inter- and intra-modal competition must be estimated