

CONSULTATION OF RAIL TRANSPORT USERS' REPRESENTATIVES

High-speed long-distance services are the most highly rated by users

- Regarding passenger transport, users are satisfied with the increased frequencies and lower prices, but point out that, where there is no competition, prices have risen.
- Railway companies call for an urgent revision of the infrastructure manager's charges.
- Rail freight transport is perceived as uncompetitive with road transport. The sector calls for the development of rail corridors and motorways.

Madrid, 23 May 2023.- The National Markets and Competition Commission (CNMC) has published a report containing the opinions of railway companies and users' representatives on rail freight and passenger transport. The CNMC is required by law to periodically gather the opinions of these stakeholders in order to take them into account in its actions. Thirty-four of the thirty-nine railway undertakings and users' associations contacted by the CNMC took part in the survey. ([INF/DTSP/006/23](#))

Passenger transport

High-speed long-distance transport is the most highly rated service. Users are pleased with the increased frequencies and lower prices, but point out that where there is no competition, prices have risen.

Railway companies consider that their sector has been discriminated against by not receiving subsidies in the context of the Spanish energy crisis and ask for the recognition of rail transport's electro-intensive nature. They also demand an urgent revision of the infrastructure manager's charges and improvements in the management of capacity restrictions. They also denounce the shortage of train drivers and the difficulties in bringing new rolling stock into service.

Users of **suburban and medium-distance services** rate the Government's subsidies for the last quarter of 2022 very positively.

This is the first time that the survey gathers the opinions of Renfe's competitors in passenger transport, after the entry of competition in high-speed services in 2021.

Freight transport

Rail freight companies are dissatisfied with the situation in the sector. They denounce the shortage of specialised manpower and rolling stock (locomotives and wagons), as well as the high cost of traction energy. They also point out that rail has received less support than road transport, although they are optimistic about European funds, the approval of eco-incentives and the development of new rail motorways.

Representatives of rail freight users (logistics companies, shippers, hauliers and manufacturers and distributors) consider that rail transport is not competitive enough with road transport, despite the fact that the overall average rating has improved compared to previous surveys. They believe that the sector lacks the flexibility and agility necessary to grow.

Freight terminals and infrastructure

The state of rail infrastructure is considered to be deficient. Users believe that it does not allow for the modulation of supply to meet urgent services or heavier loads. They also complain about the poor operation of terminals, which affects service provision and makes it more expensive.

Users ask for better management of temporary capacity restrictions (caused by frequent works) and demand the development of rail corridors and motorways to speed up and dynamise rail freight transport.

Quality of passenger infrastructure

Users' perception of the quality of infrastructure is generally good. However, they complain, for example, of differences between the main stations and the smaller ones, or barriers to mobility and the inadequacy of certain adjacent services (such as ticket sales at ticket counters or mobility services for people with special needs).

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