

A strong European rail supply industry in a fair global competitive environment

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"A fair and level-playing field in global competition and reciprocal market access to avert job losses", digitalisation, an "increasing resource - and energy-efficiency"; and an efficient and innovative use of EU funds, with a focus on the support for SMEs suggested MEPs of the committee on industry, research and energy as tools to support the European Rail Supply Industry (RSI), in their draft motion for resolution voted on Thursday morning.

Fair competition and equal opportunities at the global level

MEPs stressed that "third-country competitors, especially from China, are expanding rapidly and aggressively to Europe and other world regions, and their "practices may constitute unfair competition which threatens jobs in Europe", asking the Commission to craft "a coherent EU trade strategy, which ensures compliance with the principle of reciprocity, particularly in relation to Japan, China and the USA."

"Future trade agreements and the revisions of existing" ones should include "specific provisions which significantly improve market access for the European RSI, especially with respect to public procurement", they also said.

Innovation and efficiency in funding

The existing EU funding instruments should be used "to the full so that demand is stimulated for rail projects", said MEPs, highlighting "the importance of a successful implementation of EFSI as one tool to mobilise private capital for the rail sector" and calling for "further exploration on how private investments can be put in motion for rail projects".

EFSI "must deliver on its promise" in respect of SMEs as well, said MEPs, stressing that for the small and medium-sized enterprises in RSI "access to finance is one of the main challenges". The SME-instrument under Horizon 2020 raises "the problem of over-subscription and a low success rate", they also said, whereas COSME and the Structural Funds have "an added value" in helping "SMEs gain access to funding, including in the form of guarantee and equity facilities", MEPs added highlighting "the need for a strengthened promotion of these instruments".

Furthermore, MEPs said that research in RSI there should have three main focuses:

- "the digitalisation to increase the performance of rail and to lower its operational costs"
- "the increasing resource- and energy-efficiency", and
- "advancements which make rail transport more attractive and accepted"

However, "the innovation efforts must not neglect the infrastructure, which is a vital element of rail competitiveness", reminded MEPs.

Next steps

The draft motion for resolution is scheduled for a plenary vote during the May session.

Further information

Press release

- Committee on Industry, Research and Energy:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/itre/home.html>
- Meeting documents:
[http://www.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/agenda/201604/ITRE/ITRE\(2016\)0407_1/sitt-2201696](http://www.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/agenda/201604/ITRE/ITRE(2016)0407_1/sitt-2201696)
- Catch up with the vote: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20160407-0900-COMMITTEE-ITRE>

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