

> Return address Postbus 20904 2500 EX Den Haag

European Commission  
Commissioner for Transport  
Adina Vălean  
B-1049 Brussels  
Belgium

**Bestuurskern**  
Dir. Openbaar Vervoer en  
Spoor  
Veiligheid en Goederen  
  
Den Haag  
Postbus 20904  
2500 EX Den Haag

**Enclosures**

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**Our reference**

IENW/BSK-2020/95181

Date 2 juni 2020  
Subject Statement on international railway passenger transport

Dear Commissioner Adina Vălean,

As a follow-up to the position paper on international rail passenger transport which I sent to you on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January this year, it is my pleasure to present you a political statement on improving international rail passenger transport and a list of member states and third countries that support this statement.

The COVID-19 crisis, which is affecting all of us, has a substantial negative impact on international rail passenger transport in the short term. Many economic sectors that are served by international rail passenger transport are closed down to a large extent, such as business travel, tourism and culture. This means that we have to consider how we want to support economic recovery including the rail passenger transport sector. The COVID-19 crisis could be a momentum for greening the transport sector with the help of international passengers transport by rail. Furthermore, under the Green Deal Initiative by the European Commission, climate change has become a key policy priority and it is clear that international railway passenger transport must be part of this agenda.

This political statement has been prepared in close cooperation with member states with the aim to signal the need for an European agenda on international rail passenger transport and to decide on the establishment of a platform of Member States, the European Commission, the railway sector and the European Passenger Federation. With the adoption of this statement member states show their political support in order to prepare next steps, identify priorities for improvement and share good practices amongst each other through a platform of cooperating member states and third countries. Cooperation with the European rail sector and the European Passenger Federation is a key element of the work of the platform.

The EU member states listed in the annex to this document plus Norway and Switzerland, are supporting this statement. Given the COVID-19 crisis it is not possible for Ministers to meet in person within the next weeks to formally sign such a political statement. As agreed with the Croatian Presidency, this initiative will be announced during the upcoming informal videoconference June 4<sup>th</sup> for EU Ministers of Transport. Consequently we can take the next step start with a cooperative platform of member states, third countries, European organizations and the European Railway sector. This platform could also provide input to the

European Green Deal initiative as well as for the Commissions initiative Year of the Rail 2021.

Yours sincerely,

the State Secretary for Infrastructure and Water Management,

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S. van Veldhoven - Van der Meer