



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Commissioner Adina Vălean
Head of Cabinet

Brussels, 06.07.2021
WG/Ares(2021) 3692184

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(UITP)

Mr Ruud VAN DER PLOEG
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Ms Karen VANCLUYSEN
Secretary General
POLIS

By email: thomas.avanzata@uitp.org

Dear Mr Avanzata,

Thank you for your letter of 3 June in which you support the suggestion made by other stakeholders to extend the European Year of Rail until December 2022, and also propose to make 2022 a European Year of Rail and Public Transport. The President, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, has asked me to reply to your request.

First of all, I would like to thank UITP, EMTA, EPF, EPTO and POLIS, and all their members, for the efforts made so far in the European Year of Rail. As you know, this

initiative contributes to the objectives set out in the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. Your organisations' input will certainly help us reach a broad audience and mobilise efforts.

On the proposed extension both in time and in scope of the European Year of Rail, while I can understand your concerns about the constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic that may have impeded the full deployment of stakeholders' activities, many of those activities are well on their way or have already taken place. With the rollout of the vaccination campaign in Europe, I am confident that we can still achieve a lot by the end of 2021. In particular, this time is an excellent opportunity to boost citizens' confidence in collective transport. I would encourage everyone to continue contributing to these efforts and making progress still this year. Under the current European Year framework, we are nevertheless ready to show openness when it comes, for example, to organising some additional and then subsequent stocktaking events in the first semester of 2022.

In any case, even without any formal extension of the European Year of Rail, I trust that the momentum this initiative has created will be maintained beyond 2021 and that rail will remain under the political and public spotlight.

Beyond rail, this trend should also benefit all sustainable transport modes. As you know, the Commission has set ambitious milestones in its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and is committed to delivering the related actions in the coming years. In this context, we will continue supporting activities organised by stakeholders to help increase the uptake of rail, and more generally to promote the use of sustainable mobility options, including the use of collective transport in European urban centres. In particular, the new EU Urban Mobility Framework, planned to be published by the end of 2021, will set our ambitions to make urban mobility more sustainable and safe, focusing on people and places rather than the movement of vehicles, to ensure a better quality of life. Public transport and railways will have a central role in this important and necessary transition.

I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to actively participate in the consultation process, which started in mid-June and which will be open during the whole summer.

Yours sincerely,

Walter GOETZ

(E-signed)