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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas
on behalf of the European Commission
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The 4th railway package provides for market opening for all railway services¹ and technical interoperability to facilitate cross-border traffic and the industrialisation of rail products. Technical obstacles represent a considerable barrier to the efficient running of trains across borders. Member States are required to remove these obstacles, notably to replace their national train control system with the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS)² as of 2040. In the meantime, Member States must comply with the requirements set out in Regulation (EU) 2023/1695³. The Commission reminded France of its duty to share specifications of the French Class B systems⁴, including their interface with the ERTMS, with new operators and manufacturers allowing them to adapt onboard train systems to run in France.

Another obstacle to enter rail markets - not specific to France - is the lack of availability of network capacity for newcomers, especially on the commercially most interesting and therefore often more congested, railway lines. The Commission adopted a proposal on the use of railway infrastructure capacity in the single European railway area⁵, which is currently under discussion in the European Parliament and Council. Once adopted, it will optimise the use of network capacity and make available additional capacity without building new infrastructure.

Despite considerable difficulties, RENFE and Trenitalia, the national railway operators of Spain and Italy, have expanded their cross-border services into, and services within, France. More new entrants are preparing for access to the French rail market. The Commission will keep the situation under review and take further action if necessary.

¹ Freight and passengers, commercially operated or covered by public services obligations, as well as cross-border, national, regional or local services.

² The obligation to install ERTMS on the Trans-European Transport Networks comes from Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1153 and (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1679/oj>

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2023/1695/oj/eng

⁴ KVB and TVM.

⁵ COM/2023/443 final.