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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.5.2026)

In July 2025 the Commission adopted a report on the implementation of Directive 2012/34/EU¹ as amended by Directive (EU) 2016/2370, based among others, on market studies² requested by the Commission and official market data. Results show that, where passengers could choose between different operators, railway services became cheaper and more frequent. Market opening encouraged railway operators to become more responsive to customer needs and improve their cost-effectiveness, enhancing the role of rail in accelerating the reduction of transport emissions and congestion.

The Commission has already provided comprehensive guidance on how to apply Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007³. In 2023, following extensive consultations with stakeholders, the Commission adopted revised interpretative guidelines to take account of the legislative changes introduced by the Fourth Railway Package, including exemptions from the obligation to tender competitively public service contracts in the railway sector. The Commission does not currently envisage the adoption of new interpretative guidelines concerning Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007.

In 2016 the Fourth Railway Package completed the opening to competition of the rail services market by introducing mandatory tendering for public services and allowing commercial operators to offer domestic rail passenger services in other Member States. The Commission remains firmly committed to support the rail sector in reaching its growth potential working together with all the stakeholders.

¹ Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area (recast), OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, pp. 32–77.

² Input study on vertically integrated rail undertakings in the European Union (2025) <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c503c1d2-5ba3-11f0-a9d0-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>, Study on passenger and freight rail transport services' prices for final customers (2024) <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4ea76998-7955-11ef-bbbe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

³ Commission notice on interpretative guidelines concerning Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road, OJ C 222, 26.6.2023, p. 1.