European Passengers' Federation:
Priorities for the Year of Rail 2021

1. **Goal:** Rail should become the natural 'mode of choice' for users and the backbone of Europe's integrated green mobility system, building on its ability to carry large volumes safely, speedily, and sustainably.
   Challenge: Rail accounts for a minor share of passenger and freight movement and its services are amongst those least favourably assessed by consumers.
   Enabler: Services must be user-centred, and organised and engineered to deliver good value with consistent dependability and excellent service quality.

2. **Goal:** The allocation of resources between transport modes should reflect an informed understanding of costs, thus supporting a level playing field and allowing resource allocation to be optimised.
   Challenge: Successive Commissions have failed to make progress with the internalisation of external costs in the transport sector, reinforcing rail's competitive disadvantage.
   Enabler: Commission impact assessments should reflect the internalisation of external costs across the transport sector.

3. **Goal:** Rail services should be priced competitively, reflecting resource-efficiency.
   Challenge: Parts of the sector are characterised by outmoded working practices, lack of investment in automation and capacity constraints, and a reluctance to explore the use of lighter-weight equipment to secure energy-savings and lower civil engineering costs. It has been slow to pursue the economies of scale and operating efficiencies to be gained from greater interoperability.
   Enabler: Innovation should be incentivised, drawing on the experience of other sectors and creating career opportunities for new entrants from those sectors.

4. **Goal:** Rail should be integral to the delivery of seamless 'whole journey' travel solutions in combination with other modes, including active travel.
   Challenge: Transport services, particularly rail, are often reluctant to provide intending travellers, or third-party intermediaries such as ticketing retailers, with open access to transparent, non-discriminatory, accurate, up-to-date information, restricting consumer choice and whole journey planning.
   Enabler: There may need to be regulation to ensure integration of historic, static and dynamic data from service providers to facilitate 'whole journey' planning, inform consumer choices and allow travel disruptions to be worked around.

5. **Goal:** Rail operators should engender the trust of users as this underpins consumer confidence and a readiness to engage in the market.
   Challenge: Effective consumer protection is essential to consumer trust.
   Enabler: An, easily understood and consistently enforced system of passengers' rights is essential to good business and it should be applied without exceptions, stripped of ambiguity or indeterminate concepts like *force majeure*, and underpinned by an assurance that appropriate assistance will always be prioritised when things go wrong.

6. **Goal:** Rail should respond urgently to changing patterns of user demand and, following the pandemic, reflect heightened awareness of the access needs of the vulnerable and marginalised without compromising the need to offer a level of personal comfort that can compete with that offered by the automotive sector.
   Challenge: *COVID-19 has accelerated changing behaviours, such as home-working and reliance on digital access, a heightened awareness of cleanliness and adequacy of personal space, the health aspects of pollution and the value of active mobility.*
   Enabler: The railway operating community will need to reappraise its service offering and the suitability of the configuration of its vehicles and built estate to reflect changing user demands and to ensure access for all.

7. **Goal:** The majority of Europe's population centres should be linked by a high-quality network of rail passenger services.
   Challenge: Unsustainable air travel currently dominates longer-distance travel within Europe, aided in part by the predominant focus of the rail operating community on their national markets and complicated by fractured regulatory arrangements and incompatible national train planning cycles.

Enabler: Acknowledging the initiative of the Netherlands in promoting intergovernmental collaboration on the development of international rail passenger services, and noting the success of BEREC in the telecommunications sector and of ACER in the natural gas and electricity markets, EPF encourages a common regulatory approach with greater coordination between infrastructure managers and a mechanism to oversee the creation and operation of European inter-city corridors.

8. **Goal:** The Year of Rail should embrace both the letter and the spirit of Article 12 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and fully engage users' representatives in all related policy deliberations.
   Challenge: European *acquis* acknowledges that passengers are the weaker party to the transport contract while their representatives lack resources comparable to those of the industry lobbyists.
   Enabler: DG MOVE and other relevant Directorates-General should make the necessary provision to secure enhanced engagement with end users' representatives in formulating their proposals and discharging their responsibilities for sustainable mobility.

Gent, 02.07.2020