
Commission approves public funding to promote shift of freight from road to rail in Bolzano region, Italy

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The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules an Italian scheme to support the shift of freight traffic from road to rail in the Province of Bolzano. The measure will further EU environmental and transport objectives, whilst maintaining competition in the Single Market.

The Italian scheme, which has an **overall budget of €9 million and will run until 2019**, aims to increase the share of rail and intermodal freight transport through the Brenner Corridor, an international transit route across the Alps linking Germany, Austria and Italy.

The public support will be provided to freight transport services carried out **by railway companies and multimodal operators along the Alto Adige/Südtirol section of the transport corridor between Brenner and Salorno**, comprising 120 km of railway and 116 km of motorway.

The aid takes the form of a subsidy to railway companies and multimodal transport operators that carry freight, ultimately reducing prices for end customers. The level of support companies can receive is based on the reduction in the external costs (pollution, noise, congestion and accidents) achieved by rail transport compared to road transport.

The Commission found that the scheme is beneficial for the environment and mobility, supporting rail transport, which is less polluting than road transport, while also decreasing road congestion. As a result, the Commission has concluded that the measure complies with EU State aid rules, in particular the criteria under the 2008 Commission Guidelines on State aid for railway undertakings.

Background

In 2015, 43.9 million tonnes of freight were transported along the Brenner Corridor, of which 71% carried by road and 29% by rail. The overall volume of freight transported

by road along the Brenner Corridor has been steadily increasing since 2013. This trend goes against the EU's objective to shift freight transport from road to rail as set out in the Commission's White Paper on Transport Policy, and has a negative impact on the concentration of air pollutants along the Brenner Corridor.

The measure approved today complements , at the local level, the Italian national schemes supporting rail and combined freight transport authorised by the Commission on 24 November 2016 and on 19 December 2016.

More information will be available in the State Aid Register on the DG Competition website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved, under the case number SA.48858. The State Aid Weekly e-News lists new publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the EU Official Journal.