# 18th May 2009: Opening up of the railway sector to competition

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**Making use of its new prerogatives for the first time, the *Autorité de la concurrence* has just referred the matter to itself in order to deliver an opinion on the questions that are posed by intermodal transport (co-ordination between the train and other modes of transport)**

***> Version française***

**The land transport sector is to undergo a complete transformation thanks to the forthcoming opening up to competition of the rail passenger traffic**

The liberalisation of the rail sector is entering a new stage, particularly with the opening up to competition on 1st January 2010 of the international railway passenger traffic as laid down in Directive No. 91/440/EEC - amended, the preceding stages having been mainly concerned with freight.

In this context and within the framework of a more general approach to sustainable development and a reduction in public expenditure, the public authorities have in parallel initiated a comprehensive study into the organization of passenger land transport and particularly into the necessary adaptation of stations to solve the problems of intermodal transport (methods implemented in order to further co-ordination between the train and the other modes of transport, such as the Métro, buses, trams, bikes, etc).

The report from Senator Fabienne Keller about the "contemporary station", delivered to the Prime Minister on 10th March this year, advocates the development of "Large Stations". Much more than simple railway stations, these future platforms will eventually integrate the whole transportation chain in order

to allow a user to plan his door-to-door journey (main line trains, TER regional trains, interurban buses, urban transport, bikes, cars, etc.).

Among the conclusions of the report is the recommendation to separate SNCF's station management activity from its competing activity of rail carrier. SNCF has chosen to respond to this recommendation by creating an entity that is specifically responsible for the management of the stations, placed under the direct authority of the CEO of the incumbent operator.

**The *Autorité de la concurrence* has decided to refer the matter to itself in order to provide clarification to the public authorities and the economic players regarding the issues and competitive problems likely to be raised during this decisive phase**

SNCF is present, either directly or through its subsidiaries (like Keolis and Effia), across the whole transportation chain : transport operator (trains, trams, coaches), it is also delegated responsibility for managing the infrastructure, and for joint public transit services (for example in certain urban areas such as Lyon or Bordeaux) and is developing operations covering other segments of the market (car parking, study, consultancy, etc).

Because of its monopoly over passenger rail transport and in view of the central role of the stations which are generally interconnected to the other modes of transport, SNCF is playing a leading role when it comes to issues of intermodal transport, particularly with regard to co-ordinating the rail transport with the public transportation networks and the conditions under which information will be organized in real-time to show the movement status of the various modes to all the operators and the passengers.

This is why the *Autorité de la concurrence* will look into the competitive difficulties likely to occur in this phase of opening up the market. More specifically, it proposes:

- to analyze whether possible restrictions on competition relative to the stations are likely to have repercussions on the land passenger public

transportation sector and/or on the intermodality market.

- to examine whether the diversification of the incumbent operator across the whole of the multimodal transportation chain requires the latter to take special precautions in order to safeguard the competition.

The *Autorité* will deliver this opinion in October at the latest and this will be made public.

***> For more details, see the full text of decision 09-SOA-01***



> Consult the full text of the opinion ***09-A-55*** and ***the press release***