

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Political pressure on competition policy risks undermining the single EU rail market**

The rail operators that belong to ALLRAIL are alarmed to hear that politicians in powerful EU member states are putting pressure on EU competition commissioner Mrs Margrethe Vestager to approve the proposed merger of rail manufacturers Siemens and Alstom<sup>1</sup>.

Over the past years, the European Commission has done some excellent work in trying to create a single market for passenger rail. This is very significant considering that the rail sector is traditionally known for having large, dominant national players.

But the Commission's goal has always been clear: to make rail travel cheaper, safer, more accessible and less susceptible to taxpayer subsidy – so that society as a whole can benefit.

**If the EU single rail market is to become a global reference, competition policy must be enforced through law and not political pressure.** The answer to protectionism elsewhere around the world is not more protectionism here in Europe.

Now that the merger of Europe's two largest rail manufacturers is proposed, it is crucial that the EU Commission's competition team receives the necessary backing to carry out a rigorous legal and economic analysis, resulting in an independent decision.

It must ensure that passenger rail operators (and other actors more downstream in the supply chain) will not be worse off than before any merger. **It must assess how the market will look in the short & medium term and not speculate about 20-30 years in the future.**

Nick Brooks, Secretary General of ALLRAIL, says: "We hope the other 27 EU commissioners will support the decision of competition commissioner Vestager on this merger, rather than bending to political pressure from powerful EU member states".

It would be really unfortunate if the rail industry – still struggling as one of the last sectors to get liberalised – is the first one where the neutrality of the European Commission is sacrificed. **This would set a dangerous precedent for other railway sector competition issues, meaning that EU market opening itself is put at risk.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://melzidek.com/france-and-germany-rally-support-for-siemens-alstom-merger/>