

Beat: Politics

## **REGIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT ASK THE STATE 9 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY**

### **FOR ENDING REGIONALISATION**

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**USPA NEWS** - Regions generally share the Court of Auditors' analysis of rail transport and the 9 recommendations it makes. A number of these recommendations, formulated on the basis of an analysis covering the period 2012/2017, had already been identified by the Regions. These recommendations have already been the subject of corrective actions, such as the introduction of incentive mechanisms and harsher penalties in the agreements between each Region and SNCF. In addition, the Railway Pact and the Orientation Law on Mobility (LOM), two reforms on which the Regions have been very active, also provide answers to these recommendations.

The Regions welcome the Court's recognition of the very important effort they have made to renew the equipment fleet (€ 3.3 billion). The mobility offer offered by regional trains benefits all citizens by meeting a dual concern to reduce CO2 emissions and reduce the individual cost of transport, especially for commuting. Even though attendance fell overall over the Court's study period, these efforts by the Regions led to an improvement in SNCF Réseau's performance. Attendance increased again in 2017 (+ 4.7%). After a year 2018 marked by a social movement of great magnitude, the year 2019 seems to confirm this spectacular recovery. The Regions believe that the implementation of the rail pact should make it possible to support investments for the modernization and greening of the equipment fleet, and ambitious tariff policies. On this point, the Regions emphasize that their voluntarism in terms of pricing has maximized the use of trains and maintain the purchasing power of users, without damaging their contribution ratio to the public service.-----

In addition, the Regions note that they have to make considerable investment efforts (€ 2.1 billion) on rail infrastructure that does not belong to them. In addition, they must absorb in their public subsidies the cost of tolls, which far exceeds the cost of using the network. Despite their efforts, the network remains very degraded and affects the quality of service. This is now the urgency on which the government is expected, which commissioned a report to Prefect François Philizot. The Regions are calling on the government to engage with them in a contractual arrangement with means commensurate with the challenges for rail infrastructure. The government must open discussions to authorize regions that wish to obtain project ownership on certain lines (as the LOM will allow), or even to transfer some of these infrastructures to them. It is not conceivable that such a level of regional public involvement in rail transport would be so constrained by the state of the infrastructure, without the Regions having direct means to intervene. It is up to the state, now, to take its responsibilities to go beyond the logic of the regionalization of rail transport: it has all the cards in hand to do so, and has the means defined in the budgetary path backed at the LOM.

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