

PRESS RELEASE

Paris, February 19th, 2026

ART validates the 2027-2029 track access charges proposed by SNCF Réseau, against a backdrop of network financing needs and market opening

The French Transport Regulatory Authority (ART) today publishes the favourable binding opinion, with one reservation, that it has issued on the track access charges proposed by SNCF Réseau for the working timetables 2027 to 2029. ART thereby validates the principles and amounts of the track access charges proposed by the infrastructure manager with regard to the applicable legal framework. The reservation it issues relates solely to the need to introduce updating mechanisms for the charges applicable to public service obligations (PSO) services, in particular in the event of the opening, closure or transfer of a line. Regarding commercial services, tariff reductions in favour of "territorial development" rail services constitute a relevant price signal, likely to encourage effective and optimal use of the rail network. Lastly, ART welcomes SNCF Réseau's commitment to better controlling its operating costs and improving the quality of service provided to users, and calls on it to continue improving its charging framework ahead of the 2030-2032 cycle.

ART VALIDATES THE CHARGES PROPOSED BY SNCF RÉSEAU FOR BOTH COMMERCIAL AND PSO SERVICES

SNCF Réseau, which manages the national rail network, is responsible for its maintenance, modernisation, development and operational management. To fund these activities, it collects charges – known as "track access charges" – paid by railway undertakings in exchange for the minimum access package essential to train operations.

These charges are set on a multi-annual basis and subject to the binding opinion of ART. On 11 December 2025, SNCF Réseau proposed, within the framework of the 2027 network statement, a new charging schedule applicable to non-PSO services (passenger and freight) as well as PSO services for the period 2027-2029.

By deliberation of 10 February 2026, the ART board approved this proposal, which provides in particular for:

- **an overall increase in charges more moderate than in the previous cycle**, aligned with the trajectory set by the performance contract concluded between the State and SNCF Réseau for 2021-2030;
- **an overall stable charging structure**, supplemented by **specific measures in favour of “territorial development”**.

ART bases its favourable opinion on two findings:

- **there is no risk that the charges will lead to over-recovery of the fully allocated costs of network management**, neither at the overall level nor at the level of the various transport authorities;
- **the charge levels adopted are sustainable** for the relevant stakeholders within the meaning of the applicable legal framework, despite their high level in respect of commercial services.

Regarding commercial services, which contribute to network financing significantly beyond the directly incurred cost of their train operations (at a rate of 122% on average over the 2027-2029 cycle), **ART considers that in future no individual access charge should increase faster than inflation**, unless the infrastructure manager can clearly demonstrate its sustainability.

Furthermore, it highlights that, given the current levels and coverage rates of charges, **any change in the fiscal or regulatory landscape could potentially call into question the assessment of the sustainability of the charges applicable to these services**.

Regarding PSO services, ART considers it necessary for SNCF Réseau to introduce several **updating mechanisms for the market charge package into the network statement**. The objective is straightforward: to ensure that the market charge package amounts are commensurate with the scope operated by transport authorities, so that they can be adjusted in the event of a line transfer, opening or closure.

THE MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF “TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT” FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES ARE WELCOME AND SHOULD BE FURTHER DEVELOPED FOR THE NEXT CHARGING CYCLE

ART considers that the tariff reductions in favour of so-called “territorial development” rail services constitute a useful price signal. These measures encourage traffic on economically less attractive lines and thereby contribute to more optimal use of the national rail network.

These measures will, overall, reduce the weight of charges paid by commercial services, which, all else being equal, will contribute to stabilising their fully allocated costs coverage rate for infrastructure management.

Looking ahead, ART recommends that SNCF Réseau, for the next charging cycle 2030-2032, continue and sustain this tariff reduction policy aimed at promoting the maintenance or development of territorial development rail services and reinforcing optimal use of the network.

ART WILL CLOSELY MONITOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE TARGETS SET BY SNCF RÉSEAU

ART welcomes SNCF Réseau’s commitment to better controlling its operating costs and improving the quality of service provided to users. The infrastructure manager has set cost

control targets and an incentive mechanism based on five quality indicators, with financial penalties for failure to meet targets that may exceed 14 million euros in 2029.

ART will closely monitor the effective implementation of these commitments throughout the 2027-2029 cycle.

Consult (in French): [Opinion No. 2026-010 of 10 February 2026.](#)

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About the French Transport Regulatory Authority (ART)

Since 2010, the French railway sector has had an independent authority to accompany its gradual opening to competition: the Autorité de régulation des activités ferroviaires (Araf). Law 2015-990 of 6 August 2015 on growth, activity and equal economic opportunity extended the regulator's powers to road activities - coach transport and motorways. On 15 October 2015, Araf became the Autorité de régulation des activités ferroviaires et routières (Arafer), with the mission to contribute to the proper functioning of public service and competitive activities for the benefit of rail and road transport customers.

With competence for the regulation of airport charges since 1 October 2019, Arafer became the Transport Regulatory Authority (ART) on that date. Lastly, Law No. 2019-1428 of 24 December 2019 -mobility act- extended ART's powers and missions to the opening up of mobility and ticketing data, as well as to the regulation of infrastructure manager activities and security activities carried out by RATP in Île-de-France. Its opinions and decisions are adopted by a college of five independent members chosen for their economic, legal or technical skills in the field of digital services or transport, or for their expertise in competition matters. It is chaired since 29 December 2023 by Thierry Guimbaud.