

(private or public), is acting as a monopolist. Even in Austria, which is a relatively small country, we are talking about an annual contract volume of almost a billion Euros - a volume, which multinational transport operators do not want to let slip through their fingers.

The ultimate question is who will benefit from the “Public Services Contract” subsidies and what will be the expense for the economy, employees and rail passengers?

Retaining the option of awarding contracts directly makes sense

Overall, awarding contracts directly is a sensible legal instrument to award public transport services. The rail system in its entirety is too complex and the conditions in the individual countries are too different to find a single problem-solving approach for 25 very different countries (only Cyprus and Malta do not have a rail system) in Europe (EU27). Hence, the option to choose between competitive tendering and awarding contracts directly should definitely be retained for the responsible democratically legitimised regional administrative bodies.

However, the proposals of the European Commission on the Fourth Railway Package are heading in the opposite direction.