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Address by President Nicola Zaccheo

Senate of the Republic
18 September 2024

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the President of the Senate Ignazio La Russa for his kind hospitality in the prestigious Sala Zuccari at Palazzo Giustiniani. I would like to welcome the representatives of Parliament and the Government, the civil and military authorities, all those attending today and those following the event remotely, on television or via live streaming.

The Annual Report I am about to present comes halfway through the second term of office of the Transport Regulation Authority's Board and covers the period from 16 June 2023 to 30 June 2024.

[The 11th Annual Report of the Authority](#)

In the ever-evolving economic and social context, with Italy engaged in implementing the objectives approved by the European Union under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), I believe it is all the more important to emphasise the role of the Authority, which, by its very nature and the circumstances of its establishment, pursues its institutional mission while operating "in full autonomy and with independence of judgement and assessment".

[The independence of the Authority](#)

The establishment of independent administrative authorities and their strategic role in the liberalisation of markets are the subject of some general reflections in the first part of the Annual Report, to which I will return later.

I will now present the main activities carried out during the period under review, which are described in detail in the Annual Report.

**Access to
infrastructure**

Airport infrastructure

*ART regulation of
programme contracts
under the
derogation regime*

In the area of infrastructure access regulation, starting with the airport sector, particular significance attaches to the signing of the Addendum to the programme contract, which had expired in 2021, between the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC) and Aeroporti di Roma (AdR). This agreement brought the Capital's airports fully under ART's regulatory remit. This complex procedure involved direct engagement and constructive cooperation between the Authority's offices and ENAC, aimed at ensuring that the final Addendum complied with the economic regulatory framework in force.

In line with the provisions of the Addendum, the airport operator submitted a revised proposal for airport charges at Fiumicino and Ciampino airports for the 2024–2028 regulatory period, in accordance with the latest regulatory models adopted by the Authority.

Once the agreements relating to the so-called “programme contracts under derogation” with SAVE, the operator of Venice Airport, and SEA, the operator of Milan's airports, have been finalised, the process of bringing all airports within the Authority's regulatory remit will be complete. This will ensure the full application of the relevant EU legislation, as called for, among others, by the European Commission, which recently initiated an EU Pilot procedure concerning Italy.

The Authority has promptly responded, within the scope of its remit, and I trust that the revision of the programme contracts between ENAC and the aforementioned airport operators, in compliance with ART's regulatory framework, will lead to the closure of the EU Pilot procedure. This will ensure the full exercise of the powers conferred on the Authority under EU legislation, as the national body responsible for the oversight and economic regulation of airport charges.

With regard to concessions governed by contracts under derogation, the Authority's powers have also been confirmed by several court rulings, includ-

ing recent ones. In particular, I would like to draw attention to Council of State judgment No. 1805/2024 of 23 February 2024, which warns of the danger of “a restrictive interpretation of the Authority’s powers of review” and the ensuing risk that, in the absence of ART’s regulatory oversight, airport operators could pass on to users costs that were unreasonably incurred and are unrelated to the objectives actually achieved.

As part of its ongoing monitoring of airport operators, the Authority has assessed whether annual adjustments to airport charges comply with its regulatory models. This year, the proposed adjustment to airport charges at Trieste Airport marked the start of the first compliance verification procedures under the latest airport charging models adopted by ART through Decision No. 38/2023.

Verification of compliance with ART’s regulatory models

In the motorway sector, the Authority deemed it necessary to carry out a Regulatory Fitness Evaluation (RFE) of the methodology underlying the toll-setting systems. The results of this evaluation highlighted the need for a coordinated approach, aimed at both ensuring more accurate application of ART’s toll-setting models and assessing the need for a possible revision of the current toll-setting system, to be submitted to public consultation.

Motorway infrastructure

Accordingly, through Decision No. 15/2024, the Authority issued specific operational guidance on the application of the principles and criteria of economic regulation to motorway concessions. The aim is to ensure greater consistency between proposals for the revision and updating of Economic and Financial Plans (EFPs) and the Authority’s regulatory model.

Operational guidance on applying the principles and criteria of economic regulation to motorway concessions

At the same time, with Decision no. 29/2024, an inquiry was launched to collect information from stakeholders, particularly to gather estimates of the investments deemed necessary by the concessionaires. This information will

Initiation of proceedings to update the toll-setting system

be instrumental to the Authority's ensuing sustainability analysis within its areas of responsibility.

The inquiry highlighted several areas that require further investigation, prompting the initiation of proceedings to update the toll charging system under Decision no. 62/2024. This proceeding is expected to be completed by the end of the current year.

*Implementation of
ART's regulatory
framework and
related challenges*

Meanwhile, progress has been made in defining the toll-setting systems for concessions whose regulatory periods have expired, while the Authority has continued its advisory activities, issuing opinions on proposals to update EFPs and on annual adjustments to motorway tolls for concessions subject to ART's toll-setting system.

In this area, the critical issues identified in previous Annual Reports persist. Although the Authority has established toll-setting systems for almost all Italian motorway concessionaires, its regulatory framework has been fully implemented in only six cases. As a result, the sector remains, in practice, only partially subject to ART's economic regulation.

In this context, the procedure for revising the EFP relating to the Single Concession Agreement between Concessioni Autostradali Lombarde and Autostrada Pedemontana Lombarda is particularly significant. The Authority issued its opinion on the proposal, calling for the necessary corrective measures, which were not taken into account in the subsequent approval decision issued by the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development (CIPESS).

Following the clarifications provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT) in response to the Court of Auditors' observations concerning the failure to take account of ART's assessments of motorway tolls, CIPESS adopted a new decision on 29 May 2024, formally withdrawing its previous decision.

In the new decision, CIPESS reaffirmed the obligation to incorporate the tariff-related elements set out in ART's opinion and stressed the need to implement the adjustments requested by the Authority under the toll-setting system, specifying that their implementation "remains mandatory" for the granting authority.

The recognition of the binding nature of the Authority's requirements represents a significant step, as it clarifies the respective responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and reinforces ART's role in the procedures for revising or updating Economic and Financial Plans.

The issues relating to the implementation of ART's regulatory framework in the motorway sector should be further addressed through specific provisions of the 2023 Annual Competition Law. The corresponding bill was approved by the Council of Ministers on 26 July 2024 and is expected to be enacted by the end of the year, thereby fulfilling the NRRP objectives set out in Milestone M1C2-11 – Motorways.

*2023 Annual
Competition Law*

To achieve these objectives, the Italian Government has committed to ensuring the "full and timely implementation" of the Authority's economic regulation, as well as compliance with the principles of competition laid down in the relevant EU legislation on the award of concessions. The Government aims to simplify the administrative procedures for awarding concession contracts and updating the related EFPs. It also seeks to ensure that the identification of optimal management areas for motorway sections is consistent with the criteria established by ART, and to improve the transparency and level of detail of concession contracts. This includes extending the Authority's powers to "define model concession agreements to be included in tender documents [...]". With regard to in-house awards, the

Milestone also sets out a minimum requirement: the Authority must be provided with the necessary powers and resources to carry out *ex ante* checks on the lawfulness of such awards, with the support of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC). It also prohibits the launch of new tender procedures or in-house awards unless compliance with the Authority's regulatory framework has first been ensured.

Through the "Measures on the reorganisation of motorway concessions", set out in Chapter I of the aforementioned bill, the Government has proposed a significant reform of the sector, also resulting from constructive institutional cooperation with the Authority. This reform aims not only to achieve the objectives set out in the relevant NRRP Milestone, but also to address more effectively the substantial investment needs of the country's motorway network. These objectives will also be supported by the expected strengthening of the Authority's enforcement and oversight powers.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the institutional dialogue established between MIT and ART in this context, in the hope of further strengthening cooperation among all the institutions involved in the complex transport sector.

*Implementation of
the regulatory
framework for
electric vehicle
charging services*

Finally, in the motorway sector, during the period under review, the Authority provided its observations on the first applications of the criteria laid down in Decision No. 130/2022 concerning the regulatory measures for the preparation of model tender notices to be used by motorway concessionaires for the award of electric vehicle charging services at motorway service areas. In line with these measures, the Authority submitted its observations on the first reports on the award procedures received, particularly those from Autostrade per l'Italia (ASPI) and certain concessionaires belonging to the ASTM Group, prior to the publication of the relevant tender notices.

In this regard, ART has examined the new Plan for the restructuring of the motorway service area network, approved on 5 July by a joint decree of the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport and the Minister for the Environment and Energy Security. The new measures, which the Authority is currently assessing with a view to a possible appeal before the Regional Administrative Court, appear to disregard the regulatory powers conferred on the Authority in this area. They also appear to be inconsistent with ART's existing regulatory framework, not only with regard to the aforementioned Decision No. 130/2022 on the award of electric vehicle charging services, but also with regard to Decision No. 1/2023 concerning the award of fuel and lubricant distribution services, as well as commercial and catering services at motorway service areas (commonly referred to as 'oil' and 'non-oil' services). In this context, particular attention should be drawn to judgment No. 412 of 26 April 2024 of the Piedmont Regional Administrative Court, which recognised the public-service nature of the activities carried out by operators under sub-concession agreements for catering services and fully confirmed ART's regulatory role in this area.

Turning to the railway sector, the new regulatory framework introduced by Decision No. 95/2023 was applied for the first time during the period under review. This Decision revised the criteria originally approved by Decision No. 96/2015 for determining charges for access to and use of railway infrastructure and extended their scope of application to interconnected regional networks.

Railway
infrastructure

With regard to the charging system for the national railway network, the Authority examined the proposals submitted by the national infrastructure manager, Rete Ferroviaria Italiana (RFI). Through Decision No. 38/2024, it required RFI to submit a new charging proposal for the 2025–2029 regulatory period. As a transitional measure, the charges applicable in 2021, which had remained in force in subsequent years, were maintained for 2025. Following the extension of the charging criteria to interconnected regional networks, the deadline for infrastruc-

*The new charging
system for the national
railway network*

ture managers to submit their proposals for the 2026–2030 regulatory period was deferred by one year.

*Activities relating to
Network Statements and
verification of their
implementation*

With regard to access to railway infrastructure, the Authority, through Decision No. 188/2023, adopted in December 2023, issued guidance and requirements addressed to RFI concerning the “2025 Network Statement” and the “2024 Network Statement”. These measures were intended to address issues that arose in 2023, particularly those related to restrictions on the multiannual allocation of railway infrastructure capacity. They also specified the criteria to be applied to capacity requests submitted as part of the annual or multiannual allocation process, particularly with regard to declarations of congestion on railway lines.

These measures required the infrastructure manager to establish appropriate coordination procedures as part of the capacity allocation and analysis processes and the preparation of infrastructure capacity enhancement plans. The aim was to ensure compliance with the principles of equity, transparency and non-discrimination, while also taking into account the interest expressed by several operators, particularly in the passenger transport sector, in entering the Italian market.

The subsequent monitoring carried out by the Authority led to the initiation of sanctioning proceedings against RFI for exceeding the limits on capacity allocation under framework agreements. Specifically, RFI exceeded the 85% threshold of total commercial capacity in eleven framework agreements, nine of which concerned regional passenger rail services and two freight services. In view of the persistence of the infringements identified, by Decision no. 127/2023, the Authority initiated separate proceedings with a view to issuing an order requiring RFI to cease the infringements. These proceedings remain

ongoing, following the rejection as inadmissible of the commitments submitted by RFI.

I wish to emphasise that the proper allocation of capacity has a direct impact on the efficient use of railway infrastructure, the effective scheduling of maintenance activities, the regularity and punctuality of services and, ultimately, operators' decisions and consumers' choices regarding their preferred modes of transport.

Furthermore, achieving the long-sought modal shift towards rail will remain elusive unless rail transport is perceived as reliable for both freight and passenger services. To this end, the national infrastructure manager will need to significantly improve its performance.

Each year, approximately 10,000 interruptions occur on the railway network. Even more concerning is the increase in their total duration: in the first half of 2022, they amounted to 17,913 hours; this rose to 19,978 hours in the first half of 2023 and further increased to 22,904 hours in the first half of 2024. These inefficiencies further exacerbate the difficulties already affecting the rail freight sector. In response, the Authority is considering procedural measures to support the sector, at least until the completion of the railway infrastructure works envisaged under the NRRP.

A substantial shift, both in management practices and across the sector, is needed, as only through the optimisation of all components of the transport system can the collapse of individual modes of transport be prevented and the country's competitiveness and quality of life be safeguarded.

Finally, I would like to point out that, following the conclusion of the proceedings initiated by Decision No. 33/2024, a new operator has been granted access to the railway infrastructure to provide passenger rail services

New passenger rail services and the economic equilibrium test for public service contracts

on the Rome–Reggio Calabria and Rome–Venice routes, following an economic equilibrium test (EET) concerning the public service contract between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and Trenitalia.

Port
infrastructure

*The definition of
EFP templates for port
concessions*

With regard to port infrastructure, as mentioned in the previous Annual Report to Parliament, a significant development has been the assignment of specific responsibilities to the Authority under the Guidelines adopted by Ministerial Decree No. 110 of 21 April 2023. These responsibilities concern the application of the Regulation governing the granting of concessions for port areas and docks, approved by Decree No. 202 of 28 December 2022 of the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, issued in agreement with the Minister of Economy and Finance.

In particular, the Authority has been entrusted with the task of issuing an opinion on the duration of concessions for port areas and docks, assessing whether it is proportionate to the investments set out in the Economic and Financial Plans submitted by bidders in the award procedures conducted by the Port System Authorities (PSAs). These plans must be drawn up using specific templates adopted by the Authority. I would like to recall that the above-mentioned Guidelines are a necessary requirement under the NRRP, and in particular for the achievement of Milestone M3C2-2, as part of the overall objective of developing and enhancing the competitiveness of the Italian port system. Following a public consultation launched by Decision No. 75/2024, the Authority adopted, by Decision No. 89/2024, the EFP templates to be submitted by bidders in the concession award procedures provided for under Article 18 of Law No. 84/1994.

To effectively discharge its new responsibilities, the Authority needs access to comprehensive information on port concessions. Pending the completion of the uploading of data to the Maritime Domain Information System (SID), which is expected to be completed shortly, the Authority has requested that the Port System Authorities provide a minimum set of essential information. This is necessary to ensure that the Authority has an adequate information base to properly exercise its regulatory functions.

Finally, during the period covered by this Report, progress was made in the revision of the regulatory framework established by Decision No. 57/2018. The proceedings are expected to conclude in the coming weeks, with the launch of a public consultation on the proposed new regulatory framework.

In an area falling between infrastructure access and service regulation, the Authority has been actively engaged in ensuring equitable and non-discriminatory access to bus terminals serving passenger bus and coach services, in accordance with Decision No. 56/2018. During the reporting period, the number of bus terminals subject to ART regulation has continued to increase and currently stands at 47. Of these, eight are “designated” bus terminals within the meaning of Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No. 181/2011 on passenger rights and assistance for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRM). I would like to take this opportunity to urge the competent local authorities to identify additional terminal stops or parking areas, particularly near interchange hubs, in order to promote the intermodal development of transport services, also through ART’s regulatory measures, while ensuring greater accessibility across the country.

[Access to bus terminal:](#)

**Regulation of
transport services**

In the context of transport services, a key objective of ART's regulation is to ensure competition in tender procedures by removing barriers to participation for operators. This approach promotes cost efficiency for contracting authorities and improves the quality of services provided.

The significance of these activities was further underscored by the introduction of specific measures governing the award of local public transport (LPT) services within the framework of the 2021 Annual Competition Law, in line with Milestones M1C2-6 and M1C2-8 of the NRRP. In accordance with these provisions, during the reporting period, the Authority assessed the compliance of nine award procedures for local public transport services by road and one for regional rail transport services. The primary objective was to ensure equitable and non-discriminatory conditions for operators participating in tender procedures, promote the economic and financial sustainability of the tenders, and enhance the transparency of award procedures for both local and regional public transport.

Equally significant is the oversight of award procedures involving in-house provision and direct awards, where permitted by law. This oversight aims to ensure that efficiency objectives are met and service quality is improved, including through the use of key performance indicators (KPIs) and specific incentive mechanisms.

In this context, it is worth noting that, in many cases, these forms of contract award do not effectively address persistent shortcomings in service performance. A notable example is the recent four-year contract awarded by Roma Capitale to ATAC, on which the Authority made a number of observations last February.

*Implementation of the
Annual Competition Law*

*Minimum quality
requirements for
local road transport
services subject to
public service
obligations*

An innovative and long-awaited development in this area was the procedure for establishing the minimum quality requirements for local public transport

services by road subject to public service obligations, covering services operated by buses, trams, metro systems and trolleybuses. This procedure was concluded with the adoption of Decision No. 53/2024, following an extensive consultation process in which the Italian Competition Authority (AGCM) and the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) also participated. The measures introduced have completed the regulatory framework for the sector, which had previously covered only rail and maritime transport.

These regulatory measures aim to promote continuous improvements in service performance for the benefit of users, while also fostering innovation among public transport operators.

The key aspects of service quality from the users' perspective encompass the entire travel experience, with particular emphasis on intermodal and multimodal integration, environmental sustainability, service punctuality and reliability, accessibility of vehicles and infrastructure (especially for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility), safety during travel, and the prevention of fare evasion.

As for operators, they will have the opportunity to compete by submitting bids offering quality standards higher than the minimum requirements set out in the tender documents. In the case of in-house awards, contracting authorities will have appropriate benchmarks against which to assess the adequacy of the selected operator.

Finally, users and citizens will benefit from greater transparency concerning the conditions of use of the services, the rights they are entitled to enforce and the results achieved by LPT operators. This will be further supported by the availability of real-time operational data.

Revision of the regulatory framework for the award of local public transport services

The introduction of minimum quality requirements for local road transport services and the new provisions of the 2021 Annual Competition Law required a revision of the existing regulatory framework governing local public passenger transport services, both by road and rail. Accordingly, during the period covered by this Report, Decision No. 64/2024 brought the revision process to a close, introducing, *inter alia*, objectives relating to environmental sustainability, social sustainability, digitalisation and technological innovation. The final regulatory measures were also accompanied by templates and guidelines for preparing Economic and Financial Plans and addressing other economic aspects of award procedures, with a view to supporting local authorities.

Revision of the methodology for determining reasonable profit in the award of road, rail and maritime transport services

Finally, with the aim of ensuring a consistent regulatory framework across the different transport sectors, it has also been necessary to coordinate this work with the ongoing revision of the methodology for determining reasonable profit in the award of road, rail and maritime transport services. The outcomes of the stakeholder consultation, which closed on 21 June 2024, are currently being assessed.

Taxi services and the Authority's contribution to increasing the number of licences

To conclude this section on the regulation of transport services, I will turn to non-scheduled transport services (taxis and car-and-driver services – C&D). In previous Annual Reports, I have emphasised that the Authority has established a coherent and comprehensive set of guidelines to support the reform of taxi services. These guidelines, addressed to regional and local authorities, have considerable potential to address many of the sector's longstanding challenges, provided that they are effectively incorporated into the relevant regulatory frameworks.

Last year, to address what was described as an emergency, the Government and Parliament adopted Decree-Law No. 104/2023, commonly referred to as the “Assets Decree”. This legislation allows for an extraordinary increase of up to 20% in the number of taxi licences. Under the decree, the Authority’s role is limited to determining the amount payable for the issue of new licences, intended to compensate existing licence holders.

In exercising this responsibility, the Authority has examined requests from the municipalities of Milan, Treviso, Bologna, Pisa and Bergamo, issuing the corresponding opinions. However, the limited number of requests suggests that local authorities have made little use of the possibility of increasing the number of licences under this extraordinary measure. Despite its exceptional nature, this measure regrettably appears insufficient to address the structural and, unfortunately, widespread problems affecting the sector.

Turning to the 42 opinions issued by the Authority during the reporting period under the ordinary procedure, particular mention should be made of the opinion relating to Roma Capitale. This concerned the increase in the number of taxi licences and the revision of fares, ahead of the recent publication of the call for applications for 1,000 new licences.

Finally, ART, jointly with the Italian Competition Authority, each acting within its respective remit, submitted a joint recommendation to the Government on critical issues emerging in the markets for non-scheduled public transport services provided by taxis and car-and-driver (C&D) services.

*The joint ART–AGCM
recommendation on
taxi and car-and-driver
(C&D) services*

The joint recommendation also provided an opportunity to reiterate the essential importance of collecting appropriately anonymised data, which, far more than the national register alone, could provide the basis for effective and efficient planning of the development of transport service provision.

Passenger and user rights

Turning to the protection of passenger and user rights, during the period covered by this Report, ART's dispute settlement service became fully operational, processing over 24,000 cases submitted through the dedicated online platform, ConciliaWeb, available on the Authority's official website since 3 April 2023. Of these, 97.6% concerned the air transport sector. To date, the settlement of these disputes has resulted in payments to users totalling more than EUR 2.5 million, with an average amount exceeding EUR 400 per passenger.

Regulation of the minimum content of specific rights in the motorway sector

With regard to the *ex ante* regulatory functions conferred on the Authority by its founding legislation, the Authority has continued to develop regulatory measures aimed at establishing, in the motorway sector as well, the minimum content of specific rights, including rights to compensation, that users may claim from motorway concessionaires and service operators. Accordingly, by Decision No. 130/2023, a draft regulatory act was submitted for public consultation, following the publication of a dedicated Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), which assessed the incremental benefits of the proposed measures with regard to, *inter alia*, greater transparency in the management of motorway services, improved accessibility of travel information and the services provided, with particular attention to the needs of persons with disabilities or reduced mobility. The analysis also examined the adequacy of the service in relation to the costs borne by motorway users, as well as competition among service operators in motorway ancillary areas.

In light of the numerous contributions received and the need for further analysis of innovative issues of significant interest to both operators and users, the Authority extended the deadline for concluding the procedure to 30 June 2024 and launched a further public consultation, which concluded on 26 July. Final adoption of the regulatory act was scheduled for 30 September.

At the same time, given the complexity of the subject matter, the Authority considered it appropriate to initiate a separate procedure specifically devoted to defining the circumstances giving rise to the right to reimbursement and determining the corresponding amount. The deadline for concluding this procedure was set at 31 March 2025.

The regulatory framework governing the minimum content of user rights was further strengthened by Decision No. 92/2024, through which the Authority established measures concerning the minimum content of specific rights of air transport users, particularly with regard to complaint handling. This initiative followed a preliminary monitoring exercise conducted by ART, which focused on the transparency and accessibility of complaint-handling procedures put in place by air carriers and airport operators, and was supported by a dedicated Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Regulation of the minimum content of specific rights in air transport

These findings, together with the experience gained from the practical application of dispute settlement procedures, have highlighted certain shortcomings in complaint-handling systems, particularly in light of the absence of a specific sanctions regime under existing national legislation.

The aforementioned provisions complement the regulatory measures already adopted by the Authority concerning the minimum content of specific rights in rail transport services subject to public service obligations, as well as those concerning complaint handling in maritime and inland waterway transport services, and in rail and bus transport. Together, these measures constitute a comprehensive framework for the protection of users' rights.

During the period under review, the Authority also carried out its regular monitoring and supervisory activities to verify compliance by regulated entities with the measures in force, exercising its powers to impose sanctions in cases of identified infringements.

With specific reference to rail transport, the recent legislative amendment introduced by Article 24-bis of Decree-Law No. 69/2023, implementing the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2021/782 on rail passengers' rights and obligations, introduced several changes to Legislative Decree No. 70/2014, which establishes the relevant sanctions regime, with effect from 11 August 2023. This amendment, which strengthened ART's powers to impose sanctions and enhanced the enforcement of passenger rights, provided an opportunity to harmonise the procedural rules governing sanction proceedings concerning passenger rights. This streamlining was achieved through the adoption of a single set of procedural rules by Decision No. 146/2023.

Organisation and institutional activities

Turning to institutional communication, during the period covered by this Report, the Authority continued its communication activities through all its institutional channels. The publication of the ART Bulletin, suspended since October 2020, also resumed. The Bulletin, which provides an overview of the main decisions adopted by the Authority, is published monthly on the Authority's official website and provides direct access to the documents referred to through hyperlinks.

To mark the Authority's tenth anniversary in 2023, two events were organised, one in Rome in October and the other in Turin in November. These events addressed issues of particular relevance to the transport sector and were attended by prominent representatives of national and EU institutions, the academic community and major regulatory authorities.

To commemorate this milestone, a video featuring the Authority's staff was produced to present ART's activities in a clear and accessible manner.

Finally, in 2024, a commemorative postage stamp dedicated to the Authority was issued as part of the “Excellence in Knowledge” thematic series, produced by the *Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato*.

For 2024, the contribution rate for the Authority’s operations remained unchanged at 0.05% of the relevant turnover of the entities liable to pay the contribution, which is half the maximum rate established by law, with the turnover threshold remaining at EUR 5 million. The exemption of smaller operators from the obligation to pay the contribution was thus maintained, in line with the objective of minimising the burden on contributing entities. This was achieved despite the exclusion of the road transport sector from the Authority’s regulatory remit under Article 20 of Decree-Law No. 104/2023, which exempted operators in that sector from the obligation to pay the contribution and led to a significant reduction in ART’s revenues.

The contribution to the Authority's operations

On the other hand, mention should be made of the judgment delivered on 25 April 2024 by the Eighth Chamber of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which ruled in favour of ART concerning the contribution to the Authority’s operations payable by airport users. This judgment finally settled the long-standing dispute brought by certain airlines.

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Before the final acknowledgements, and as mentioned at the outset, I would like to conclude this address with some reflections on ART’s strategic role and, more broadly, on that of independent regulatory authorities, both in the current context and looking ahead.

Concluding remarks

The origins of independent authorities can be traced back to the United States, with the establishment of independent regulatory commissions in 1887. These bodies were established to regulate sectors that had previously been left entirely to private initiative, with the ultimate aim of extending State intervention in the economy.

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The development of independent regulation in the United States was therefore driven by different, I would say almost opposite, needs from those that would later lead European States to replace public regulation with regulation by independent bodies, aimed at establishing the rules of the game *ex ante* and promoting liberalisation processes.

In Italy, independent authorities have developed mainly since the 1990s (with ART, the most recently established of these authorities, having been set up in 2011 for various reasons and becoming operational in 2013). They were conceived as public bodies independent of the executive, enjoying organisational and financial autonomy. This independence is essential to enable them to fulfil their institutional mission effectively, safeguarding the public interest, supporting businesses, and protecting the rights of citizens and users.

In the European context, the impetus provided by the European Commission, particularly through the achievement of the milestones set out in the NRRP, remains crucial for transport regulation.

I would like to thank Parliament and the Government for putting in place measures that have strengthened the Authority, enabling us to address more effectively the challenges inherent in carrying out our institutional functions – challenges that are, more generally, common to independent administrative authorities, which are entrusted with regulating complex sectors characterised by deeply entrenched economic interests.

The daily challenges posed by the markets, together with the growing complexity and unpredictability of today's international economic systems, make it more essential than ever to ensure the fullest possible institutional cooperation among

the various branches of the State, particularly in view of the substantial investments currently being made in infrastructure and transport.

The role of the regulator is crucial in these changing circumstances. The Transport Regulation Authority performs this role effectively, serving as a key point of reference in Europe and beyond.

Finally, I would like to offer a few brief but heartfelt words of thanks.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the women and men who work at ART and who bear the daily responsibility for safeguarding the autonomy and independence of the Authority.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Parliament, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Council of State, the Court of Auditors, the Regional Administrative Courts of Piedmont and Lazio, the State Attorney's Office, and the other independent authorities.

Special thanks go to the Ministries with which the Authority works most closely, particularly the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, and the departments of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers reporting to the Minister for European Affairs, Cohesion Policy and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

I would also like to thank the City of Turin, the *Politecnico di Torino*, the Customs and Monopolies Agency, the Piedmont Region, the *Guardia di Finanza*, the *Arma dei Carabinieri*, the General Command of the Corps of Harbour Masters – Coast Guard, and all the other institutions and universities with which the Authority has signed cooperation agreements.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members, my Head of Cabinet, the Secretary-General, the Legal Adviser, the Guarantor of Ethics, the Audit Committee, the Evaluation and Strategic Control Committee, the Advisory Board, and all my closest collaborators.