



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Brussels  
MOVE.DDG2.C.4/LD

**Subject: Invitation to manifest the interest to become candidate founding member of the Transforming Europe's Rail System European Partnership**

Dear Sir, / Dear Madam,

The European Commission is planning to put forward a proposal for a European Partnership on Rail Research and Innovation in accordance with Article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), building upon the current Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking.

The Rail European Partnership will focus on accelerating, with an integrated system approach, research, development and demonstrations of innovative technologies and operational solutions to make rail more attractive, enabled by digitalisation and automation. Its ambition is to reach up to 75% market uptake by 2030, improving competitiveness and the European technological global leadership in rail.

Its objectives are integrated with European Union priorities, namely “*a European Green Deal*” allowing to shift a substantial part of the 75% of inland freight carried today by road to rail and inland waterways<sup>1</sup>, to progress a “*Europe fit for the digital age*”, “*an economy that works for people*” and “*a stronger Europe in the world*”<sup>2</sup>. The future Rail European Partnership will be built on a long-term commitment from the European Union and its private members to deliver solutions ready to enter industrialisation, operations and deployment.

You can find more information about the proposed European Partnership for Rail at the following link <https://shift2rail.org/shift2rail-successor/>.

As a next step, the European Commission will make the proposal for adoption by the Council - after consultation of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM/2019/640 final)

<sup>2</sup> Priorities of the European Commission 2019 – 2024: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024_en).

Committee. This will take the form of a common Regulation establishing all the Joint Undertakings foreseen under Horizon Europe<sup>3</sup>.

The final scope, objectives and budget for the partnership will depend on the political agreement on the legal act establishing the Joint Undertaking, as well as the agreement on the Master Plan between the Commission and partners. This Master Plan will be developed, on the basis inter alia of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) currently being developed by ERRAC.

## **Scope**

The proposed Rail European Partnership aims to bring together the wide range of actors in the rail system, from across the rail supply industry and operational sectors in order to develop a “system of systems” approach. The future Partnership aims at transforming rail’s system architecture, increasing emphasis on freight and digitalisation and enhancing focus on deployment of innovative solutions. For that purpose, it needs to involve key partners and their co-investment to deliver such a programme, including testing results at different levels before bringing them at European large scale, subject to the relevant socio-economic business case. The Partnership will be a catalyst to address present and future challenges in the transport sector and improve mobility of passengers and goods across Europe. In order to achieve the most tangible impact for society, the focus should be on harnessing rail for digital and sustainable transformation of our economy and society.

The future members of the Partnership will have the possibility to identify together with the Commission the priorities and call topics of the Partnership.

The Partnership will be able to explore opportunities for funding of programmes and projects under a number of European Programmes (e.g. Connecting Europe Facility, Digital Europe Plan, European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund) and develop systemic synergies between the Partnership and existing funding mechanisms.

## **Conditions for establishing a European Partnership**

A key criterion for addressing a priority through a partnership approach is demonstrating that it is more effective in achieving Horizon Europe objectives and Union priorities than traditional calls. This demonstration was carried out in the impact assessment.

The other conditions for establishing a European Partnership are stipulated in the draft Horizon Europe Regulation (Article 8 and Annex III). The key elements are

- Ex-ante demonstration of additionality and directionality of the European Partnership, including a common strategic vision of the purpose of the European Partnership;
- Ex-ante demonstration of the partners’ long term commitment, including a minimum share of public and/or private investments.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme_en)

This means that European Partnerships require collective commitment to a Common Vision. Alongside a common long-term vision, the principles of ex ante commitment and sharing costs are key conditions establishing a European Partnership in which the Union commits significant budgets to address Union policy priorities in collaboration with the sector.

### **Expression of interest**

This invitation is addressed to private and public entities that intend to manifest an interest to become a Founding Member in the Rail European Partnership. The interested entities should express their interest and commitment by submitting a letter (max 2 pages). This should contain, at high level, the following elements:

- the overall motivation of the concerned entity,
- support to the objectives,
- assessed (ie duly justified) commitments for the 7-year period.

In order to ensure that the entities joining the European Union, represented by the Commission, in the establishment of the Partnership collectively cover the different areas of expertise relevant to the rail partnership and are representative of the European Union rail system, the following additional aspects will be considered in assessing the candidates:

- demonstrated know-how in rail and, more specifically, in rail research and innovation;
- capacity to implement multi-annual and multi-stakeholders' projects, part of an integrated programme;
- readiness to embrace a long term vision of this European Partnership, which shall result in a long term commitment to it;
- participation as a single entity, which may present itself with linked business parties;
- commitment of at least EUR 30 Mio indicative net contribution, of which 5% to be expected in the form of financial contribution to the running costs of the partnership;
- geographical establishment.

It is expected that the core membership of the Rail European Partnership would consist of indicatively 20 entities representing, in a balanced manner, the following stakeholder categories (noting that some stakeholders may have the capacity to cover several categories):

- infrastructure managers;

- rail passenger operators, including urban;
- rail freight operators;
- rolling stock manufacturers;
- signaling systems' manufacturers;
- infrastructure manufacturers;
- ICT solutions providers (ticketing and data);
- rail research centres can also apply.

The Commission will carefully consider all applications received and may seek further details in particular where a particular stakeholder group risks being over represented. It will contact interested parties no later than end of October.

Membership will be confirmed at a later stage, possibly via their listing in the basic act, subject to the acceptance of the new European Partnership rules and regulations. The membership agreements will be negotiated by the Executive Director of the new Joint Undertaking, but designed to ensure the necessary continuity of research and innovation with Shift2Rail while looking for new models for implementation.

Please do not hesitate to forward this letter to relevant entities within your organisation or Member State. The interested entities should manifest their interest by email to the following addresses:

[Keir.FITCH@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Keir.FITCH@ec.europa.eu)

[MOVE-C4-SHIFT2RAIL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MOVE-C4-SHIFT2RAIL@ec.europa.eu)

not later than **1 October** 2020 14:00 CET.

Yours sincerely,

Henrik HOLOLEI  
Director-General  
(e-signed)

Jean-Eric PAQUET  
Director-General  
(e-signed)