

Press Release

20 March 2024

Join us for 'The Future of Rail Freight – see how it works in the 21st century!' event

Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) is the driver for a digital European rail freight and the key technology to ensure Europe's rail freight becomes more digitised, automated and efficient. DAC will foster sustainability and a more reliable supply of goods across Europe for people and businesses.

Digital rail freight will improve intermodal competitiveness of rail logistics to shift more volume to the most environmentally friendly and energy-efficient transport mode. It will also play a role as a key enabler of other technologies, such as ETCS operations without trackside equipment, and lay the basis for intelligent freight trains by offering power-supply and connectivity for future wagon fleet.

The European rail sector is working, with the Union support through the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-Rail), on solutions to strengthen the performance of rail freight and to cope with the demand for green transport. The 'Greening Freight Transport' communication states that "the deployment of digital automatic couplers (DAC) will be a game-changer", pushing rail freight into the 21st century, increasing capacity, meeting emission targets, and boosting employment in Europe.

Against the backdrop of the Connecting Europe Days, EU-Rail, together with the European DAC Delivery Programme, will offer an insight into the state of play of the current DAC initiatives and developments by hosting a high-level European debate, as well as showcasing the opportunity offered by rail automation via a live DAC demonstration.

"The Future of Rail Freight – see how it works in the 21st century!" event will take place in Train World (Brussels, Belgium) on 2 April at 11:00, in cooperation with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and will feature speeches from the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Transport, Georges Gilkinet, German Minister for Digital and Transport, Volker Wissing, and the European Commissioner for Transport, Adina Vălean (TBC).

Sector and government representatives will join a debate on experiences, funding and financing, large-scale testing and deployment of the transformation project and express their views on the next steps to take for future digitised and automated European rail freight.

Panelists:

- **Peter Füglistaler** (Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Transport BAV)
- **Sigrid Nikutta** (Chair of Rail Freight Forward, CEO of DB Cargo)
- **Paolo Pagliero** (Group Vice President Technology of Wabtec)
- **Mark Topal** (CTO of ÖBB Holding AG, Manager of the European DAC Delivery Programme)
- **David Zindo** (President of UIP, CEO of Strem Group)

Moderator: **Kristian Schmidt** (Director for Land Transport, European Commission)

DAC is a unique opportunity and offer to policy makers to push rail freight to the 21st century while ensuring the long-term re-industrialisation of the Member States.

Detailed information and live stream are available at the following link: <https://rail-research.europa.eu/calendar/connecting-europe-days-2/>

To register as a press and media representative, please click here: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/FutureOfRailFreight_Press_and_Media

About Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking

The Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-RAIL) is the European partnership for rail research and innovation under the Horizon Europe programme (2020-2027) and the successor to the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking. The partnership aims to accelerate research and development in innovative technologies and operational solutions. It supports EU policies and objectives for the rail sector, its competitiveness, and the European rail supply industry. EU-Rail accelerates the use of integrated, interoperable and standardised technological innovations necessary to support the Single European Railway Area.

About the European DAC Delivery Programme (EDDP)

The European DAC Delivery Programme (EDDP), enabled by EU-RAIL, is a unique platform dedicated to the successful implementation of Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) as a means to revolutionise rail freight systems in Europe. Founded on an open cooperation concept, the project gathers a wide range of entities from railway undertakings, infrastructure managers and wagon keepers, as well as the rail supply industry, entities in charge of maintenance, concerned sector organisations, rail research centres and national and European political institutions. The aim is to deliver a European DAC solution through an integrated shared programme, building upon R&I results and pilots, and ensuring the necessary actions for a fast, technically and economically feasible European-wide roll-out.



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