



3rd MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SSG

15 May 2024

10:00-13:00h

Hybrid meeting

Minutes of the meeting

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all participants and reminded on the need to fill in the CoI declaration.</p>	<p>10:00-10:10</p>
<p>2. Approval of the Agenda and previous MoM</p> <p>The Agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.</p>	<p>10:10-10:15</p>
<p>3. Conclusions on Joint Session with SRG of 14 May</p> <p>The SSG members held a debate on the joint session with the SRG held on the day before and around the main points of collaboration proposed by the Chair of the SRG.</p> <p>Mr De Weerdts started saying that holding a joint meeting once a year is a good initiative. He found the intervention of Mr. Kristian Schmidt (Director at DG Move) very inspiring, in particular when saying that rail should be linked to challenges such as green mobility or energy.</p> <p>Mr Routil agreed and highlighted another element of Mr Schmidt's intervention, rail as the backbone of European mobility network. He acknowledged that the views of both groups could be different on some points but that it was good to meet.</p> <p>Mr Fantechi shared the same analysis. For him, the main difference between the two groups is that scientists have a vision which is to have a unique railway system possible from the technological and scientific point of view, whereas the SRG brings the States views. For the SRG it is not easy because of their differences, also due to the societal implications specially because business is still very nationally based. He considers that SSG's duty is to bring this vision to the attention of the States, including societal aspects.</p> <p>Mr Sanz commented that there are now lots of observers, lots of actors that have prepared position papers on the future FP10. We can all collaborate, but the question is: where do we go? Towards a new partnership? What about promotion of industrial competition? Towards long term research activities based on a new ecosystem that we do not know yet? If we want to find synergies with other sectors, we need to imply the ERC, the RTD, etc. Meeting with the SRG is very good, but we need a big debate if we want to achieve something.</p>	<p>10:15-10:25</p>

<p>Mr Ferreira, who could not attend the joint session, highlighted another challenge on certification. There is a lot of work in research, but when you want to use those results, you have problems, e.g., with TSIs, too costly to implement, so cannot go to market. That is a huge difficulty.</p> <p>Regarding regulations and standards applicable to rail, the Acting ED explained that the EU-Rail SP is looking into it, although the SP is only focusing on the CCS, and partially on TMS and DAC.</p> <p>The Chair continued saying that both groups, the SRG and SSG, are bodies included in the governance of the EU-Rail JU, but clearly different. The reason is that the SRG is a group based on States representatives who represent each country. The SSG members are however selected as individuals and do not represent their own countries, so its mandate is quite different.</p> <p>Mr Wawrzyniec Perschke (online), from DG MOVE, intervened in the debate from a policy making perspective. He said that it is up to the SSG to choose how to go for common statements. The EC counts on the SSG as a scientific body to keep scientific advice and independence. Any lower solutions if we want to be competitive and to be able to bring more affordable solutions is of paramount importance.</p> <p>Mr Moessner (online) said that in the policy domain the role of the SSG is about pointing to a vision that countries might be able to follow. He does not have any problem for having common statements. However, with regard to research infrastructures, there he sees some problems.</p> <p>The Chair concluded the debate saying that they did not speak about specific topics with the SRG yet. The SSG remains open to evaluate any specific proposal coming from the SRG in the future.</p>	
<p>4. Update on EU-Rail’s activities:</p> <p>- General information</p> <p>The Acting ED started introducing the representative of ECTRI to the SSG as a permanent Observer, Mr Martin-Lamellet. ETRA’s representative was not reachable, so the Secretariat was still in the process of clarifying the situation.</p> <p>Mr. Martin-Lamellet introduced himself and his association, ECTRI, composed of independent research centre members that provides expertise and advice on transport policy and innovation.</p> <p>The Acting ED continued presenting the latest developments on the System Pillar (<i>see presentation</i>), focusing in particular on the following topics:</p> <p>On the work of the System Pillar on TMS, on Harmonised Diagnostics, on Cybersecurity and the response to the CER/EIM paper.</p> <p>Another work he referred to is about the standardisation and TSI input plan (STIP). He informed that a first version of the document had been released and now the JU is providing a revised version. This will help the EC for the definition of the mandate to ERA and standardisation organisations.</p>	10:25-10:50

<p>On the Innovation Pillar, he presented the status of the Flagships Projects. He presented as well the status of the running projects, Exploratory Research projects and FA7.</p> <p>- Outcome of 2023 Call for proposals and launch of 2024 Call The Acting ED presented the results of the 2023 Call and invited the SSG to continue improving on the communication of EU-Rail's calls. The participation had been better than in the previous call. He also SSG thanked members for advertising the calls.</p> <p>He added that some budget will come back to EU-Rail due to the UK participants in the selected projects that are not eligible to EU funding (given that the call 2023 implement the budget 2023, when UK was not yet associated to Horizon Europe).</p> <p>He also informed of the postponement of the 2024 call to 5 June, as it was too close to the previous call and following a request from the GB members.</p> <p>- Status of Deployment Group (DpG) setup The Acting ED presented the status of the group as well as its advisory remit. Formally the EC needs to decide on the proposed list of members provided by EU-Rail, but a first informal meeting already happened in full alignment with the EC. The DpG is part of the research programme. We have the Innovation Pillar (which provides technical solutions), the System pillar (which is about system interfaces and architectural definition as well as harmonisation of operations) and the DpG (which is about how we implement all those in the rail system).</p> <p>He informed that the first remit of the group identified is on the implementation of FRMCS</p> <p>Luis Ferreira asked for minutes of the 1st Dp Group.</p> <p>➤ <i>The Secretariat will provide the minutes of the first meeting to the SSG members.</i></p> <p>- Upcoming communication activities The Acting ED explained the participation of EU-Rail in recent events, TRA and Connecting Europe Days. He also informed that he will participate in the ITF Summit on 21-24/05 in Leipzig, Germany, which is a high-level event with the participation of several Ministers.</p> <p>With regard to the Innotrans Train, he informed that the SSG Members can take it from Brussels if they wish. The train service is ensured by Deutsche Bahn, but other JU members are contributing and some sector associations.</p> <p>SSG members were finally invited to help disseminating the Woman in Rail Award.</p>	
<i>Coffee break</i>	10:50-11:10
<p>5. SSG scientific advice on:</p> <p>- Update of Multi Annual Work Programme (MAWP) The Acting ED presented the 5 main new areas added where a gap was identified. He then presented the draft MAWP with track-changes that was distributed before the meeting. No comments were received from the SSG members, any additional contribution can still be provided in the coming week to the JU.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that a positive SSG opinion is provided on the updated MAWP.</p>	11:10-11:35

<p>Mr Fantechi found some small comments, typos that he will communicate to the Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Annual Activity Report (AAR) 2023 <p>The Acting ED informed in particular about the In-kind contribution report. He said that the target of S2R is being reached. There are some members who contributed more, others less.</p> <p>After a brief commentary, the Chair proposed to provide a positive SSG opinion to AAR 2023.</p>	
<p>6. SSG report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific priorities to be addressed in the Work Programme 2025-2026, including on scope of next calls for proposals, in line with the EU-Rail's Master Plan <p>The Chair said that members needed more time to make a meaningful contribution around Exploratory Research activities. To do so, members required a more precise idea of the budget. They also realise they need to coordinate more between them, trying to group maybe around some topics that more than one member would consider important.</p> <p>The Acting ED clarified the budget was for the time being identified in the distributed draft AWP 5.8M€ for exploratory research activities. The SRG, ERRAC and ERA had been consulted. He informed on the process of prioritisation to follow. After that, the SSG will be again consulted, in view of the WP25 adoption by the Governing Board in November.</p> <p>The Chair invited members to update their individual proposals and send them to the Secretariat by the week after. Mr Ferreira asked whether it was possible to rewrite the contributions that had already been sent to which Acting ED assented.</p> <p>The Acting ED completed the information by saying that some topics may be put aside if there is not sufficient budget, but not completely dismissed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the assessment of the Call for expression of interest for Associated Members, with scientific advice <p>The Acting ED presented the main features of the draft Call, which is to be provided to the GB on 24 May for a possible decision in its June meeting.</p> <p>Upon request of the GB, the SSG could provide independent advice and scientific analysis to support the assessment of applications of potential associated members and contributing partners, (see Article 21.7 (d) of the SBA).</p> <p>The Acting ED asked to the SSG have a message that should be delivered to the GB on the matter above.</p> <p>Following a discussion within the SSG, the Chair concluded proposing that the Acting ED transmits the message to the GB that the SSG remains available to provide an assessment on the candidates, but only from the operational and scientific point of view, following the normal selection process which also includes a financial assessment. The Chair also indicated that if the GB considers the SSG input is not needed, this is also well accepted by SSG.</p>	<p>11:55-12:45</p>
<p>7. Closing remarks and AoB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innotrans programme and next meeting: 	<p>12:45-13:00</p>

The next SSG meeting will be held during Innotrans on 26/09 in the morning. The Chair said that in case the SRG would like to meet there, the proposal would be assessed. The Acting ED added that, in that case, it would also depend on a common space available in the EU- Rail stand.

Mr Fantechi asked about how to register in Innotrans. The Acting ED said that members would need to inform the Secretariat whether they need access, also because EU-Rail could provide with invitations for the Vip guided tours.

The Chair commented that it would be interesting for SSG members to participate in the various parts of the Innotrans programme.

- *The Secretariat will investigate how to facilitate access to SSG members to Innotrans.*

Mr De Weerdts commented that it would be good to have a discussion in the SSG on a joint long-term vision for EU-Rail, and from there give input to the Phasing out document needed at the end of the year. And could also be useful to spot missing points in the current programmes. Once we have a vision, it would be possible to see if all elements are already included.

The Chair assented and proposed to organise some informal meetings between members or use doodle, because the official meetings are not enough to go in-depth in the discussions.

The Acting ED welcomed the proposal to contribute to the phasing out plan but reminded that the plan needs to be sent out in October for a GB decision in November.

- *The Chair proposed trying to organise a virtual meeting to have some opinion on the 2nd half of June or July.*

The Chair closed the meeting reminding that no formal SSG position on the proposed list of points of coordination with the SRG could be approved until the SRG Chair would send her a proposal (as he announced at the joint session).

Finally, the Acting ED proposed to use CIRCABC for the SSG, which was accepted.

- *The Secretariat to send the information on how to register to SSG members who do not yet use this platform.*

ATTENDEES: Angela Di Febbraro, Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi, Nacima Baron (remotely) Michele Carboni, Mathijs De Weerdts, Alessandro Fantechi, Luis Ferreira, Matthias Landgraf (remotely), Martin Leitner, Klaus Moessner (remotely), Ladislav Routil. Claude Marin-Lamellet (ECTRI, Observer)

ABSENT: Marielle Stoelinga.