



4th MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SSG

26 September 2024

10:00-13:00h

Hybrid meeting

Minutes of the meeting

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all participants to the 4th meeting of the SSG held in this occasion in Berlin, for those who were present, during the InnoTrans fair.</p>	<p>10:00-10:15</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>10:15-10:30</p>
<p>3. Update on EU-Rail's activities:</p> <p>- General information</p> <p>The ED started his presentation with a long-term view of the JU activities including the main milestones in the next months and in 2025. The most immediate priority is the finalisation of the Work Programme 2025-2026 and Phasing-out plan for the Governing Board decision in its meeting of 21 November, for which both the SSG and SRG are being consulted.</p> <p>The process for the selection of associated members to EU-Rail is running in parallel. The call for expression of interest was adopted by the Governing Board in its last meeting of 21 June and will be open until 4 November. The selection process will go on until the 1st quarter of 2025, including the ED negotiation of the Letter of Commitment with the selected associated members scheduled for February. The ED reminded SSG members that upon request of the GB (in line with Article 21.7(d) of the SBA), the SSG can provide independent advice and scientific analysis to support the assessment of applications of potential associated members and contributing partners (but only from the operational and scientific point of view, as agreed by the SSG in its May meeting).</p> <p>The ED also highlighted a workshop on the future of the JU that will take place on the 16th of October.</p> <p>In response to a question from Ms Stoelinga, the ED explained the plans for the opening of the FA7 Call (Maglev) scheduled for March 2025.</p> <p>The ED continued presenting the latest developments on the System Pillar. On the work of the standardisation and TSI input plan (STIP), the ED informed that the SP-STG approved the first version of the STIP in August. The ED also referred to the EULYNX Baseline 4 Release 3</p>	<p>10:30-11:30</p>

approved by the SP-STG in June. The information on these two pieces of work is available on EU-Rail website.

On the Innovation Pillar, the ED presented, as usual, the status of all Flagships Projects. He also presented the progress on the running projects, Exploratory Research projects and FA7.

- **InnoTrans programme**

The ED highlighted the main events organised by EU-Rail during the fair and which were attended by high-level representatives from industry, national governments and EU institutions. The Guided Tours in particular were a great opportunity to explore cutting-edge rail solutions developed under the EU-Rail and Shift2Rail programmes.

The ED encouraged the participation of the SSG members present in InnoTrans to attend the activities organised for the two last fair days.

- **Outcome of 2024 Call**

The ED presented the results of the last EU-Rail call for proposals (HORIZON-ER-JU-2024-01), which was closed on the 5th of June. The EU-Rail Governing Board in its extraordinary meeting of 17 July adopted Decision n°13/2024 approving the funding of 3 projects, one for each topic, for a total budget of EUR 21,700,000.

The ED included in his report an overview of the various DAC/EDDP related projects as presented in the Programme Board meeting of 17 September. (*See presentation for details.*)

- **Status of Deployment Group (DpG) setup**

The ED continued his report referring to the setting of this group, which is part of the research programme, as well as its advisory remit. More concretely, the DpG will deliver recommendations to the Governing Board on the consideration and needs in relation to the deployment of rail innovative solutions. While the EC still needs to decide on the proposed list of members provided by EU-Rail, two informal meetings already happened in full alignment with the EC. The next meeting will be on 22 October.

The ED informed that the first remit of the group identified is on the implementation of FRMCS. A subgroup has been created on this topic and is already operational. It promotes further alignment with ERTMS roll-out and other major game changers needed (and sector digitalisation strategy).

As requested by the SSG in its previous meeting, the minutes of the first meeting of the DpG are available on the CIRCABC platform. The minutes of the second meeting will also be shared (once adopted by the DpG in its next meeting).

- **Upcoming communication activities**

The ED informed of the next events that will be attended by EU-Rail: 'Rail Live 2024' (to be held on 26 and 27 November in Zaragoza, Spain) and the 'Collaborative Joint Undertakings event' at the European Parliament (to be held in the first quarter of 2024 – date to be confirmed). He also emphasised the holding of the 2nd EU-Rail General Assembly 2024 on 21 and 22 November, right after the Governing Board meeting of the 21st, with a session open to the public on the second day. The Chair of the SSG is invited to participate and present the SSG activities.

<p>The ED informed also of the revamping of the EU-Rail website and newsletter, as well as of the programmed dissemination activities of the R&I outputs and projects reporting.</p>	
<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>	<p>11:30-11:45</p>
<p>4. SSG advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work Programme 2025-2026 - Phasing out plan <p>SSG members are invited to provide their opinion on the Work Programme 2025-2026, including on scope of next calls for proposals, in line with the EU-Rail's Master Plan. The Chair explained that members started reading the draft WP but needed more time to complete the reading and make their contribution.</p> <p>The ED understood that it is an exercise that requires time and thanked the SSG members who had contributed to the proposal of topics for the next exploratory research calls.</p> <p>He presented the topics of the Flagship Projects as well as the Exploratory topics that had been proposed for selection, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-EXPLR-01: Studies on Rail Industry 5.0 • HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-EXPLR-02: Studies on innovation in climate finance for rail • HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-EXPLR-03: Extending the rail network of PhDs (3 to 5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low-height noise reduction barriers in rail transport - Smart grids and micro smart grids in the railway system - any other • HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-EXPL-04-SNS: Exploitability of 6G in autonomous mobility <p>The ED explained that SSG input had been duly assessed and taken into account, and that there had also been an important input from ERRAC, the SRG and other stakeholders. For the last proposal (co-funded with SNS JU), he explained that the final scope is under discussion with the other JU and that it could potentially be shifted to 2026.</p> <p>The ED asked members for their opinion on the four topics proposed. Regarding the second topic 'Studies on innovation in climate finance for rail', Mr Ferreira commented that the Studies on innovation in climate finance for rail needed more precise objectives.</p> <p>As a general comment and for the future, the SSG members expressed their preference for a more flexible and open system for the collection of their ideas.</p> <p>The Vice Chair expressed his views that when reading the draft Work Programme 2025-2026, he finds it difficult to synchronise with the other work going on, e.g. with the Flagships Projects.</p> <p>The ED replied that exploratory research is indeed not pre-defined in the MAWP as the Flagship Areas are (from which Flagship Projects topics are derived). This is done on purpose to open the possibility of exploration from the wide consultation undertaking before the drafting of the Work Programmes.</p> <p>Ms Stoelinga underlined the importance of investing in invest in low TRL research.</p>	<p>11:45-12:30</p>

<p>The ED suggested also that for future contribution an exchange with the private members could also be beneficial, to which the SSG members agreed.</p> <p>Regarding how to stimulate participation in EU-Rail’s calls, the Chair commented that financing only one project per topic (as for 2024 call) does not motivate participants. Mr De Weerdt added that having one call for all exploratory would be more attractive for applicants, because it would give more freedom to applicants and raise the quality of the proposals. The ED took note of the proposal, adding that it could be materialised with one ranking list for all exploratory together. The ED will investigate the feasibility of such scheme and if possible, he will present it as such to the Governing Board based on the SSG recommendation.</p> <p>The ED thanked SSG members for their ideas and invited them to submit any advice/contribution in writing on the draft Work Programme 2025-2026 in the next days so that it can be taken into consideration for the finalisation of the document before the Governing Board meeting of November. (The documents need to be sent to the Governing Board 20 working days before according to its rules of procedure.).</p> <p>The 2025-2026 Work Programme will be amended in the next year, in particular to reflect the accession of new Members.</p> <p>The same applies for the draft Phasing out plan.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">➤ <i>SSG advice on WP 2025-2026 and Phasing-out plan to be provided by the <u>10th of October</u>.</i></p>	
<p>5. Closing remarks and AoB</p> <p>Possible collaboration with the SRG</p> <p>The Chair of the States Representative Group (SRG) joined the SSG meeting to explain his proposal for collaboration, as announced in the previous meeting. His ambition is that both groups can align forces to ensure the highest impact on future policy development both at EU and national levels. He explained that it was important to make the synergies of the scientific agenda, annual work programme, multi-annual work programme, especially on System Pillar, otherwise there would be no standardisation process. He informed that the SRG is starting the preparation of the monitoring and opinion of the strategic topics and the focus is linked to the most important developments. For the first two years it will be FRMCS, for which coordination of the national plans will be key. Next topics will be ATO and final process regarding ERTMS. He proposes to carefully monitor the process and standardisation, so that a general development plan can be established. The idea is not to repeat the process that was done in ERTMS implementation.</p> <p>He continued referring to other topics for SRG focus, which are traffic management system and DAC.</p> <p>Last point, the SRG Chair wants to include in the discussion an insight into the future, after the end of the work of the current JU.</p> <p>The SSG Chair thanked him for sharing his plans, reassuring him that SSG members are keen in reading any document the SRG would like to share on the proposed topics, although the role of each group is of course different.</p>	<p>12:30-13:00</p>

The Chair of the SRG concluded saying that the opinion of the scientists is important for Member States to know what the best way is to implement new technology. He finally asked for the SSG collaboration on the Transport Policy Study initiative, in particular on whether something is missing or any further proposals they would have.

Possible workshop with the SIPB members

The ED had already addressed this point in the Work Programme discussion, suggesting that for future contribution an exchange with the private members could also be beneficial, to which the SSG members agreed. The proposed way of operationalise this exchange was through a workshop with the SIPB when needed. The Chair agreed with the proposal although she considered that further details should be provided for a good preparation.

Dates of the next meetings

The meetings of 2025 are scheduled for **18 February, 13 May and 21 October**.

AOB:

SSG organisation

The Chair informed the ED that the SSG members agreed to prepare the discussion topics a couple of weeks before each SSG meeting. The ED welcomed the initiative.

Members converged on the following points:

- There are some doubts about what SSG duties are, in particular what the JU/GB is expecting from the SSG (what kind of advice).
- To provide the expected advice, they would need to work on draft documents and receive them in advance for a proper analysis.

The ED reminded the tasks concerning the scientific advice as per the [list provided in Article 21 of the SBA](#). The scientific advice should concern, in particular, annual work programmes and additional activities, as well as any other aspect of the joint undertakings' tasks, as necessary. There is therefore flexibility also on the possible contribution of the SSG to EU-Rail.

Regarding the sending of the documents, he said that the advancement of the SSG meeting from 2nd week of October to the last week of September unfortunately had as a consequence that the draft documents for discussion were ready only a few days before the meeting.

The ED welcomed a proposal from the SSG Members to provide advice on the Flagship Projects, having some SSG Members in charge of following them. The ED suggested to look on how to operationalise it if this is confirmed by the SSG members (who will be the one following the FPs) – follow-up action for the SSG.

Additionally, the ED mentioned few other contributions of the SSG, in particular on the ability to provide advice on the Phasing out plan in view of the possible continuation of the JU in FP10, and reflection on the future topics and structural elements.

Another important expected contribution from the SSG members is the active promotion of the EU-Rail call, as indicated in past call there is too few scientific institutes interest, not many new universities and players responding to the EU-Rail call for proposals.

Use of CIRCabc platform

SSG Members approved to use CIRCabc for sharing documents in its last meeting in May. The EU-Rail Legal Officer informed that according to the information received all SSG members are now registered in this platform and are able to access it any time. She asked whether members were satisfied with it and whether they received notifications when new documents were uploaded. Members replied that sometimes they receive notifications, others not. On the proposal of the Legal Officer, they agreed that both systems, platform and email, should be used in parallel for sharing documents. The Legal Officer reminded members that the documents related to each meeting remain always available in the platform's meeting folder and, in the case of the draft minutes, they are again uploaded in the next meeting folder (for adoption).

- *The Secretariat will use both e-mail and CIRCabc for sharing the documents with SSG members.*

ATTENDEES: *Angela Di Febraro (Chair), Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi (ViceChair), Nacima Baron (remotely) Michele Carboni (remotely), Mathijs De Weerd (remotely), Alessandro Fantechi, Luis Ferreira, Matthias Landgraf, Martin Leitner (remotely), Klaus Moessner (remotely), Ladislav Routil. Marielle Stoelinga, Claude Marin-Lamellet (ECTRI, observer) and Torben Holvald (ERA, observer).*

ABSENT: *The nomination of the ETRA observer, Ms Sonja Forward, is still pending of confirmation. There were no EC representatives in this meeting.*