



5th MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SSG

18 February 2025

10:00-13:00h

Hybrid meeting

1. Introduction <i>Welcome by the Chairperson</i> <i>Declaration of conflict of interest based on Agenda items</i> The Chair welcomed all participants in the room and online, reminding of the need to sign the confidentiality and non-conflict of interest declaration. The Agenda was approved without any changes.	10:00-10:05
2. Approval of the Agenda and previous MoM The minutes of the meeting of 26 September 2024 were approved.	10:05-10:10
3. Update on EU-Rail's activities: <i>(See presentation for full details)</i> - General information (including System, Innovation Pillars and Deployment Group) The ED presented an update of the regular activities of EU-Rail. The ED referred to the System Pillar (SP), with the list of decisions taken by the last Steering group and the next steps. The Innovation Pillar (IP) followed, with an update on each project. FP1-MOTIONAL is overall in green status, with just some points of attention. The new FP1-TRAVELWISE, which is a synergy project jointly with the SESAR JU, to better align the flow of the passengers' exchange of information between airport and railways, was also overall in green status. FP2-R2DATO is in a yellow status, the reason being that a locomotive for the testing is not anymore available. It needs also to align with FP2-MORANE 2. For this latter, ERA will add in April an Addendum to the technical opinion on FRMCS v2.	10:10-11:10

FP3 and FP4 are overall in green status, with no specific points of attention. For FP4 in particular, there is an issue among consortium on data sharing, which will be solved with an upcoming amendment. FP5 is in yellow status as of the need to deliver fully the DAC package in a short timeframe. FP6 is in green status with only small delays. The ED informed that on the day after he would send a letter to EUSPA and ERA, to have a collaboration project on the satellite communication, especially in the context of some demonstration on FP6. Juan de Dios SANZ asked for more details on the above. The ED replied that the idea is that the entire sector is backing up with common requirements, using what other projects have already done. Furthermore, the plan is to have demonstration activities using satellite communication, avoiding having to use a non-European system. For this we need to ensure the collaboration of EUSPA. Regarding FA7, the ED informed first call of 2025 will seek to developing some prototype on maglev technology. A new project also started related to Hyperloop: Hyper4Rail. Regarding exploratory research, the picture becomes more and more comprehensive. For PhDs EU Rail, whose coordinator is encountering some difficulties to pay one of the partners, the University of Kiev (Ukraine), a purely administrative issue. For the other 6 projects, the deliverables are under assessment. There is only one point of attention to the societal KPI output of Academics4rail. - Deployment Group (DpG) The ED informed that the group is up and running after the Commission’s endorsement. There were three informal meetings last year, and the first formal meeting was held on 13 February 2025. New candidates arrived, who still need to be assessed, and the EC will consider new members twice a year. The first formal meeting served to approve the documents that had already been prepared. He highlighted in particular a Decision on the deployment of FRMCS. Together with ERA, the JU is putting all necessary resources. - Governing Boards outcomes The ED continued referring to the main outcomes of the two last GB meeting, highlighting in particular the Decision on Associated Members taken at its meeting of 5 February 2025. The decision is not yet published because all the applicants first need to be notified on the outcome of the selection process, and this can only be done, according to the procedure in place, after the Commission’s endorsement. The latter is expected in over the course of March. - Upcoming communication and dissemination activities The ED explained the main events in which EU-Rail participated in the last months, such as Rail Live 2024 on 26-27 November in Zaragoza. Regarding the recent and on-going internal activities, he said that the EU-Rail’s website has been updated and a new Newsletter has been launched. Soon it will also be launched a new corporate video, and a new communication plan will also be developed.	
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EU-Rail is putting much emphasis on communication because if we are not visible, we will not be heard by the decision makers. Any type of communication counts, including of course the one that SSG Member can do in their own networks. The ED highlighted the list of events which will count with EU-Rail presence. The ED also highlighted an initiative together with the SSG Chair to have a session on talents and skills in the next WCRR – still under discussion. Any idea from the SSG on places where the JU work can be advertised, is welcomed. Finally, the ED informed on the launching of the 2nd wave of Flagship projects in October.	
<i>Coffee break</i>	11:10-11:30
4. Discussion topics for scientific advice: - Preliminary draft WP 2026 first feedback The Chair introduced the discussion by saying that personally she appreciated the structure of the WP. Regarding the part more interesting for the SSG, the scientific one, and in particular the next calls and possible SSG advice, the SSG Members took note of essentially 3 points: - a 1st call 2025 will have just one topic; - a more interesting 2nd call will come after, in the Autumn 2025; and - for 2026, the only topic for exploratory research is the one regarding 6G in collaboration with SNS JU. A discussion on the importance of engaging universities in the future R&I activity was held. The ED further explained how synergy with other JUs also enlarge both the base of the potential beneficiaries and the size of the EU-Rail Programme. He also highlighted the openness of all EU-Rail calls, not preventing university to participate in the flagship projects, which are actually already participating to as well. Juan de Dios SANZ reacted by saying that it may be true that calls are open, but it would be beneficial for the JU to create additional opportunities for universities. Juan de Dios SANZ raised also the questions of the dissemination of results, which does not seem very good in the current EU-Rail projects. The ED agreed and explained that mitigation measures are currently put in place, notably with the update of the handbook with clear KPI requirements on dissemination. Alessandro FANTECHI referred to “Academics for Rail projects”, as part of the exploratory projects. But he also thinks that if calls are limited to academics, it would be a club rather than a community. The ED replied that the point is taken, and he is very much open to proposals from the SSG. He proposed as a possible solution to ensure more participation of academia and SMEs in the next wave of flagship projects. He will also relay the message to the private members of the JU. Another possible solution more complicated would be to build a topic with cascading grants. He asked for more ideas from the SSG Members.	11:30-12:40

Martin LEITNER took the floor to ask if it was possible to include already now the Universities, depending on TRL levels, as this would maybe increase the importance of academia so that applicants have to search for universities because the need to fill this TRL mandatorily.

Luis FERREIRA said that in Europe there is no Joint research centre for mobility and in particular for rail; however, there is one for energy and other sectors. This would be a great opportunity for small countries because you have the possibility to participate in bigger projects.

Wawrzyniec PERSCHKE, from DG MOVE, said that a joint research center for rail is beyond our possibilities. It is certainly something that can be talked about with SSG peers in the ministries', but this would require heavy lobbying. For him it is rather unlikely that it would be a mobility one. It depends on political pushes that we cannot control. What he recommends is faster deployments which lead to a lower cost; as well as bringing to a stage more standardised and ready for deployment. On ontology, he confirmed that there is a close collaboration with ERA. Now the real topic is how to bring more academia and SMS in the activities of the JU.

- Advice on Flagship projects, status of the SSG Members availability and next steps

The ED thanked those Members who expressed an interest and presented an initial proposal for the collaboration of SSG Members. The idea is to cover every FP with at least one SSG Member depending on their expertise and availability.

He emphasized that it is important to act quickly because the target is still June.

The Chair commented that she finds it a good proposal and confirmed her availability. All Members who expressed an interest joined her in her approval.

The ED will send an updated proposal to all SSG Members after the meeting. Participation is open to all, including at a later moment, depending always on availability. In every SSG meeting there will be a revision of the situation.

The next step will be communicating the SSG Members' names to the consortiums to check whether there would be any conflict for providing them access to confidential deliverables, according to the procedure in place.

He reminded that it is a prerequisite to have a profile as an expert in the European Commission expert database.

- FP10 and future of rail, overview of the document developed in EU-Rail

(See presentation for full details)

The ED informed members on the workshop held on 16 October 2024, followed by dedicated meetings, which all served to build up a high-level paper discussed at the last Governing Board meeting of 5 February 2025, where it was agreed to further fine tune it for a final decision in the next meeting in June. The paper is confidential for the moment.

The ED summarized the content of this paper. The main idea expressed so far is that in the future we need a more focused JU. We need to simplify the rail system. The rail system is complex, and the landscape is composed with a lot of legacy systems. The idea behind this mission is to see how we can help to make the railway, more resilient, agile and less costly.

The next steps are further improving the paper with the SSG input and advice. Officially the SSG advice is needed for the next meeting in May. It is important to have the inclusion of the

academic perspective, also to liaise with ERRAC, because they have an academic group doing some action in research in the future. All the sector needs to go with one voice before the decision-makers. The ED invited the SSG members, who know well their own national systems, to take any opportunity to spread the message. Juan de Dios SANZ commented that he read the document in detail and found that resilience is there, but not enough. Another aspect, service quality is focused on punctuality and reliability, but he thinks it should be open for the general transport, because if you think on freight, you are only a part, and if you think on passenger, the same. The Chair commented that we heard many times that rail is the ideal candidate to become the backbone of the multimodal transport system in Europe, this vision could be added. Matthias LANDGRAF commented that military mobility becomes more prominent on the political landscape. The ED invited members to send their comments on the paper. With regard to the possible lack of vision on the overall transport, he said that this was not put in the paper because it is not for the JU to define the vision of the transport system, but more on the Commission side. So the question is whether we want a JU focused on multimodal because then it would be a completely different structure, then it would be not only rail. There are sometimes conflicting interests. This is the reason for which the focus on the paper is on what rail can achieve to enable it to become that backbone. The Chair added that there is no intention to focus on other transport ways, but it is important to innovate. So she would like to see maybe not in this paper but later a reference to that vision, but she confirmed that the JU needs to be focused on rail. Juan de Dios SANZ is also of the opinion that a rail JU is needed, and to emphasise a very important element of the rail system, which is the human part. We need to consider an ecosystem, not to concentrate on the isolated rail. The ED concluded explaining the next steps. He proposes that SSG members provide comments in writing, proposing modifications to the text of the paper. The JU will continue to share the evolution of the paper. The ED offered the possibly for a dedicated workshop if the SSG members would like to. Lastly, he invited members to interact with their colleagues in the ERRAC group.	
5. Closing remarks and AoB Dates of the next meeting: 13 May 2025 The ED reminded that in the next SSG meeting the Annual Activity Report and the WP 2026 will be in the agenda for SSG advice. The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all members for their participation and interesting debate. The updated version of the presentation will be replaced on Circabc platform.	12:40-13:00

Attendance list: <u>SSG Members present:</u> Angela di Febraro (Chair), Juan de Dios SANZ (Vice-chair), Alessandro Fantechi, Luis Ferreira, Mathias Landgraf <u>SSG Members online:</u> Routil Ladislav, Klaus Moessner, Martin Leitner, Michele Carboni <u>Observers:</u> Claude Marin-Lamellet (ECTRI) Jan Andersson (ETRA), Torban Holvald (ERA), Wawrzyniec Perschke (DG MOVE)	
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