



6th MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SSG

13 May 2025

10:00-13:00h

Hybrid meeting

Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction <i>Welcome by the Chairperson</i> <i>Declaration of conflict of interest based on Agenda items</i> The Chair opened the meeting and invited the participants to declare any conflict of interest.	10:00-10:05
2. Approval of the Agenda and previous MoM The agenda of the meeting was approved without any changes. The minutes of last meeting were approved with minor changes.	10:05-10:10
3. Update on EU-Rail's activities: - General information (including System/Innovation Pillars and Deployment Group) System Pillar The ED presented the latest developments, in particular the outcome of the last SP-STG meeting held on 13 March 2025. There were decisions on trackside assets (TACS) analysis, the traffic CS system concept and cybersecurity specifications. <i>(see powerpoint presentation for more details)</i> Information points at the last SP-STG meeting were in relation to: FRMCS, the second phase of contract SC2.4 and new contract SC2.5, STIP revision and ASTP. With regard to FRMCS, the ED explained that on the request of the EC, the SP is updating the FRMCS report and adapting its scope to meet the timeline towards GSM-R obsolescence in view of TSI specifications integration. This discussion will happen at the next SP-STG meeting. With regard to the STIP revision, the ED said that currently we are in the consolidation phase, i.e. aligning the different inputs and offering the possibility to provide further comments, with the aim of approving version 2 by June.	10:10-11:00

Juan de Dios SANZ asked for further clarification on the purpose and way to achieve that goal. The ED clarified the scope of the STIP, its content and the intended process with ERA and European standardisation bodies. The ED presented also the progress status summary which was overall positive except for some delays in the work of operational harmonization. Innovation Pillar The ED gave the floor to Nicolas FURIO, new Head of Unit for Innovation at EU-Rail. Mr FURIO introduced himself. Nicolas FURIO gave an overview of the projects managed by the IP team, including interaction and alignments between projects. <i>(see powerpoint presentation for more details)</i> Luis FERRERIA asked about the Pods4Rail project, whether they are looking mainly at passengers. Nicolas confirmed; surveys addressed to passengers had been launched. Matthijs DE WEERDT and Marielle STOELINGA referred to the mention of challenges with a low TRL in the description on the Work Programme. Nicolas FURIO and the ED invited the SSG members to make their proposals on this question. - <u>Action</u> The ED also confirmed that the sufficient representation from academia will be asked. The ED added that any input for the current amendment of the WP had to be sent as soon as possible, because the final draft shall be sent to the JU Members on the 21st of May in view of its adoption at the Governing Board meeting of 24 June. The Chair asked Nicolas for more information on the project Academics4Rail and KPIs. Nicolas provided the information on the project work on develop a methodology for KPIs and the link with the technical KPIs from the Flagship Projects. Luis FERREIRA asked whether there is any benchmarking study on the results of the projects, and also to compare with the projects developed in China. Nicolas replied that there is no such benchmarking. Luis informed of the many papers submitted by Universities in China. The ED added that patents are also a good indicator and Torben HOLVALD (ERA) informed members of the Agency study the Agency did in 2021 with JRC on railway patenting trends: Final report – ERA JRC study on railway patenting trends.pdf Deployment Group The ED gave an update on the recent developments on the DpG work. <i>(see the powerpoint presentation for more details)</i> He reminded that it is an open group, new interested stakeholders can apply all year and membership evaluation will happen twice per year. In the last meeting held, the FRMCS subgroup remits and working plan were approved. The topic for the next meeting will be to discuss alignment major transition programmes for operational deployment topics (e.g. serial retrofitting on-board units for ERTMS, FRMCS, DAC...). Call for proposals 2025-01 The ED informed the SSG members on the launch of the first call of the year that contained only one topic: “<i>HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-FA7-01: Further Technological development of</i>	
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<i>Maglev-derived Systems</i>". Only one proposal has been received, and expert evaluation is ongoing. - Upcoming communication and dissemination activities The ED presented the main ongoing and planned communication activities. <i>(see powerpoint the presentation for more details)</i> He started by a meeting with the Members of European Parliament (MEPs) of the Transport (TRAN) committee held on 9 April 2025, where he provided an update of EU-Rail's initiatives to drive rail digitalization and automation. The newly appointed ED of ERA was also participating. The two organizations will jointly participate in the International Transport Forum (ITF) with a stand, and the EU-Rail ED will attend a Ministers' Roundtable on 21 May. On the same date, all JUs will do a gathering event in the EP, with the objective to showcase the impact and importance of JUs. The ED referred presented the "Regional Matchmaking Days", aimed at engaging further geographical representation with new participants in the future calls, and for which sponsors are sought. The ED also referred to the current update of the Governance handbook in regard to communication and dissemination of project results, in order to put more strength to the Flagships to ensure a minimum number of deliveries per year. Last but not least, the ED informed members that the Women in Rail Award is now planned on a yearly basis.	
Coffee break	11:00-11:20
4. SSG scientific advice: - Draft Consolidated Annual Activity Report (AAR) 2024 – SSG advice for GB meeting of June 2025 The ED presented the draft AAR 2024 as well as the provisional accounts, explaining that the final accounts will only be ready in a few weeks. The final accounts will be proposed for opinion together with the 2024 AAR adoption at the GB meeting in June. He explained that the S2R programme is finished, so from now on the JU is focused on the EU-Rail programme, and beyond. The Chair precised that SSG members are not in a position to analyse the financial information, although they all agreed that they did not foresee any major issues with the information provided. The SSG provided therefore a <u>positive scientific advice</u> on this topic. - Draft Amendment N°1 of Work Programme (WP) 2025-2026 - SSG advice for GB meeting of June 2025 The ED introduced the changes that have been done to the WP 2025-2026. He explained the budgetary adjustments and the IKAA reporting. Regarding the technical and operational changes, there has been an update of the description of the flagship areas to adapt to the current status. <i>(see powerpoint presentation for more details).</i>	11:20-12:15

The Chair commented on the possibility of the SSG members to comment upon KPIs. The ED confirmed and in particular he recommended that the SSG members' upcoming work in assessing the Flagship Projects could also focus on this.

He further explained that each Flagship Project needs to comply/adhere to certain quantifiable technical KPIs, and that these KPIs need to be provided by the end of the year. This requirement is now written in the Work Programme text.

A different kind of KPIs are the societal KPIs, which is the activity asked to the Academics4Rail project, i.e. explaining from a broader perspective what is the impact of our work on society. Academics4Rail was asked to develop a model for this, with the support and endorsement of JRC.

Juan de Dios SANZ said that for technical KPIs we need to find consensus on the definition and applications in the modeling. The ED replied that JRC will support the JU to validate the outcome of Academics4Rail.

The Chair said that the MAWP has a section on this and the explanations there are good. She also said that Academics4Rail is just a project, but it is important to find how to go beyond, after the end of the project. It is also important that all results of the project are clear, convincing and useful for the future.

The SSG provided a positive scientific advice to the amendment n°1 to the WP 2025-2026.

- Draft Revised Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) – SSG advice for GB meeting of June 2025

The ED presented the main changes to the MAWP, such as the inclusion of new topics/technical enablers linked with the area of expertise of the new associated members; adjustments of TRLs; review of technical enablers per FA; and a better reflection of interaction between the FAs and ongoing/future initiatives.

The Chair said the members went through the main changes and found no major issues. As commented before, she appreciated the explanation on the KPIs.

Mathijs DE WEERDT commented that he found that there are no references to literature, early reports, etc. He thinks it would be much more reliable for future users if there are points to the state of the art.

The ED understood his point and replied that Mathijs' comment is relevant in view of the call topics text and will ensure that reference will be provided to support any applicant's interest.

The ED continued explaining that there could be a change on FA6 impacting also the WP26, because of the foreseen difficulties in performing high-TRL activities on the rolling stock part. The final version of the document will be distributed again to the SSG, and the Chair will receive the documents sent to the GB for adoption in the June meeting.

The SSG provided a positive scientific advice to the revised MAWP.

- Draft High-Level Paper on a future policy based public private partnership for rail – SSG advice for GB meeting of June 2025

The ED recalled the status of the document, presented following the initial preparatory works last year, at the Governing Board meeting of 5 February. With the agreement of the GB, a draft was published on the EU-RAIL website on 14 March 2025. The EU-Rail Members contributed to the High-Level Paper advising the ED through dedicated meetings of the ED-SIPB, including observers.

The comments provided by SSG members so far have been integrated into the version presented at the SSG meeting. The ED also presented the latest development on the Annex to the main document. Upon the consultation process, an Annex to the draft High-Level Paper, describing three Flagship Initiatives had been initiated. It is at an early stage of development, and it will be sent only for information to the GB. The document will be further developed and finalized with further input from EU-Rail Members and observers. The ED highlighted that the input from the SSG is key. In terms of the next steps, there will be a last drafting meeting on Monday 19th of May with representatives from EU-Rail Members, although not many changes are foreseen. A new version will be shared with the SSG after that. The Annex will be a living document, so that there is always the possibility to make contributions. Continuation will of course depend on the discussions on MFF/FP10. Juan de Dios SANZ asked for the position of EU-Rail on the future after FP9. The ED reminded the options included in the phasing out plan endorsed by the GB which also set the basis for exploratory work that the JU is doing right now. Juan de Dios SANZ commented that DAC has been in S2R, in EU-Rail, so, he asked what should be new in DAC for FP10. He also asked for the digital passport. The ED said on the latter that it is something we need to look at. And for the DAC, it is an enabler. The focus would be for any future programme also on what is developed of innovative around the DAC. Alessandro FANTECHI referred to the creation of a network of academics. He wonders whether there can be a census of universities and research centers participating in rail research activities also outside EU-Rail. As one of the remits of Academic4Rail is the creation of such a network, EU-Rail will check if there is a deliverable that provides already this overview- <u>Action</u> The Chair reacted saying that the most suitable framework is the special calls Erasmus+, e.g. there are a lot of alliances on maritime transport. A good idea therefore is to examine the calls of Erasmus +. But there is no University alliance on rail aspects. Luis FERREIRA added that there is also the association EURNEX. The SSG Members had the chance to amend the text of the High-Level Paper during the meeting. On this basis, the SSG provided a <u>positive scientific advice</u> to the High-Level Paper to be submitted for adoption at the next GB meeting.	
5. CEI Associated Members – status The ED presented the 5 new associated members of EU-Rail. The signature of the Letters of Commitment (LoC) was almost concluded – only one was pending. The LoCs detail which flagship areas the associated members intend to contribute to, as well as the value of their contribution. All new representatives to the Governing Board have been published on our website.	12:15-12:30
6. Advice on Flagship projects – status	12:30-12:50

The ED informed members of a delay in the issue of the contracts for the SSG members interested in providing advice on Flagship projects, due to a change in the EC expert system, which had been solved now. So, they should receive their contracts in the next days. – <u>Action</u> The ED reminded the scope, being assessing the work of EU-Rail Flagships by evaluating their deliverables in order to prepare a report for the ED, and to be then addressed to the GB, on the aspects that would require further attention or where further scientific knowledge could be created. A link to Academics4Rail for the KPIs may be possible, as discussed above. At the next SSG meeting, a progress report on the work performed will be made. The Chair said that it would be good to have an indication on which deliverables include the KPIs. The ED agreed. - <u>Action</u>	
7. Closing remarks and AoB Dates of the next meeting: 21 October 2025 Attendance : <u>SSG Members present</u> : Angela di Febraro (Chair), Juan de Dios Sanz (Vice-chair) Alessandro Fantechi, Luis Ferreira, Mathijs DeWeerd <u>SSG Members online</u> : Nacima Baron, Mariëlle Stoelinga, Martin Leitner, Klaus Moessner, Matthias Landgraf, Michele Carboni, Ladislav Routil <u>Observers</u> : Jan Andersson(ETRA); Claude Marin-Lamellet (ECTRI), Torben Holvald (ERA), Wawrzyniec Perschke (DG MOVE)	12:50-13:00