



7th MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SSG

21 October 2025

10:00-13:00h
Hybrid meeting

Minutes of the meeting

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair, Juan de Dios SANZ, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.</p>	<p>10:00-10:05</p>
<p>2. Approval of the Agenda and previous MoM</p> <p>The proposed agenda of the meeting was approved without any changes.</p> <p>The minutes of last meeting were approved with minor changes.</p>	<p>10:05-10:10</p>
<p>3. Update on EU-Rail's activities:</p> <p>General Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report on System Pillar (SP) work <p>Giorgio Travaini, EU-Rail Executive Director (ED), welcomed and updated SSG Members on the latest developments, and in particular on the last SP meeting held on 4 June. Two important pieces of work were approved on TACS specifications and on cybersecurity.</p> <p>The EU-Rail standardisation and TSI Input Plan is for approval in the next meeting planned for 24 October. The same was for the FRMCS System Pillar Report version 2.</p> <p>The ED also informed on the status of the ongoing activities. There were only a few delays on some of the activities, but largely speaking the SP is delivering according to the plans.</p> <p><i>Additional details are present in the provided PowerPoint presentation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level overview of Innovation Pillar (IP) activities <p>After an introduction by the ED, Nicolas FURIO, Head of Unit for IP at EU-Rail, provided a detailed update on each flagship and exploratory research projects focusing on the new elements since the last SSG meeting in May.</p> <p><i>Specific information on each project is provided in the PowerPoint presentation.</i></p> <p>Mathijs DE WEERDT asked for the intention to share with the public the project results. He commented that there are different levels of sharing, from just the name and brand of the components to real sharing with the public, and he was interested to know what was the desired</p>	<p>10:10-11:00</p>

level of sharing. Nicolas FURIO replied that for those deliverables that are sensitive, EU-Rail is always asking to provide at least a public extract and in general EU-Rail promote the openness and sharing of information.

- **Report on High-level Deployment Group (DpG) work**

The ED explained the latest development of the High-level Deployment Group. He reminded that the work of this group is largely of voluntary nature.

The ED introduced the initial outcome of the FRMCS subgroup.

The subgroup has provided a possible way on how to approach the authorisation, a toolbox for possible migration scenario, and provide recommendation to ERA.

The ED reported that in general, all DpG representatives are very satisfied because the group generates knowledge not necessarily known until now.

Luis FERREIRA asked how the DpG works with the national entities. The ED replied that for the moment the DpG works as an expert group, creating subgroups with a clear remit, but not making yet the connection with decision makers at national level. This connection will be the next natural step. However, the Commission, as part of the DpG, ensures the national implementation plans are coordinated for the deployment. The DpG work is also public on the EU-Rail website and shared with the SRG, which also helps to ensure the information is disseminated.

Additional details are present in the provided PowerPoint presentation.

- **Outcome of call for proposals 2025-01 and launch of call for proposals 2025-02**

The ED informed on the outcome of the first call for proposals of the year with the topic *HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA7-01: Further Technological Development of Maglev-derived Systems*. The selected proposal for funding is now in the grant agreement preparation phase.

The second call for proposals of the year will be a big call, comprising the 2nd wave of flagship projects and the last batch of exploratory activities. It was published on 8 October on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) and will remain open until 11 February 2026.

The ED presented the call configuration and full list of destination topics and budgets, highlighting that exploratory project projects will compete among themselves as it was requested to be ED by the SSG, which means that it may happen that there are, e.g. two projects financed under one topic or none under another topic.

An Info Day was held on 10 October, with more than 250 participants, which shows great interest. The event included a connection with GREENET, the network of Cluster 5 National Contact Points, presented by the representative of Poland at EU-Rail SRG. Also, a B2platform has been set up for interested applicants to connect, with already more than 500 users.

The ED reiterated the necessary SSG support in further dissemination to obtain good proposals coverage. - ***ACTION for SSG Members: disseminate the EU-Rail call 2025-02.***

Additional details are present in the provided PowerPoint presentation.

- **Other information points**

The ED informed the SSG Members of the decisions adopted at the last Governing Board meeting of 24 June. He also pointed to the termination of the membership of THALES on 24 July, due to the takeover of another JU member, HITACHI. The ongoing grants participated

by THALES were taken by HTACHI, and the in-kind contribution commitment for future R&I activities have been taken up by different JU private members including HITACHI.

The ED continued explaining the status of three ongoing calls for tenders; one of them (Multi-Project Collaborative Tool) had to be cancelled due to the non-fulfilment of the minimum requirements of the tender specifications.

The draft agenda of the EU-Rail's General Assembly of 2025 scheduled for 2-3 December was presented, and the ED reminded the SSG contribution needed for the 3 December (10 minutes presentation). - **ACTION for SSG Chair: to prepare and present the SSG report in the General Assembly.**

He presented as well as the planning for 2026, including the main meetings and decisions to be taken by the Governing Board in 2026. The dates of the SSG were chosen so there is enough time to provide the SSG advice on the documents to be sent for adoption at Governing Board meetings.

Luis FERREIRA proposed to advance the Autumn SSG meeting to September so that it can be held during the Innotrans fair in Berlin.

The ED confirmed that it would be possible with the caveat that the documents may not be fully ready for SSG advice. He suggested the SSG Members to reflect about it and to take a decision latest in the next meeting.- **ACTION for SSG Members: to reflect and discuss internally if a change of the SSG date is wished by all Members and communicate it at the next SSG meeting or before to the secretariat.**

Upcoming communication and dissemination activities

The ED presented the main ongoing and planned communication activities.

The ED informed in particular on the Women in Rail Awards that took place on 1 October in Krakow, with four awardees. He then informed on a recent successful Brokerage event held also in Poland, during the TRAKO fair, in collaboration with EU-Rail PKP S.A. and the National Contact Point for research. The plan is to organize an online information day for flagship area in November 2025.

The ED informed that for the Innotrans fair of September 2025, a joint stand with the Commission and ERA is confirmed. On the Commission side, there will be not only DG MOVE but also DG INTPA. The plan is again to have a programme for a train journey from Brussels to Berlin, with the support of DB and the JU private members.

The TRA event of 18-21 May 2026 in Budapest will have a joint stand with EU-Rail, SESAR, Clean Hydrogen and Clean Aviation JUs.

The ED also highlighted a series of podcasts available on the [website](#), and on [Spotify](#) and [Youtube](#). EU-Rail continues to push for more digital publications and further website development.

Full details are available in the PowerPoint presentation.

Coffee break

11:00-11:20

<p>4. SSG scientific advice - for GB meeting of 2 December 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Amendment N°2 of Work Programme 2025-2026 <p>The ED explained that the intention of this amendment is to make the necessary transfers to the 2025 budget, to ensure proper consumption by year end. The SSG specific advice is therefore not required, but for transparency it will be shared with the SSG Members.</p> <p>The SSG provided <u>positive feedback</u> based on the explanation above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Work Programme 2026 <p>The ED informed SSG Members that the most relevant scientific part is related to the 2026-01 call, which is present in the annex of the WP26. The ED explained the two topics present in the call text.</p> <p>Juan de Dios SANZ highlighted the difficult ambition set in the topic covering FA6/7 on the reduction of 30% total weight on new vehicles in particular also in regard to the current TSIs requirements to be met. He also suggested looking for the car body structure to functional, trying to combine weight reduction with improved vehicle functions (for instance, in cabling and wiring, EMC reduction, etc.). With regard to the hyperloop, he mentioned that maybe instead of a formal certification, we should continue with a volunteer certification process.</p> <p>The ED replied that the call text indicates the weight as “up to” and that if needed more emphasis on the impact of weight reduction will have on TSI could be reinforced in the call FA6/7 text. Similarly, reference to investigation on functional printing can be added in the FA6/7 call text. Concerning hyperloop, he understands the certification issue and welcomes proposals from the SSG Members to reflect it into the text.</p> <p>Following a question from the SSG Members on the standardization organisation participation in the R&I works of EU-Rail, Juan de Dios SANZ explained that there is a signed MoU between EU-Rail (formerly S2R) and Cenelec on standardization. When it was decided to create the JTC20 for hyperloop, it was discussed how to implement it and the collaboration with EU-Rail.</p> <p>Alessandro FANTECHI intervened to express that there could be more clarity on the safety components to be used for hyperloop testing. He wondered whether the call should refer to the documents or to other results from previous projects as the framework, not to have a proposal to verify components that are not in that framework. The ED found it a good idea and asked for ideas for reformulation, in particular he asked Juan de Dios SANZ if existing JTC20 documents can provide the indications above.</p> <p>Mathijs DE WEERDT highlighted the importance for the R&I projects to share their results. He wondered how and when this could be encouraged, as it would help also to attract young talent.</p> <p>Ladislav ROUTIL also commented that we need to attract people from other fields.</p> <p>Juan de Dios SANZ expressed his support to reinforce the dissemination activities in the R&I projects as a way to share results.</p> <p>The ED took good note of all the arguments raised and added that explained the current practice in EU-Rail concerning dissemination of R&I results. He also explained that several projects have the most deliverable set as “public”, and they are therefore fully downloadable on the EU-Rail website. Additionally, EU-Rail introduced dedicated KPIs on dissemination actions in its Governance and Process handbook, which are applicable to Flagship Projects as from the ongoing call, but they will be also implementable for the currently running Flagship Projects. The following text in each Flagship Project topics has been added as well to promote wider participation including from universities:</p>	<p>11:20-12:15</p>
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“It is expected that the Flagship Project stemming from this topic: - will involve sufficient European geographical representation of academia and ensure that all needed expertise for the described activities reflects the Special skills and/or capabilities expected from the Applicant(s) as described in the specific topic conditions.”

ACTION for SSG Members: to submit written input to the WP 2026 by 30 October.

On this basis, the SSG can provide positive scientific advice to the WP 2026.

- **Opinion on draft High-level paper Annex**

The ED presented the main highlights of the draft Annex to the High-level Paper on “A Future Policy Based Public Private Partnership For Rail”.

Full details available in the meeting’s PowerPoint presentation.

➤ ***European simplified and integrated rail system***

Juan de Dios SANZ considered that the proposed text in the Annex is very good, but the concept of the flagship areas needs to be reinforced.

Mathijs DE WEERDT added that it is possible to evolve at different speed in different countries.

Mariëlle STOELINGA commented that common integrated approaches are more needed than ever.

➤ ***The Next-Generation Rail Freight Operations with European Digital solutions***

Juan de Dios SANZ agreed with the approach presented by the ED, but he considers that it could be more ambitious, because we need convergency to intermodal system. He suggested to extend the rail intermodal actions.

The ED replied that he took well note and asked for written input. He confirmed that the flagship initiative should seek for entire logistic coverage, in fact one of the pre-deployment proposed includes ports.

➤ ***Resilient and Recoverable Railway System***

Juan de Dios SANZ commented that if there is a transfer to rail of some part of military contingencies with human activities, emergency could be considered. Also, he considers that we need a clear idea of what is demanding the military sector.

Matthijs DE WEERDT added that there is a need for a more integrated rail system, and these are special circumstances which might help.

Mariëlle STOELINGA confirmed that it is a very open and difficult question. In the Netherlands there are currently talks about enlarging rail stations, combining with civil use. But if military trains have to run, civil trains will not be able to run.

➤ ***(new) Innovative EU High-Speed Rail Corridors***

The ED informed that a fourth flagship initiative will be added on high-speed that will be completed in the next revision of the Annex, because it will need to be aligned with the Commission’s master plan on high-speed to be soon published.

Juan de Dios SANZ questioned which R&I could be part on it. The ED exhorted the members for ideas, for example aerodynamics is quite specific or more relevant for high-speed. Additionally, the idea presented is also to use high-speed as an early deployer of technologies applicable also elsewhere in the rail system (at lower cost).

The ED also presented the innovation provided in each Flagship initiatives which is the new proposed coverage in the JU of pre-deployment activities.

Additional details are present in the provided PowerPoint presentation.

<p>Ladislav ROUTIL asked for the support to start ups and other activities. The ED said that this can be part of it, but it was not yet analysed in detail how to. This will be part of the next step, for a next JU, when we know better what the scope of action will be.</p> <p>To conclude the discussion on the draft Annex, the ED thanked the SSG Members for their feedback, inviting them to provide their written comments in time for the sending of the documents to the Governing Board on 4 November, according to the applicable rules of procedure. He stressed that there will be a further revision of the document in 2026, and therefore possibility to continue providing feedback.</p> <p><u>ACTION for SSG Members: to submit written input to the draft Annex by 30 October.</u></p> <p>On this basis, the SSG can provide <u>positive feedback</u> to the draft Annex.</p>	
<p>5. Advice on Flagship projects - status</p> <p>Members received the specific issue review documents on 13-15 October.</p> <p>The ED presented the provided Specific Issue Review instruction. He asked if there were question or doubts and this was not the case.</p> <p>Juan de Dios SANZ asked to have the DoA (Description of Action) of each project to be assessed. The ED confirmed and EU-Rail will check if it has been shared. – <u>ACTION for SSG Secretariat</u></p> <p>Matthijs DE WEERDT asked for some advice on the draft version of the report, in particular if someone could be available for the revision of the draft reports before being submitted. The ED said that they can contact the Project Manager in charge, as indicated in the emails they received. – <u>ACTION for SSG Secretariat</u></p>	12:15-12:30
<p>6. Future of EU-Rail – discussion</p> <p>The ED explained the current status and encouraged SSG Members to be proactive.</p> <p>Juan de Dios SANZ informed that in Spain there is a dedicated group exchanging on the topic and involving several stakeholders.</p> <p>Ladislav ROUTIL asked if a JRC for rail could be an option. Luis FERREIRA commented that the new Portugal alliance as new associated member of EU-Rail, in which his university participates, was the only way forward for Portugal.</p>	12:30-12:50
<p>7. Closing remarks and AoB</p> <p>Dates of the next meeting: 18 February 2026</p> <p>Juan de Dios SANZ proposed starting the SSG meetings earlier, at 9am, to have more time for discussion. All Members agreed and it was accepted by the ED.</p> <p>Attendance : <u>SSG Members present</u> : Juan de Dios Sanz (Vice-chair), Alessandro Fantechi, Luis Ferreira, Mathijs De Weerd, Ladislav Routil, Martin Leitner <u>SSG Members online</u> : Nacima Baron, Mariëlle Stoelinga, Klaus Moessner, Matthias Landgraf, Michele Carboni <u>Observers:</u> Torben Holvald (ERA) <u>EU-Rail:</u> Giorgio Travaini (Executive Director), Nicolas Furio (Head of IP), Anna Maria Torres (Grant and Legal Officer)</p>	12:50-13:00