



## 14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL SRG

19 February 2026

09:30 – 12:00h  
Hybrid meeting

<p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <p>The Chair, Haltuf Miroslav, welcomed all participants, and particularly the new SRG representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Switzerland: Ms Johanna Tudeau and Mr Michel Baudraz.</li> </ul>	<p>09:30- 09:35</p>
<p><b>2. Approval of Agenda and previous MoM</b></p> <p>The proposed agenda for the meeting was approved.</p> <p>The minutes of the last SRG meeting were approved.</p> <p>The EU-Rail Executive Director (ED), Giorgio Travaini, welcomed the participants and presented the new designated EU-Rail SRG secretariat: Ms. Florentina Laptuca.</p>	<p>09:40- 09:45</p>
<p><b>3. Amendment of SRG Rules of Procedure</b></p> <p>The ED presented the proposed amendments to the SRG Rules of Procedure (RoP) concerning confidentiality and conflict of interest (CoI), which were prepared following consultation with the European Commission (DG RTD).</p> <p>The proposed simplification foresees that SRG representatives sign a declaration upon appointment and submit one annual declaration covering the entire year. Any change in circumstances giving rise to a potential conflict of interest must be reported immediately through a spontaneous declaration. External participants will continue to submit a declaration prior to each meeting. The amendments clarify Article 12 (points 2 and 4) of the RoP.</p> <p>The Chair and secretariat confirmed that the required quorum was reached. The amendments to the SRG Rules of Procedure were approved by consensus.</p> <p>The updated provisions will be implemented accordingly.</p>	<p>09:45- 10:00</p>
<p><b>4. Update on EC activities</b></p> <p>Ms Mihaela Williams (European Commission, DG MOVE) provided an update on the preparation of the next EU-Rail programme. She indicated that the proposals are still under negotiation and that the Commission services (DG RTD) are working on the preparation of the Single Basic Act. No official launch of the process has taken place</p>	<p>10:00- 10:10</p>

yet. Member States were invited to support the preparation of the case for the continuation of the EU-Rail Joint Undertaking.

The Chair mentioned the importance of making the position of Member States visible in support of the future partnership. He noted that, in the absence of draft legislative texts, it remains difficult to formulate a solid and relevant position and requested clarifications and the expected availability of the FP 10 and SBA draft proposals as information from ERRAC and DG RTD indicates interest in the future partnership framework.

The AT and FR representatives highlighted the need for information on participation requirements, expected investments and the implications for Member States if they are requested to participate. France representative noted that more clarity is needed regarding what exactly in the Single Basic Act would need update depending upon the outcome of the new ER mandate (extension of mandate to management of pre-deployment projects, etc).

The DE representative, underlined the importance of first securing the continuation of EU-Rail and requested reliable indications on the future governance framework, noted that securing confirmation of the programme's continuity should be the priority before further discussion on governance arrangements.

In this regard, the DG MOVE representative clarified that two parallel processes are ongoing.

First, the proposals for the future Horizon Europe framework and the European Competitiveness Fund are currently under negotiation in the Council. In this context, the future Single Basic Act (SBA) will define the conditions for partnerships, which may be implemented either as standard or institutionalised partnerships.

Second, as negotiations on the European Competitiveness Fund are still ongoing, no definitive elements are available at this stage.

A separate process concerns the preparation of the Single Basic Act under the next programme. This will include a public consultation and a call for evidence. Member States will be able to contribute once DG RTD publishes the relevant documents.

The Chair asked whether Member States would still be required to provide national funding and how potential double financing would be avoided. He also asked whether additional contributions might be required from Member States. The European Commission representative indicated that, at this stage, it is not possible to provide a definitive answer, as the FP10 proposal is still in discussion at Council level.

The Chair invited further questions, and the DE representative suggested a joint position of the Member States (level of Ministries of Transport) in support of the continuation of the ERJU.

The ED confirmed that feedback already received had been integrated into the High-Level Paper. If the SRG wished to express a broader position on the continuation of EU-Rail, a draft document could be prepared and circulated for comments. Such input

<p>would support the upcoming consultation process, which, as confirmed by the Commission, will be open to stakeholders.</p> <p>The CH representative asked about the implications if the Joint Undertaking programme will not be continued. The ED explained that this scenario would be assessed through the Commission’s impact assessment. In the absence of a Joint Undertaking, rail research and innovation activities could be implemented under another programme or transferred to another implementing structure.</p> <p>Mihaela Williams clarified that the outcome will be based on the impact assessment and will not be arbitrary. The following options will be assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No partnership, with activities implemented under standard European Commission work programmes;</li> <li>• A partnership implemented through the European Commission work programmes;</li> <li>• The establishment of a Joint Undertaking, subject to a cost-benefit analysis, with the most appropriate option selected.</li> </ul> <p>The discussion was concluded with the Chair – <b><i>Action</i></b> inviting the Joint Undertaking to prepare a draft paper and requesting Member States to provide comments by a deadline to support the forthcoming consultation process:</p> <p><a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/16413-Horizon-Europe-European-Partnerships-to-be-implemented-as-joint-undertakings_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/16413-Horizon-Europe-European-Partnerships-to-be-implemented-as-joint-undertakings_en</a>.</p>	
<p><b>5. Update on EU-Rail’s on-going activities</b></p> <p>– <b>Outcome of Governing Board &amp; General Assembly of December 2025</b></p> <p>The ED informed the Governing Board about the key feedback from the EU-Rail General Assembly, where DG MOVE’s Director for Land transport confirmed his full support for the continuation of the EU-Rail Joint Undertaking. He also informed about the support expressed by Pierpaolo Settembri, deputy head of cabinet of Commissioner for Transport for the continuation of EU-Rail during a meeting at the European Parliament with the attendance of a number of Members of the European Parliament. All EU-Rail Private members reaffirmed, with individual statement during their participation at C-Level in the EU-Rail General Assembly, their strong commitment to continue their engagement.</p> <p>The ED although clarified that the EC position is a collegial approach, and such position has not been taken yet, pending the preparation of the Single Basic Act, foreseen by year end.</p> <p>– <b>Report on System Pillar (SP) work</b></p> <p>The SRG was informed about the progress of the SP, as presented by Karel Van Gils, Seconded National Expert in EU-Rail. Key outcomes from the recent SP Steering Group meetings included the approval of several deliverables and change request</p>	<p>10:10-11:00</p>

packages across multiple domains, as well as progress on architecture, operational harmonization and data-related activities.

The Chair highlighted the importance of strong coordination with The European Research Area (ERA), in particular regarding the direct implementation of TSIs and the alignment of change management processes to avoid duplication. The NL representative stressed that cost-benefit analysis should be carried out in close cooperation with ERA and as early as possible, given the potentially significant financial implications of the proposed changes. The DE representative expressed support for this approach, while the ERA representative confirmed that economic aspects are already integrated into the pre-assessment templates to evaluate the maturity of change requests. The ED clarified that the System Pillar does not introduce parallel processes to those of ERA; rather, it aims to ensure transparency, sector alignment and risk-based assessment before submission of change requests. Additionally, the economic assessment is part of the ERA mandate and remain in their capabilities, with the support in so far as possible of the above-mentioned pre-assessments as part of the SP processes already.

The need to further consolidate the change of control approach and ensure a consistent level of coordination and agreement across TSIs was also emphasized by the SRG members.

*Additional details are available in the PowerPoint presentation provided.*

– **High level overview of Innovation Pillar (IP) activities**

Léa Paties, EU-Rail Senior Programme Manager, presented an overview of the EU-Rail flagship projects, highlighting that all projects are progressing at a similar level of maturity. A consolidated document on demonstration activities has been shared via CIRCABC, providing a high-level summary of the six flagship programmes and their geographical coverage across participating countries.

The presentation outlined the upcoming dissemination activities and technical enabler demonstrations to be held across Europe between April and May 2026, aimed at showcasing results and engaging stakeholders.

The main outcomes of the current reporting period were also presented. The second reporting period (2024) was positively assessed, with successful completion of several work packages and no major deviations from the Description of Action.

*A full report by flagship is provided in the PowerPoint presentation.*

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

Karel Van Gils provided the status on the activities of the FRMCS European Deployment Subgroup. The presentation outlined ongoing work on functional and system specifications, preparation of FP2-MORANE2 testing activities, standardization efforts in ERA and ETSI, and the development of deployment scenarios, technical guidelines, and cost-driver analyses. The work programme for 2026–2027 includes intensified dissemination activities, publication of scenario reports, and organization of webinars. An update was also provided on the European

DAC Delivery Programme, including the continuation of pilot and preparatory activities and the planned governance arrangements.

Following the presentation on FRMCS deployment status and the European DAC Delivery Programme, the Chair opened the floor for comments.

The Chair asked about any update on the meetings organised by the European Commission with the DAC National Contact points. The ED informed that no additional meetings have been held, but that the information on the start Pioneer DAC Trains would be a good opportunity; the JU will discuss it with the European Commission – ***Action***

The Chair emphasized the importance of harmonized solutions with limited national deviations and highlighted that validation activities should identify issues before final TSI adoption. EU-Rail work through the System Pillar and Innovation Pillar activities will allow the alignment on requirements, as well as tested solution to be possibly integrated in TSIs. The ED underlined that interoperability is essential but not sufficient on its own; avoiding multiple national variants is key, and continued sectorial coordination with EU-Rail can contribute to achieve this and ultimately system cost reduction.

The NL representative referred to ongoing testing activities (including FP2-Morane 2) and noted that, while some elements are being tested, others will require vehicle upgrades. She highlighted the importance of addressing integration challenges, particularly with onboard and infrastructure systems, while maintaining the objective of a single European solution, with technical options to be further clarified by suppliers.

The AT representative raised concerns about the risk of increasing vehicle hardware costs, warning that higher costs could negatively affect the market.

The Chair reiterated the need to clarify how FRMCS deployment costs will be covered and to ensure that the overall approach remains competitive, considering system complexity.

ERA acknowledged the cost concerns, confirming that cost reduction remains a key priority in ongoing work.

Karel Van Gils emphasized the business perspective, noting that deployment decisions should be based on cost-benefit considerations and overall cost efficiency, with particular attention to operational costs rather than infrastructure alone. He also highlighted operational risk aspects and referred to deployment scenario analyses shared with participants. The Commission's Baseline 3 paper was mentioned as a useful reference to support a cost-efficient implementation approach. He provided the weblink where the current High Level Deployment group documents can be found at: <https://rail-research.europa.eu/frmcs-european-deployment-group/>

In closing, the Chair underlined the importance of a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis and recommended benchmarking the European approach against global practices.

*Additional details are provided in the PowerPoint presentation.*

**- State of play of ongoing 2025-02 Call & launch of 2026-01 Call**

The presentation provided an overview of the Call for Proposals 2025-02 and the newly launched Call 2026-01. For Call 2025-02, launched on 8 October 2025 with a budget of EUR 148.2 million, a total of 34 proposals were received across Flagship Areas and Exploratory Research topics. The evaluation process is currently ongoing in line with the EU-Rail Work

Programme 2025–2026, and Actions to be funded will be submitted to the Governing Board for approval of the list of actions to be funded.

Call 2026-01 was launched on 4 February 2026, with the Info Day held on 9 February 2026 (over 260 registrations and 210 participants). The deadline for submission is 7 May 2026. The call focuses on regional rail services and innovative guided transport solutions, including new approaches for safety and emerging transport modes.

– **Status of the High-Level paper on the Future of Europe Rail and information actions towards the permanent representations**

The presentation provided an update on the future policy-based Public-Private Partnership for Rail, aimed at simplifying and harmonizing the European rail system through a coordinated EU approach. The initiative includes four Flagship Initiatives (system integration, digital freight, resilience, and high-speed rail) and foresees significant investment in R&I and pre-deployment. Emphasis was placed on bridging the gap between innovation and market uptake through stronger pre-deployment activities, pilot projects, and real-life validation.

Next steps include finalizing the draft of Flagship Initiative 4 by March for submission to the Governing Board in April, reactivating working groups for Flagship Initiatives 1–3, and integrating feedback from the ERRAC consultation (deadline: end of February). The indicative timeline foresees preparatory work in 2026, adoption of the new framework in 2027, and the launch of the first call for proposals in early 2028.

Some SRG participants emphasized that the implementation of the High-Level Paper is feasible, and that Member States could participate financially, provided that the benefits and returns are clear. The importance of ensuring financial sustainability and managing risks related to contributions was noted.

A public consultation is planned, with the objective of reaching a final position by December. The Council decision on the new Single Basic Act is expected in 2027, potentially enabling the launch of a new partnership by the end of that year.

The ED reported ongoing bilateral meetings with transport and research Brussel’s attachés from Member States (13 completed so far), thanking the SRG Members for their support, which were useful to present concrete ideas of ECF implementation linked to FP10 and gather initial reactions. Further meetings are planned with additional countries and stakeholders.

– **Ongoing and upcoming communication and dissemination activities**

The ED presented the main EU-Rail events planned for 2026, among which two major events:

At TRA 2026, EU-Rail will participate with a joint stand together with other 3 Joint Undertakings and contribute to plenary sessions and project presentations.

For InnoTrans 2026, around 25 events are under preparation under the coordination of DG MOVE, with contributions from EU-Rail and ERA. EU-Rail will organize VIP and innovation tours, showcase several demonstrations, and ensure strong stakeholder visibility. Most of the activities will be led by EU-Rail through a common stand with ERA, DG MOVE and DG INTPA (DG International Partnerships). An innovation tour will involve many partners. A dedicated high-speed train from Brussels to Berlin is planned, which will be fully available for stakeholder engagement activities. Meetings and workshops may be organized on board,

subject to the overall programme and logistics. SRG members are invited to attend if interested. The train will be privately sponsored, while EU-Rail will manage communication activities.

**Action** – subject to logistic possibilities, the ED will check the possibility of a SRG event/meeting on board of the train.

Additional communication actions started in 2025 continue, including the series of [Railcasts](#) (six episodes already available) and promotional videos. Strong sector support for the continuation of EU-Rail was highlighted, including letters of support from across the rail sector and around 40 European universities, with a view to reinforcing outreach towards decision-makers.

The SRG members welcomed the strong visibility foreseen for EU-Rail at major international events and underlined the importance of coordinated communication and stakeholder engagement. They were encouraged to support outreach activities and relay key messages at national level.

*Additional details are presented in the PowerPoint presentation provided.*

– **Other information points**

The ED informed the SRG Members about the recent operational calls for tenders, including “Locomotive fleet retrofit and engineering solutions for DAC (and ERTMS)”, the “Strategic Advice to Europe’s Rail” and the cancellation of “Europe’s Rail Multi-Project Collaborative Tool”, due to non-compliance with the minimum tender requirements.

The ED informed that EU-Rail will circulate a draft text for a possible service request in the context of the “Strategic Advice to Europe’s Rail”, related to a study on facilitating the impact of R&I activities, how to ease the access to market – as discussed with the SRG in 2025.

– **Action.**

In addition, a 2026 planning overview was provided, outlining the main events calendar, TRA 2026 in Budapest (18–21 May) and InnoTrans in Berlin (22–25 September), the General Assembly scheduled for November, together with the main meetings and decisions to be taken by the Governing Board.

Clarifications were requested regarding participation conditions for entities from associated countries, in particular Switzerland and the UK.

The European Commission representative confirmed that entities from Switzerland are eligible to participate in calls, with no participation restrictions. The Commission indicated that a possible increase of the EU contribution to EU-Rail following the accession of associated countries under Horizon Europe (HE), is subject to an internal European Commission decision mechanism and no definitive decision or timeline is currently available. It was noted that the distribution of financial contributions is managed at EC programme level; participation in a partnership does not automatically guarantee funding.

The UK representative explained that following UK accession to HE, the European Commission published an explanation of UK association and the impacts on Joint

<p>Undertaking participation shortly after the association came into effect, providing the link to the document:</p> <p><a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/uk-association-horizon-eu-partnerships_en.pdf">https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/uk-association-horizon-eu-partnerships_en.pdf</a></p>	
<p><b>6. EU-RAIL activities with ERRAC</b></p> <p>The ERRAC update: DG RTD presented the FP10 orientation and partnership approach, while DG MOVE highlighted key initiatives including the High-Speed Rail Action Plan and the Military Mobility Package; upcoming 2026 ERRAC meeting dates were also shared.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged stronger engagement with ERRAC, <b>Action</b> with documents to be circulated for comments before May and further coordination after the ERRAC General Assembly to identify possible contributions from the group.</p> <p><i>More details are provided in the PowerPoint presentation.</i></p>	<p>11:00- 11:15</p>
<p><b>7. Point for SRG first feedback</b></p> <p>The ED presented the main elements of the draft EU-Rail Work Programme 2027, including priorities, planned calls and indicative budget. The Programme will focus on continuing the implementation of the EU-Rail R&amp;I activities, notably the ramp-up of the second wave of Flagship Projects and the launch of Call 2027-01 (Q1) and Call 2027-02 (Q3) under the Innovation Pillar, as well as ongoing System Pillar activities supporting standardisation and preparation of next steps beyond 2027.</p> <p>The Deployment Group will contribute to bridging research and implementation, including work on coordinated European deployment and pre-deployment activities. The future perspective beyond EU-Rail will aim at strengthening the Single European Railway Area through increased interoperability, resilience, competitiveness and simplified processes.</p> <p><b>Action</b> SRG members are encouraged to provide comments if any to the JU.</p>	<p>11:15- 11:30</p>
<p><b>8. SRG report on national R&amp;I activities</b></p> <p>Overview on the national research projects/activities received</p> <p>The ED presented an overview of the national research projects and activities received, outlining the current state of play and their alignment with the proposed EU-Rail actions. The update aimed to provide visibility on ongoing national initiatives and support coordination and synergies with the EU-Rail programme.</p> <p>The lists of R&amp;I activities (policies, programmes and projects) at national and regional level are published on EU-Rail's website.</p> <p>The DE representatives noted that the information presented for Germany was not up to date.</p>	<p>11:30- 11:45</p>
<p><b>9. Discussion and agreement on questions to be addressed to UNIFE in next SRG meeting (Chair proposal)</b></p>	<p>11:45- 12:00</p>

<p>The Chair invited members to reflect on potential contributions to the rail research and innovation agenda, including relevant work from the new SRG representative, Israel.</p> <p>By his own initiative, the Chair highlighted the need to strengthen coordination at Member State level with ERA, as he had already discussed with Oana Gherghinescu, Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA). A discussion on possible scope followed with the SRG members who asked for clarification. The European Commission also asked for further details on the matter and reminded the remit of the EU-Rail SRG.</p> <p><b>Action</b> the Chair will develop a one pager exemplifying the scope. Following that further actions could be discussed in the next SRG.</p> <p>By his own initiative, the Chair also referred to a meeting with Enno Wiebe, the Director General of UNIFE, the association of supply industry. The Chair highlighted an opportunity for the SRG to strengthen its involvement in sharing information on areas such as interoperability specifications, CCS, SME support, cybersecurity, military mobility, and coordination with national associations.</p> <p><b>Action</b> SRG members were invited by the chair to prepare a set of questions to be sent to UNIFE by the end of March.</p> <p><i>Additional information is provided in the PowerPoint presentation.</i></p>	
<p><b>10. AoB and closing remarks</b></p> <p>– <b>Presentation of the German R&amp;D project "Automated Train"</b></p> <p>A German national research and development project “Automatied Train” , especially on the Automated Train system architecture (national funding approx. EUR 40 million, total investment approx. EUR 100 million) was presented. The development is aligned with ETCS Level 2 and is based on a conformant architecture developed in cooperation with the German National Safety Authorities (Eisenbahn-Bundesamt) and independent assessment bodies, starting from the work done in the framework of Shift2Rail and EU-Rail.</p> <p>The project has already produced significant engineering results and documentation (cf. presentation sent on 12 February 2026) and could contribute to EU-Rail Wave 2 Flagship Projects activities as well as to the System Pillar. The consortium expressed its willingness to share documentation and demonstrators' results across the European railway sector.</p> <p>Participants acknowledged the high technical value of the work and stressed the importance of ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alignment with EU-Rail System Pillar and Innovation Pillar activities,</li> <li>• recognition of the contribution, including possible financial considerations.</li> </ul> <p>The ED thanked for this proposal and the DE representative for having facilitated the transfer of knowledge. The ED encouraged all other SRG Members to do the same and</p>	<p>12:00- 12:50</p>

<p>asked to reflect in the context of the next JU of MS contribution could not be foreseen upfront, so that to avoid transfer of knowledge a posteriori but to optimise the use of national and European funds upfront – given the common interest of developing European specifications and solutions.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Member States (including the Czech Republic) may be open to testing activities.</p> <p><b>Action</b> EU-Rail to liaise with the project for the transfer of knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Coordination with the SSG for a joint meeting in May to discuss and agree on the positioning on FP10 and future partnership/s</b></li> </ul> <p>The Chair invited the SRG members to be present at the next SRG meeting scheduled on 13 May 2026.</p> <p><b>Action</b> The Chair by his own initiative invited members to share any contacts or feedback from NATO, outside the remit of EU-Rail, with a view to possible exchanges (meeting in the EU-Rail SRG) supporting standardisation work in military mobility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Dates of next SRG meetings</b></li> </ul> <p>Next meeting will be held on 13 May 2026.</p>	
<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><b>SRG Members</b> present: <i>Miroslav Haltuf (Chair), Johanna Nes (Vice-chair), Ivanka Terzic, Leonhard Hartinger, Johanna Tudeau, Reut Cohen.</i></p> <p><b>SRG Members online:</b> <i>Louise Mothersole, Serhat Melik, Karen Roofthoofd, Andrea Pap Neuschlová, Nati Bloch Damti, Juan Henriques, Osvaldo Pires Manso, Pérez Martín David, Becky Bennett, Adnan Jelin, Ariane Boehmer, Mandt Mikkel Åsgard, Arzu İpek Yılmaz, Obreczán Mátyás, Niko Bogdan, Magdalena Glogowska, Peter Klamo, Pierre Gierenz, Baudraz Michel, Darjan Konjić, Henri Vichard.</i></p> <p><b>Observers:</b> <i>Torben Holvald (ERA), <a href="#">Elena Mihaela Williams (DG MOVE)</a></i></p> <p><b>Invited as presenter:</b> <i><a href="#">Dr. Dirk Spiegel (Deutsche Bahn)</a></i></p> <p><b>EU-Rail:</b> <i>Giorgio Travaini (Executive Director), <a href="#">Isaac Gonzalez,(acting Head of Corporate Services)</a>, <a href="#">Karel Van Gils (Seconded National Expert)</a>, <a href="#">Lea Paties (Senior Programme Manager)</a>, <a href="#">Ariadni Matraka (Programme Assistant)</a>, <a href="#">Cosimo Serpolla (Corporate Legal Assistant)</a>, <a href="#">Florentina Laptuca (Assistant to the Corporate Service Unit)</a></i></p>	