Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-RAIL)

18th MEETING

OF THE EU-RAIL GOVERNING BOARD

9 April 2026

09:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Hybrid meeting

LIST OF PRESENCE:

European Union represented by the European Commission	SCHMIDT Kristian, DG MOVE	Chair
	WILLIAMS Mihaela, DG MOVE	Observer
	GENTILI Andrea, DG RTD	Observer
	RODRIGUES Helena, DG RTD	Observer (remotely)
ACCIONA	BONILLA Javier	Representative
ADIF	VILLALMANZO David-Ibán	Alternate
ALSTOM	ERB Nicolas	Alternate
AZD	MICHAL Pavel	Alternate
ANGELRAIL consortium led by MER MEC	SCARNERA Vincenzo	Alternate (remotely)

CD	JINDRA Petr	Alternate (remotely)
CEIT	INAKI Diaz Garmendia	Alternate (remotely)
DEUTSCHE BAHN	LIANOS Manuel	Alternate
DLR	MEYER ZU HÖRSTE Michael	Representative (remotely)
European Smart Green Rail Joint Venture (eSGR JV)	JOSE Solís Hernández	Representative
ERTMS	RODRIGUES Renato	Observer (Presentation Agenda Point 8) (remotely)
	ROMAN Treydel	Observer (Presentation Agenda Point 8) (remotely)
FAIVELEY TRANSPORT	MATTEO Frea	Representative (remotely)
FREQUENTIS	GRAF Guenter	Representative (remotely)
FSI	PIFFERI Davide	Representative (remotely)
HITACHI RAIL	TROMBETTA Antonella	Representative (remotely)
	SALVATORE Iovino	Observer (Presentation Agenda Point 8) (remotely)
INDRA TALGO	GONZÁLEZ Alfredo	Alternate (remotely)
INFRASTRUTURAS DE PORTUGAL – leader of the PT Alliance	FIGUEIRA Patricia	Representative (remotely)
	GANHAO Francisco	Alternate

Norwegian Rail Directorate	SAETHRE Preben	Representative (remotely)
KNORR-BREMSE	HILSE Hans-Christian	Representative
ÖBB	TOPAL Mark	Representative (remotely)
	STROHMEIER Flora	Alternate (remotely)
PKP	JANCEWICZ Zbigniew	Representative (remotely)
NS/PRO RAIL	ZIJLSTRA Hotske	Alternate (remotely)
SIEMENS MOBILITY	KAMINSKY Ralf	Alternate
SNCF	CHERON Christophe	Representative
STRUKTON	SAMSON Henk	Alternate
TRAFIKVERKET	CAROLIN Anders	Representative
VOESTALPINE	UWE Ossberger	Observer (remotely)
XLAB	NEJC Bat	Representative (remotely)
European Union Agency for Railway	GHERGHINESCU Oana	Observer
ERRAC	ARTUR FOJUD	Observer
SRG	HALTUF Miroslav	Observer
SSG	DI FEBBRARO Angela	Observer (remotely)
EU-RAIL	TRAVAINI Giorgio	Executive Director
	FURIO Nicolas	Observer

	CONLON Ian	Observer
	LAPTUCA Florentina	Observer
	GONZALEZ GARCIA Isaac	Observer
EU-RAIL	GYARMATI Zsofia	Observer (remotely)

LIST OF DECISIONS:

The following decisions were taken by the Board:

- The Decision n°04/2026 Approving the ranked lists of innovation actions selected for funding and the list of rejected proposals under the Europe's Rail call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02
- Decision n°02/2026 Approving the update of Flagship Initiative 4: Innovative EU high-speed rail corridors to the Annex to the High-Level Paper "A Future Policy-Based Public-Private Partnership for Rail"
- Decision n°03/2026 on the request for the commission agreement for derogation from implementing rules to the staff regulations.

LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS:

The following list was endorsed by the Board

- The process for setting up dedicated groups as amended with the European Commission services for a Governing Board endorsement.

OVERVIEW OF DISCUSSIONS:

INTRODUCTION

The 18th meeting of Europe's Rail Governing Board (GB) was chaired by Mr. Kristian SCHMIDT (European Commission, DG MOVE). The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting, which was held in a hybrid form with in-person and digital participation.

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair welcomed the new Governing Body representatives and presented the draft agenda, which was adopted without amendment. He added a last AOB point on ED due appraisal, that would require EU-Rail ED to exit the meeting.

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA *Declarations of conflict of interest based on the agenda items* 2. INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION 3. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	9.30-10.30
4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 17th GB MEETING OF 02 DECEMBER 2025	10.30-10.35
ITEMS FOR DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD	
5. DECISION ON THE APPROVAL OF LIST OF ACTIONS SELECTED FOR FUNDING FROM THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02 6. DECISION ON THE ANNEX OF THE HIGH-LEVEL PAPER ON "A FUTURE POLICY BASED PUBLIC PRIVATE PARNTERSHIP FOR RAIL" (UPDATE OF FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE 4: INNOVATIVE EU HIGH - SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS) 7. DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR THE COMMISSION'S AGREEMENT FOR DEROGATION FROM IMPLEMENTING RULES TO THE STAFF REGULATIONS	10.35-11.20
ITEM FOR DISCUSSION ON CONTENT	
8. OPERATIONAL HARMONISATION (OF EUROPEAN RAIL CONTROL COMMAND AND SIGNALLING AND OPERATIONAL RULES)	11:20-12:25
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	

9. AOB • INDICATIVE LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE OR AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING • DATE OF THE NEXT GB MEETING: 23 JUNE 2026	12.25-12.30

2. *INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION*

The Chair started his intervention by welcoming the new Members of the GB:

- European Commission (RTD) – Mr Kryzstof Kuik, replacing Ms Joanna DRAKE,
- CEIT - Dr Iñaki Díaz, replacing the main representative, Mr Juan Melendez,
- ProRail – NS - Ms Hotske Zijlstra, replacing the main representative, Mr Julien Cayet,
- Alstom added a third representative (alternate): Mr Nicolas Erb.

He subsequently updated the Governing Board Members on the latest EU policy developments since the last meeting.

He referred to the High-Speed Rail Action Plan, part of the Transport Package, adopted last year and its ambitious goal to triple high-speed traffic by 2050. He highlighted plans to expand the network into a truly European high-speed system, driven by infrastructure development, rolling stock, research, and industrial policy for the rail supply sector.

For the High-Speed Rail Master Plan, the Chair informed Board Members about the ongoing work, which aims to expand the network into a truly European system covering 25 countries, with an estimated cost of about €546 billion. He referred to the need to ensure commercial viability, competition and explore financing opportunities through investors. Several models of investments are currently being considered, and a meeting with investment banks is scheduled for 24 April to further advance these discussions.

The Chair underlined that the objective is to position high-speed rail as part of Europe's industrial strategy, rather than solely as a transport policy. He also noted that the research dimension is being developed, under the coordination of EU-Rail's Executive Director.

Regarding the proposal for revising the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) regulation, which the Commission plans to present in the second half of 2026, he highlighted the intention of making vehicle authorisation and safety certification processes faster and more cost-efficient and thereby reducing the burden on the applicants. Other key priorities include removing barriers to interoperability by accelerating the removal of obsolete national rules, and a more robust safety monitoring. He also emphasized the aim of giving a leading role for ERA in the roll-out of harmonised digital systems, including ERTMS and FRMCS, and establishing the Agency as a digital system authority. He also pointed to the growing international dimension, noting increasing global interest in cooperation and support to candidate and neighbouring countries, such as Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans, to align with

European Standards. Ensuring that ERA is adequately equipped with human and financial resources, and will play a central role in delivering its tasks in full.

Oana GHERGHINESCU, Executive Director of ERA, discussed the proposed amendment to the Agency's regulations. She urged Board members to support the process to ensure objectives are met on time, noting that these changes would provide significant value to members.

Andrea GENTILI, from DG RTD, on behalf of the newly appointed Director, Krzysztof Kuik, provided an update on ongoing FP10 and ECF interinstitutional negotiations, in particular in relation to partnerships. He noted that, as of early March, the draft position of ITRE Committee of the EP (Heler's Report) on the FP10 proposal underlines the importance of partnerships for enhancing competitiveness and at the same time expresses support for the EC proposal for rationalising the partnerships landscape via a portfolio approach. This draft report includes a proposal to allocate at least EUR 2 billion for each partnership, to ensure critical mass and focus on strategic areas for EU industrial competitiveness. Concerning the Specific Programme, the ITRE position of the EP (Ripassi's Report) goes in the same direction. A PGA (partial general approach) on FP10/ECF is expected for the end of May (Competitiveness Council) still within the Cypriot Presidency.

He further indicated that the Commission is expected to adopt the Single Basic Act (SBA) for Joint Undertakings in the new FP10 by the end of the year, with the aim of supporting EU sustainable competitiveness, the EU strategic autonomy and closing the innovation gaps.. Ongoing work across Commission services is currently focused on preparing the consultation phase. The corresponding Call for Evidence of the SBA is planned to be published still in April, for feedback from the stakeholders for 4 weeks. The key challenges to be addressed include insufficient investments from the private sectors, the fragmentation of innovation ecosystems, and delays in uptake of innovation. In addition, he reports that on 26 March discussions started with the Member States in the context of the Partnership Knowledge Hub (PKH) on the portfolio of partnerships. In view of the PKH, partnerships should link FP10 and ECF and other projects to make sure to increase and accelerate their impact.

To conclude, Andrea Gentili reminded that the interinstitutional process on FP10 and ECF is still ongoing, and thus, at this stage, no assumptions can be made regarding the establishment of JUs in any areas. The outcome of this ongoing process will determine the future of JUs, and it is essential to await its completion before drawing any conclusions or making decisions about their potential creation. The Chair reaffirmed DG Move commitment to the creation of a future of rail JU, noting a critical lack of private sector investment in research, its eco-system fragmentation and the need to accelerate implementation and promote startups. Despite rail not being perceived as a high-tech industry compared to areas like microchips, supercomputers or batteries, the Chair emphasized its strategic importance in light of global competition and rail supply industry ambitions.

The Chair stressed that there is also a simplification drive to rationalise partnerships and joint undertakings. While some sectors can be bundled, rail should not be combined with others, as it is a strategic sector that requires a dedicated approach based on co-creation and cooperation, rather than competition. The focus should be on connectivity, increasing TRLs, and pushing research towards deployment. At the same time, the current context in the Council shows that some Member States are considering cutting funding, despite the Parliament generally being supportive.

The Executive Director of Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-Rail), Giorgio Travaini, stated that there is also a commitment for a successor of EU-Rail from the private members, being voiced out even by CEOs, available on Europe's rail website: https://rail-research.europa.eu/latest-news/ceos-of-europes-rail-private-members-reaffirm-their-commitment-to-future-rail-partnership/. With the use of FP10 with ECF in a next rail Joint Undertaking would be a game changer as capitalising on all the work being done by EU-Rail the acceleration of adoption into the network the needed system adaptations would allow us to achieve the Single European Rail Area and increased competitiveness. Some Member States, such as Austria in the Industrial Strategy from the Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure: https://www.bmimi.gv.at/service/presse/hanke/2026/0116-industriestrategie.html (page 754), are already voicing out their interest in the continuation of the EU Rail.

The Chair stressed the importance of making the case for the future of the EU Rail, internally with their respective ministries.

Miroslav HALTUF, the SRG Chair, noted that the SRG members are discussing a possible transport ministerial declaration in support of the continuation of EU-Rail. He also related the possibility of a further discussion during the International Trasport Forum in May that will be also attended by EU-Rail.

The Chair also mentioned the informal Transport Council scheduled for 28 April, where rail is on the agenda.

3. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director welcomed the Members and introduced the new EU-Rail colleague, Florentina LAPTUCA, that would be the new secretariat of the Governing Board.

He thanked Members for submitting their annual conflict of declarations, noting that only a few are outstanding. He further on provided a detailed overview of the Innovation Pillar (IP) activities, emphasizing that results are coming out on various ongoing projects.

During the Flagship Project 3 presentation, where reducing inspection time and costs is a key focus as well as improving maintenance techniques towards predictive solutions, the Chair intervened to express condolences to Spain regarding the recent train accident near Córdoba at Adamos. David-Ibán VILLALMANZO (ADIF) thanked the group for their support during this difficult time. He noted that the EU-Rail work on way side monitoring and detection for precursors is vital to reduce such events as much as possible. It is important to have an extended participation in making way side monitoring aligned with maintenance policies.

Oana GHERGHINESCU (ERA), emphasised that we should move the interest from infrastructure to the rolling stock and innovation on monitoring. After the Gothard accident attention has been put on broken wheels. The service monitoring is still manual, hence the necessity to go for innovative practices in both infrastructure and rolling stock.

The Chair emphasized the human and economic impact of the Spain accident, urging investment in preventative technologies. The Executive Director, supported by the EC, called for proactive implementation of pre-deployment activities (as emphasised on the High-Level Paper setting the ground for a possible next rail JU) rather than reactive measures, and provided updates on the System Pillar and the High-level Deployment Group (DpG) achievements. Furthermore, the ED proposed, and the Governing Board endorsed, the processes for setting-up dedicated subgroup(s) to assist on ad hoc basis the high-level Core Group as well as the creation of FRMCS and DAC deployment sub-groups to advance EU-Rail's deployment goals, as outlined in the meeting presentation.

Information points on various topics were also provided by the Executive Director. These are the following:

- The Call for Proposals 2026-01 was published on 04 February 2026 and will remain open until 07 May 2026. An Info Day was held on 09 February 2026, attracting more than 260 participants, a record in terms of attendance, demonstrating strong interest in the call and leading to high expectations regarding the number of proposals.
- Recent operational calls for tenders were presented, including:
    - Framework contracts for "Locomotive fleet retrofit and engineering solutions for DAC (and ERTMS)", with awarded contractors published in the EU Official Journal. The overall value of the framework contracts amounts to EUR 3,000,000 over a maximum duration of 48 months. A first specific contract was launched in March 2026.
    - Framework contracts for "Strategic Advice to Europe's Rail", with a total value of EUR 1,200,000 over 48 months. A first specific contract was signed in December 2025, with additional contracts planned.
- Upcoming operational calls for tenders included in the Annual Work Programme 2026 were outlined. These concern:
    - The implementation of framework contracts supporting the EU-Rail System Pillar activities, with an estimated budget of EUR 8,000,000 and indicative timeline in the second and third quarters of 2026.
    - A framework contract on "Passenger Perspective in Rail Transformation", with an estimated budget of EUR 50,000.
- The outcomes of the State Representatives Group (SRG) meeting held on 19 February 2026 were presented. This included the adoption of amendments to the SRG Rules of Procedure, the presentation of the draft Work Programme 2027, and updates on EU-Rail ongoing activities, and the future of EU-Rail.

- The outcomes of the Scientific Steering Group (SSG) meeting held on 18 February 2026 were also reported. This included the adoption of amendments to the SSG Rules of Procedure, discussions on the draft Work Programme 2027, and advice provided on flagship projects.
- An update on communication, dissemination, and stakeholder relations activities was provided. This covered key events such as the Rail Forum Europe, the EIM Chairs and Speakers Annual Event, RailTech Europe, InnoTrans, Connecting Europe Days and a side event to be communicated soon. -Action, the European Start-up Prize, highlighting engagement with stakeholders and promotion of EU-Rail activities.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director for a very complete and comprehensive presentation and opened the floor to any comments.

SRG Chair, Miroslav HALTUF, informed of the new State Representative Members that he welcomed in the last SRG meeting. He highlighted the positive, collaborative relationships with Switzerland and Israel, noting their valuable contributions to coordination efforts.

Further, he mentioned the possible new members of the SRG, especially CH, IL; the new association agreement with JP is expected (currently cooperation at observers' level) as well as with Australia. Andrea GENTILI mentioned that with IL the situation is challenging for the moment, the association agreement with CH is signed and formalised already, while the agreement with JP was not formalised yet.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 17th GB MEETING OF 2 December 2026

The Chair invited participants to provide any further feedback on the draft minutes of the last GB meeting. All received comments had already been incorporated in the version shared on 16 December 2026.

The Europe's Rail Governing Board adopted the minutes without any further changes.

ITEMS FOR DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

After confirming that the required quorum for any decision to be taken was granted, the Chair opened the decision section.

5. DECISION ON THE APPROVAL OF THE RANKED LISTS OF INNOVATION ACTIONS SELECTED FOR FUNDING AND THE LIST OF REJECTED PROPOSALS UNDER THE EUROPE'S RAIL CALL FOR PROPOSALS HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02

In line with Articles 11 (Confidentiality) and 12 (Conflict of interest) of the Governing Board Rules of Procedures, as well as to the Governing Board Code of Conduct, the Chair invited private Members who were in Conflict of Interest with this point for decision, to remain silent and abstain from voting.

Following, the Executive Director explained that for the Europe's Rail call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02 already two private members declared conflict of interest, Xlab and DLR. Subsequently, all other private members present in the meeting (online or physically) declared themselves in conflict during the meeting itself.

The Executive Director presented the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-02. He indicated that on 8 October 2025 the EU-RAIL published the call for proposals, and opened for submission on 30 October 2025 with a deadline of 11 February 2026. An evaluation was carried out according to the rules on proposal submission and evaluation laid down in the EU-RAIL Work Programme 2025-2026. The Call Evaluation Report (Annex 1) contains the results of the evaluations, including statistics related to the proposals submitted, results of the technical evaluation, the proposed call ranked list(s) based on independent experts ranking, as well as those proposals which are below the threshold.

The Executive Director underlined that according to Article 19.4(j) of the SBA, the Executive Director shall "submit for approval to the Governing Board the list of actions to be selected for funding by the joint undertaking", and according to Article 17.2(u) of the SBA, the Governing Board shall "[...] approve the list of actions selected for funding".

He indicated that the total budget for the call is EUR 148,200,000.00. The call covers the ten topics and types of actions. Following the past scientific advice from the Scientific Steering Group to the Governing Board, the approach was adjusted in this call: instead of having a ranking list per topic for Exploratory Research (01, 02, and 03), all proposals were ranked in the same list. Based on the result of evaluation, all the topics have been covered with at least one proposal, except for the Exploratory Research topic on extending the rail network of PhDs where proposals are in the reserve list. Two proposals received a better ranking on the project related to studies on innovation in climate finance for rail.

A total of 30 Countries participated, of which 22 from EU Member States, 8 Associated Countries (Norway, UK, Albania, Switzerland, Turkey, Serbia, Ukraine and North Macedonia).

The evaluation of proposals was carried out between 13/02/2026 and 23/03/2026. The evaluation committee/panel was composed of 24 external experts and an additional 5 external experts were contracted as recorders (one per panel). A total of 29 external experts were involved in the evaluation, in addition to the 3 external ethics experts who performed the ethics evaluation.

The ED also recommended to take note of the fact that any substantial misalignment or inconsistency not satisfactorily addressed during the Grant Preparation Phase will be reported back to the Governing Board to establish a possible way forward, including the termination of the preparation phase without signature of the concerned Grant(s).

The Chair opened the floor for comments. Michael Meyer Zu HÖRSTE, from DLR, raised a question concerning the proposals replying to the topic HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA6-01, indicating that he was unable to identify the second proposal. The Executive Director clarified that proposals failing to pass the eligibility check or inadmissibility check are not evaluated by independent experts, they are identifiable in the annex statistic tables.

Further on, the Chair requested clarification regarding the possibility of transferring the administrative budget to the operational budget to possibly fund projects in the reserve list. The Executive Director indicated that a proposal could be submitted to the next Governing Board meeting to approve a transfer and use of budget from administrative to operational expenditure, pending availability from the currently ongoing reconciliation exercise.

Article 17.2(u) establishes that the Governing Board shall "(…) approve the list of actions selected for funding". On this basis, the Chair submitted the draft decision referred to the results of the evaluation of the EU-Rail call for proposals of 2025-02 to the vote of the Members.

Decision

GB adopted the Decision n°04/2026 on approving the ranked lists of innovation actions selected for funding and the list of rejected proposals under the Europe's Rail call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02

6. DECISION ON APPROVING THE UPDATE OF FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE 4: INNOVATIVE EU HIGH-SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS TO THE ANNEX TO THE HIGH-LEVEL PAPER A FUTURE POLICY-BASED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR RAIL

The Executive Director highlighted that EU-Rail, together with all members, has worked intensively on finalising an upgraded version of the High-Level Paper annex (Flagship Initiative 4), addressing the challenges related to a harmonised high speed European network.

The document is intended to be a living document, supporting future improvements and addressing the challenges of a harmonised, fully digital, climate-friendly, and resilient high-speed system. It also focuses on unifying traffic management, advancing technology, and further harmonising the system. The paper reflects the comments received from members, in particular regarding the adaptation of the distributed paper for pre-deployment activities in automation considered feasible up to GoA 3.

At this stage, the paper is not yet fully comprehensive, as it is intended to evolve depending on the decisions of the European Commission and the Council regarding the continuation of EU-Rail.

The Chair opened the floor for comments before moving to adoption.

Michael Meyer Zu HÖRSTE, from DLR, on behalf of the private member provided the following statement of support: *We support the document in its current form as a necessary step towards a next rail partnership. It is important to give an impression about content and targets of the next partnership. At the same time, we consider it to be a living document. At a later stage, its structure and content may need to be further enriched, taking into account the actual available budget as well as the final composition of the next partnership. The partnership* *may evolve with new partners joining, in particular if a larger budget allows more parties to invest and contribute with their specific required expertise.*

The Chair agreed that a strategy and a draft programme should be aligned with the available budget and welcomed the participation of new partners.

Decision

GB adopted the decision n°02/2026 on the approval of the update of Flagship Initiative 4: Innovative EU high-speed rail corridors to the Annex to the High-Level Paper "A Future Policy-Based Public-Private Partnership for Rail"

7. *DECISION N°03/2026 ON THE REQUEST FOR THE COMMISSION AGREEMENT FOR DEROGATION FROM IMPLEMENTING RULES TO THE STAFF REGULATIONS. COMMISSION DECISION C(2025) 7357, OF 18 NOV 2025 ON THE GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING ARTICLE 27 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS OF OFFICIALS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ARTICLE 12(1) OF THE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF OTHER SERVANTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ("GEO-BALANCE")*

EU-RAIL considers this Commission Decision is not suitable for application by analogy to EU-RAIL due to its design for a Commission-like environment with large and predictable AD5–AD8 populations. EU-Rail shall request a derogation to the EC rules before the adoption of specific rules adapted to the JU framework. Pursuant to Article 110(2) of the Staff Regulations, the Governing Board shall first mandate the Executive Director to seek the Commission's agreement to derogate those rules prior to the adoption of the specific rules for EU-RAIL by the Governing Board.

The Chair proposed the decision for adoption.

Decision

GB adopted the Decision n°03/2026 approving the derogation from the Commission from implementing rules to the staff regulations

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

8. *OPERATIONAL HARMONISATION (OF EUROPEAN RAIL CONTROL COMMAND AND SIGNALLING AND OPERATIONAL RULES)*

Ian CONLON (Head of Unit, System Pillar)

highlighted the need for a simplified, cost-efficient railway, and the importance of a harmonized control-command and signalling (CCS) system architecture. He emphasized that industry-wide collaboration is critical to this success. He addressed the current state of ERTMS deployment, noting that a lack of harmonization has resulted in fragmented, slow, and costly implementations—including over 150 different ETCS system compatibility types. This is because the current ETCS and radio specifications are partial and do not cover the full system, leaving key elements non-harmonized. Thus even if Infrastructure Managers wish to implement ERTMS only signalling there needs to be national development and thus national variation. This variation introduces huge complexity into the European signalling system and makes it very difficult to cost effectively maintain and improve the system. There is although a potential solution – to develop a harmonised approach for Level 2 implementation for the whole Control Command and Signalling system. This is the goal of the System Pillar work.

Rodriguez RENATO, from ERTMS explained the steps that are being taken to develop the full CCS specifications and harmonised operational rules.

Danilo IOVINO, from Hitachi Rail STS, said that the initiative aims to provide a blueprint to support the sector's transition towards a harmonised CCS system by establishing common operational and technical foundations, while promoting European solutions and ensuring compatibility with existing investments. The approach also foresees migration support through adapter solutions, deployment of Trackside Asset Control Systems/Eulynx-defined assets, and pilot activities to validate specifications and integration into service.

In this context, the planned delivery roadmap was presented, structured across Baseline 0 (Minimum Viable Product), Baseline 1 and Baseline 2, following a phased approach to progressively extend functionality and move towards a fully harmonised system.

Ian CONLON then took the floor to present the summary and outline the next steps, highlighting the importance of testing, piloting, and validating specifications as they evolve. He emphasized the objective of supporting the sector in developing a European full CCS based on ERTMS Level 2 solution without signals, which represents an opportunity to significantly reduce implementation variability, complexity, and costs.

In the coming months, a substantial volume of SP outputs becomes available, it will be crucial to secure sufficient commitment from the sector to review and further refine operational rules and related specifications.

He also underlined the need to anticipate and support these activities, particularly for pilot lines and pre-deployment actions, potentially within the framework of a third partnership.

(Full details are provided in the GB meeting PowerPoint presentation)

The Chair stressed the need to reduce both complexity and costs, noting that previous approaches have not delivered the expected results. He underlined that cost reduction should go hand in hand with simplification and a system-wide perspective, of support, test and deployment, and emphasised the importance of securing full endorsement by the sector.

Mark TOPAL (ÖBB) stated that discussions on harmonising the technical part of the sector to reduce costs through simplification have been ongoing for 10–15 years, without achieving the desired results. He noted that what is missing is an understanding of why the system remains too costly and too slow, and how lessons can be learned from the past. He questioned how cost reduction will ultimately be achieved through KPIs, highlighting that the current perspective is mainly that of infrastructure managers and that a full system view is needed to address this challenge.

Christophe CHERON (SNCF) stated that ERTMS Level 2 provides an opportunity to move beyond historical rules. He noted that there are different ways of operating level 2, but at least between German and French implementations there was 80% commonality of approach, requiring open-mindedness to consider what is truly needed.

Anders CAROLIN (Trafikverket) noted that rules have developed organically, increasing variability and making it difficult to identify the safest solution across systems. He stressed that safety aspects and sub-systems need to be appropriately negotiated.

Oana GHERGHINESCU (ERA) highlighted the lack of transparency and flexibility in the current CCS approach, describing it as fragmented. She suggested that a combination of operational and engineering harmonisation could address this, supported by standard rules and KPIs. She emphasised that standardisation should aim to reduce procurement time, accelerate delivery, and enable faster authorisation. She also stressed the importance of involving NSAs to assess safety concerns, consolidating arguments, and ensuring adherence to harmonised operational points, while supporting the transition from legacy systems.

Manuel LIANOS (DB) supported the work and approach of the System Pillar and indicated that Member States should also potentially be involved in discussing the outputs, as they are a main stakeholder with regard to the implementation of operational rules.

Miroslav Haltuf (Chair of SRG) referred to national specificities and the need for common competition rules, noting that national frameworks may restrict market access and increase costs for operators and suppliers. He underlined that system complexity cannot be fully eliminated and pointed to gaps in addressing emergency situations, including cyberattacks. Echoing this, Ian CONLON warned that continued market variability is unsustainable and stressed that deep, long-term European harmonisation is the only way to reduce costs and boost efficiency.

On the operational side, Christophe Cheron (SNCF) welcomed the tangible progress made by the System Pillar, emphasizing that future Level 2 implementation must maintain strict coordination and transparency. Mark Topal (ÖBB) reinforced this, advocating for active operator involvement to drive cost reductions.

The Executive Director concluded that success would depend on mobilising the necessary resources at this stage, particularly for reviewing System Pillar deliverables. He highlighted that accelerating progress is possible if the Governing Board asks for it, it will then require mobilisation of additional resources and/or prioritisation of existing ones with a clear implementation plan for a pilot test.

The Chair closed the discussion stating that the overall System Pillar approach was supported and the call for action clear. He urged to shift away from national compromises and toward standardised, safety-first European solutions. The meeting solidified a shared goal: developing a uniform, efficiently managed system backed by dedicated, cross-sector resources.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

INDICATIVE LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE OR AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

- 2nd GB meeting:
    - Call 2026 award
    - CAAR 2025
    - Final Accounts 2025
    - Possible amendment AWP26
- 3rd GB meeting:
    - AWP 2027
    - IKAA Plan update
    - Amendment AWP26

DATE OF THE NEXT GB MEETING:

- 23 June AM
- 24 November AM (+ General Assembly on the 24th PM & the 25th AM)

Done in Brussels, on 9 April 2026.

Signed:

Magda KOPCZYNSKA

Chairperson of the Governing Board

Electronically signed on 29/06/2026 09:32 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121