

# **Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe**

## **18<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting,**

**18 November 2021**

*Co-Chairs: Alain Quinet, Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Affairs, SNCF RESEAU & Kristian Schmidt, Director Land Transport, DG MOVE*

---

### **1. Welcome**

---

Alain Quinet introduced the meeting by reminding that the objectives set by the COP26 regarding CO2 emissions and energy savings were perfectly consistent with the European Green Deal.

Similarly to 2020, in 2021 the rail sector has been impacted by the ongoing COVID crisis.

Traffic has been restored and ridership is increasing despite new uncertainties, and the movement overall still remains under pre-crisis levels. The Recovery Plan has moved forward, and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF2) has entered an operational phase. The Connecting Europe Express has proven to be a success highlighting that challenges remain concerning interoperability. Lastly, following the COP26 it appears necessary that we increase the pace to meet the objective of a net zero carbon transport.

Within PRIME, IMs have worked, throughout the year:

- in the short run, liaising with the Commission on ongoing actions,
- and on a longer horizon, to promote interoperability and benchmark, to assess their vision of the impact of EU policies.

---

### **2. Adoption of agenda and approval of the summary of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting**

---

### **3. Upcoming Commission initiatives**

*Kristian Schmidt, Director Land Transport, DG MOVE*

---

The EU seeks to double high speed traffic by 2030 and triple it before 2050, to double freight transport by 2050. These objectives will be difficult to achieve but are necessary.

In order to do so, rail transport should become more efficient, notably through the optimization of capacity with TTR and DCM. Ticketing is also essential. The Commission may need to act on this issue as it is the main reason evoked by EU citizens when asked why they do not take the train.

Despite the implementation of the Fourth Railway Package, obstacles remain, notably on cross border, capacity management and rolling stock. Interoperability and ERTMS have to be accelerated.

The Connecting Europe express has been a wonderful adventure. However, it has shown that barriers remain.

During the European Year of Youth, initiatives set to facilitate the access to train for young people should be highlighted.

Besides, an important topic is the skill shortage in the rail sector. Apprenticeships are important in encouraging people to work in the rail sector.

Concerning COVID, the EU has approved all emergency regulations but the situation is still very difficult and there could be an extension for reduction of TACs.

Maurizio Castelletti presented the third evaluation of data delivery under regulation 2020/1429 on COVID.

The number of PSO passenger trains circulating on the network between January and September 2021 stabilised compared to the same period in 2019. However, the number of passenger commercial trains between January and September 2021 was still 21.5% lower than in the same period in 2019, showing there was no recovery in 2021.

The number of freight trains circulating on the network partially recovered the lost ground even if in 2021 it was still 2.5% lower than in the corresponding period in 2019.

---

#### 4. Strategic discussion on management of investment projects

---

- **Presentation 1: Upcoming TEN-T review and the new legal framework on Streamlining of TENT projects : *Herald Ruijters, Director Investment, Innovative & Sustainable Transport, DG MOVE***

The TEN-T revision is an opportunity to modernize the current legal framework and to step up efforts in aligning TEN-T with the new priorities of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

The new Regulation should include firm incentives to shift transport demand towards more sustainable forms of transport, provide for the gradual development of the TEN-T in three steps (2030, **2040** and 2050), and, the creation of European Transport Corridors through the integration of CNC and RFC. It should also provide for an increased focus on multimodality and interoperability between modes and transport nodes, a better integration of urban nodes into the TEN-T, and, the assurance of interlinkages with AFIR and ITS proposals.

Concerning the TEN-T governance, the role of the European Coordinators will be reinforced through the institutionalization of their presence in cross-border entities. There will be a harmonization and streamlining of the existing TEN-T monitoring and governance tools through the adoption of the Coordinators' work plans every four years and an annual status report.

Further discussions on the implementation of the regulation will be organised with the IMs in order to take into account corridors.

Under the TEN-T Revision, the priority will be to ensure the stability of the current network and in particular the core network. There will be updates of the maps concerning the statistics of the transport nodes, the integration of RFC with CNC, the alignment of TEN-T with military mobility network and a more precise definition and identification of urban nodes.

The alignment of European Transport Corridors will also be moved from CEF Regulation to TEN-T Regulation.

The TEN-T Streamlining Directive seeks to address the deficiencies of procedures impacting the implementation of TEN-T. These procedures are often very complex and a certain planning is needed. The directive concerns pre-identified cross-border links and missing links of the TEN-T core network corridors and projects exceeding 300 million euros on the core network corridors. Member States can choose to extend the scope to all projects on the core network or even of the comprehensive network.

- **Presentation 2: ERTMS deployment – current state of play, outlook for the future – Matthias Ruete, European Coordinator for ERTMS, DG MOVE**

Following the COP26, it appears that rail, as a sustainable mode of transport, will increasingly be in competition with other modes of transport.

Most CNC lines scheduled under the EDP for 2023 are operational or under construction. The deployment on the CNC lines scheduled for 2030 is also taking momentum.

Based on current plans and commitments, by 2040, the vast majority of the TEN-T Network and beyond will be equipped. A number of Member States will have equipped their whole network by then. According to national plans, it is expected that 10 countries will have achieved full ECTS coverage on their network, and in total no class-B system will be required on board in 14 countries.

Operators do not fit or retrofit their fleet since they do not see the need to invest in ERTMS because the lines in their area of operation are not equipped with ERTMS and/or they can still use class B systems.

Rules are extensively interpreted. There are more exceptions than rules on ERTMS: less than half of the new vehicles put on the market were equipped with ERTMS between 2015 and 2019 due to existing exemptions.

### **Conclusions**

- Change from isolated “ERTMS islands” to commercially significant networks equipped with ERTMS;
- Prioritisation of ERTMS deployment on specific sections (missing links) would enhance international freight operations;
- There are very large benefits to be reaped by Infrastructure Managers by achieving a coordinated ERTMS deployment by 2040 coupled with a class B decommissioning;
- Class B systems will become niche markets and maintenance costs will rise;
- Vehicles need to be equipped, otherwise the benefits of trackside rollout will not be achieved. ERTMS should now become standard equipment of the rolling stock;
- ERTMS on-board will gradually become a replacement for class B systems rather than an additional system;
- Around 22,000 vehicles (60% of the EU fleet operating on the CN) will reach the end of life and therefore are expected to be renewed in the next ten years. This is an opportunity to render the fleet green and digital.

Revisions of the TEN-T Regulation and the CCS TSI should allow advancing ERTMS deployment deadlines on the comprehensive network, setting out class B decommissioning deadlines and significantly increasing the proportion of new trains equipped with ERTMS.

In order to move towards a common system moving to 2040, we need a manageable deadline, a European governance in terms of ERTMS, a European deployment plan, one coordinator in each Member State and make sure that finances are deployed in a correct way.

- **Presentation 3: The challenge of conducting investment projects from an IM perspective, Alain Quinet, Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Affairs, SNCF R (FR)**

There is a paradox between a renewed European ambition with an objective of carbon neutrality by 2050 in the EU and the reduction of transport sector emissions by 90%, and a lack of fresh money, skill shortages, stringent regulations (noise, biodiversity...), as well as costs and delays in the rail sector.

There is also an issue with the environmental and regulatory requirements and popular acceptability. There are additional costs due to additional regulatory and environmental requirements. Besides, extended duration and increasing legal recourses are to be expected due to the sensitivity of the public living near the infrastructure. The competitiveness of the rail sector is at stake because it is increasingly costly. Concerning costs and delays, IMs must focus on providing an accurate evaluation of costs and correct risk provisions.

Main implications :

- Long term financial visibility as an incentive to invest in industrial capacities and human resources ;
  - Go slow or go fast : mature projects help avoiding unexpected cost increase and additional delays ;
  - Local discussions and arrangements with stakeholders are better than stricter regulations ;
- Economic model must include duly assessed risk provisions and incentives.

- **Discussion**

During the discussion, IMs highlighted:

- Capacity problems, requiring additional infrastructure
- The need for ERTMS as a basis for digitalisation
- The shortage of contractors for construction of tunnels, bridges, earthworks, due to the high number of ongoing projects.
- Dependence on raw materials and exposure to related price increases
- The current focus on national planning (based on national funding) and need to find a European perspective
- Cost of compliance with environmental rules (e.g. compensation measures)
- Need to further analyse and discuss these constraints in PRIME.
- CZ is planning major investment in high speed lines to improve international connections (Vienna – Berlin in four hours, connections to neighbouring countries). Will also improve existing national capacity, which is insufficient. Coordination with neighbouring IMs is frequent and intense.
- Italy is splitting the grants and loans from the Recovery and Resilience Facility between building and maintaining the network, upgrading of urban routes, ERTMS, actions to improve infrastructure resilience, the development of station and development of secondary lines. Between 2022 and 2026, Italy will double investment efforts. It will have a significant impact on economic development and employment. The initiative “public debate” designed to involve local communities will be mandatory for all investment above 4 billion euros.

---

## **5. PRIME deliveries – Subgroups activities – Work Plan 2022**

---

- **Renewal of mandate PRIME industry co-chair**

Alain Quinet was re-elected as PRIME co-chair. He highlighted the important role of PRIME as a platform of cooperation between European infrastructure managers and the Commission that works for the development of rail within the wider frame of European transport and common interest.

- **Presentation and adoption of the PRIME Workplan 2022**

Alain Quinet presented a proposal for upcoming deep dive studies, to be carried out in 2022 and 2023. Proposed topics had been discussed with the co-chairs, chairs of subgroups, and the support team. Deep dives should be focused on a specific topic. They rely on input from subgroups and PRIME members.

In order to boost international passenger traffic, the focus for the next two years should be on night trains, long distance passenger services as market segment and mark ups, the internalization of externalities and the network conditions and impact on traffic.

It was agreed to change the title of the deep dive study on long distance services to “Long distance cross-border passenger rail services as a market segment to promote”. The PRIME work plan 2023 was adopted with this change.

- KPI and benchmarking: *Rui Coutinho (IP)*

Since 2018, the KPI subgroup has been delivering public reports, has cooperated on deep dive. The number of participants in the subgroup is increasing, with currently 24 active members, with 18 of them delivering data publicly through reports.

- Charging: *Maria Alvarez Cuadrado (ADIF)*

Ongoing discussions on the impact of COVID and the measures impacting IMs and RUs. In 2022, fundings in Deep Dive should be completed. The subgroup plans to work on cooperation on charges for international services.

- Finance: *Rik Corman (Prorail), Marco Wilfert (DB Netz)*

In 2020 and 2021, the focus has been on the COVID impact on IMs, the state of play of Recovery package and other financial instruments, ERTMS, Deep dive study on State funding.

The Agenda for 2022 and 2023 is the following :

- The subgroup acts as an ‘intermediary’ between the Commission and rail IMs;
- PRIME deep-dive study on State funding ;
- Alternative financing possibilities for IMs ;
- Funding of climate adaption actions and of climate change related damage to rail infrastructure: Rail infrastructure is vulnerable for climate change. Existing compensation funds and processes are probably not fit for this purpose.

- Digital: *Harald Reisinger (RNE)*

The digital subgroup will continue to discuss and accompany ongoing sector work on digital infrastructure information, digital capacity management and digital train information.

**Next PRIME Plenary:** 23 June

---

## **Joint meeting of PRIME and RU Dialogue**

---

---

### **1. Welcome**

---

---

### **2. Adoption of agenda and approval of the summary of the last joint meeting**

---

The minutes were adopted.

---

### 3. Strategic discussion on timetable redesign and digital capacity management

---

- **Presentations**

- **Timetable redesign and digital capacity management – Introduction, *Philipp Koiser, RailNetEurope***

Smart Capacity Management aims at making modal shift a reality. In order to do so, we need to provide better service to the customers.

TTR for a Smart Capacity Management enables it through easier and more transparent access to capacity, increased capacity supply with the same existing infrastructure and a better coordination at the European level.

The vision for the sector is a capacity for Freight and Passenger needs, efficient planning, advanced planning and alignment of works and optimised request deadlines, harmonized Europe-wide.

Timetable Redesign Incorporates DCM which covers the complete TTR process.

- **Timetable redesign and digital capacity management - what benefits do railway undertakings expect, *Ulla Kempf, SBB Cargo and Sebastian Naundorf, Forum Train Europe***

Even though rail freight and rail passenger services use the full European network, infrastructure is managed mainly nationally, central EU-countries are heavily overbooked, 75-80% of freight train path requests are constantly modified, leftover capacities do not really exist and punctuality could be enhanced.

Passenger and freight RUs need stable market-oriented conditions.

Most passenger and some freight services need long term planning stability in order to compete with air and road. Thus, path commitments are needed earlier in order for rail to be really competitive.

Beside, most freight and some passenger trains need capacity at short notice. There should be a possibility for path commitments beyond timetable periods. Commitments need to be stable.

To ensure European transport streams in the future, the rail sector needs Dimensioning I, Planning II and Safeguarding III.

In order to achieve the objectives set, new tools and processes need to be quickly implemented:

- EU-wide binding harmonized Capacity Usage Concepts,
- A new European capacity allocation process,
- Digital Capacity Management.

In order to achieve these objectives, IMs need to create ambitious plans for implementing these market-oriented elements, share draft plans with their neighbour IMs and their customers for improved alignment and act quickly.

RU Core Expectations for Capacity management are :

- Stability and reliability,
- Fulfilling needs of Passenger customers,
- Fulfilling needs of Freight customers,
- Cross-border harmonization,
- Full implementation,
- Fact-based improvements.

- **Discussion**

RUs highlighted:

- The need to involve RUs in the TTR development and implementation planning. It was agreed to increase transparency, consultation and communication between the parties.
- The need for stability and improved predictability of temporary capacity restrictions. IMs pointed out the tension between the need to grow and enlarge networks, which entails works, and the need to ensure quality. It is necessary to have a good system that is as predictable as possible. IMs need to find the most digestible amount of TCR for clients. The focus could be on fewer lines and rerouting lines. TTR should deliver more transparency. The predictability of TCRs could also be improved using the outputs of Shift2Rail.