

Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe

22nd Plenary Meeting,

1 December 2023, Madrid

Draft Summary Record

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

1. Welcome

2. Adoption of agenda and approval of the summary of the 21st meeting

The agenda and minutes were adopted without change.

3. Ongoing Commission initiatives

Kristian Schmidt, Director Land Transport, DG MOVE

Kristian Schmidt (DG MOVE): As we are nearing the end of the current Commission mandate, DG MOVE is working on a number of files:

- Train Drivers' Directive:

The main goals are facilitating transferability of certificates and overcoming language barriers, either by introducing additional languages or by using digital automatic interpretation tools. The issue of languages remains sensitive. COM aims to balance the need to make the deployment of staff more flexible and efficient with the high costs and challenges involved in language training.

- Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC):

The most important current issues are the setup of a pre-deployment entity and the funding of the deployment of DAC. COM is currently considering how to mobilise resources from all sources for the deployment, which is foreseen to start in 2028.

- Guidelines on Track access charges:

Was discussed at last Plenary. COM has consulted widely, plan to adopt the guidelines in the first half of 2024.

- Telematics applications:

COM and ERA will prepare a revision of the current TAP and TAF frameworks, which will be presented at the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC) in February 2024. Adoption planned for summer 2024.

- Pilot services:
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The Commission has selected 10 pilot services to help establish and improve rail services. We have carried out kick-off meetings with the proposers and are now following up on those meetings. They allow us to see practical problems involved in starting new services. IMs are invited to support cross-border services that operate on their network.

- Solidarity lanes:

Work on the solidarity lanes is ongoing. Russia withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July and proceeded to bomb Odessa, port installations and grain silos. While maritime transport continues, Ukraine also relies on land exports via the Solidarity Lanes. In October, 3.1 Mt of grain was exported through the solidarity lanes, of which 29% by rail. Situation on PL border is difficult due to blockade of truckers. Europe is investing in the reconstruction of Ukraine via CEF.

4. Strategic discussion on challenges of ERTMS deployment

- Presentation: IM perspective, *Alain Quinet, Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Affairs, SNCF R*
- Discussion

Moderator: *Kristian Schmidt, Director Land Transport, DG MOVE*

Speakers for the strategic discussion:

- *Gianpiero Strisciuglio, CEO RFI*
- *Dr. Volker Hentschel - Head of ERTMS Rollout in Germany attached to the Board of DB Netz*
- *Bernard Gustin, CEO Lineas*
- *Michael Peter, Chair of UNIFE and CEO of Siemens Mobility*
- *Klaus Mindel, UNISIG General Manager*
- *Matthias Ruete, European Coordinator for ERTMS, DG MOVE*
- *Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director, European Union Agency for Railways*

The panel discussion addressed different aspects concerning the deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS). Half of the targets for the end of 2023 are achieved, rest is under way, but much to be done.

The benefits will include:

1. **Interoperability:** Facilitate cross-border rail operations.
2. **Safety:** Enhanced safety of railway networks.
3. **Capacity:** Improves network capacity.
4. **Cost Savings:** Cost saving through economies of scale.

Challenges for deployment are:

1. **Interoperability:** Systems across countries and within individual countries must be harmonised. Ideally one single ETCS, to boost competition between operators.
 2. **Timelines:** Planning might be too ambitious.
 3. **Funding & Economies of scale:** Establishing a stable and predictable funding model is crucial. Economies of scale have not materialised yet.
 4. **Regulatory:** Demand for stability on the side of the EU and authorisation. Authorisation should be faster.
 5. **Cost:** Need to be brought down, costs are spiralling.
 6. **Suppliers:** Dependency on limited supplies that reduces market competition.
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Strategic Direction:

1. **Harmonized approach:** Industrial roll out of single systems to improve competitiveness. Shift from corridor-based to national rollout.
2. **Stable Governance and Funding:** European comprehensive vision (TEN-T goals), long-term governance, and multi-annual funding.
3. **Industry:** Homologation takes too long; suppliers are not profitable. Need for larger contract volumes.
4. **Standardization:** Stop developing national systems, or even multiple different system per country (DE/NL). Improve modularity of systems.
5. **Simplification:** Rules and requirements are a burden.

Conclusion: The panel emphasized the urgent need for harmonised comprehensive strategies across Europe to ensure successful ERTMS deployment.

5. PRIME deliveries – Subgroup activities – Work Plan 2024

Alain Quinet (SNCF R): In the past year, PRIME has given a lot of input to Commission initiatives. PRIME work in 2024 will be focused on preparing the necessary transition and implementation for these initiatives:

- In July 2023, the Commission presented a legislative proposal on the use of rail capacity, which assigns a strengthened role for PRIME as European network of infrastructure managers, with specific tasks and responsibilities.
- Guidelines for setting rail track access charges are expected to be published by the Commission in early in 2024. Both documents affect core business areas of infrastructure managers.
- Benchmarking performance continues to be a key source of knowledge and improvement for PRIME.
- No deep dive studies on new topics are planned, but some may be necessary in future in the context of this work on implementation.

- Formation of a task force to identify transition measures towards new functions under the capacity proposal - *Alain Quinet, PRIME co-chair*

Alain Quinet (SNCF R):

- The Commission proposal for a Regulation on the use of railway infrastructure capacity in the single European railway area (COM (2023) 443/2), which the Commission presented in July, foresees a strengthened and more operational role for the European Network of Infrastructure Managers (ENIM). Still in negotiations between co-legislators. For a swift implementation following adoption, proposal for new task force to analyse and prepare necessary changes to the structure and working procedures of PRIME, based on a review of responsibilities, competences and tasks outlined in the Commission proposal for the European network of infrastructure managers and the Network Coordinator. Should the Plenary decide to set up this group, the Commission co-chair would be Kathrin Obst.

Kathrin Obst (DG MOVE):

- Proposal to adopt this remit for the new group and to include the new group in the PRIME work programme. The subgroup should present an intermediate state of play to the PRIME Plenary in June, with a view to being able to put forward a proposal for a revision of the statutes for the PRIME Plenary in November 2024.
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- This is not hands-on work that IMs do on capacity allocation, but more governance structures and procedures of PRIME/ENIM and its relationship with the network coordinator.
- Looking for IMs to nominate their representatives. Deadline for nominations is the beginning of the Christmas break.
- Have two applicants for co-chairing on behalf of the IMs.

Alain Quinet (SNCF R): See no objections to creation of the group from IMs, so will be included in work programme.

- Presentation and adoption of the PRIME Workplan 2024 (5' presentation per subgroup + 10' discussion)

– Safety culture: *Ludwig Koschutnig, OeBB, Michaela Strohschneider, DG MOVE*

- Alain Quinet (SNCF R): the subgroup on safety culture has achieved its objectives so we propose to close it. We thank the chair and members of the group.
- Josef Doppelbauer (ERA) gave background on recent activities, including following the accident in Greece.

– KPI and benchmarking: *Raymond Geurts van Kessel, ProRail, Jude Carey, Irish Rail*

– Charging: *Maria Alvarez Cuadrado, ADIF, Vincenzo Carpinelli, DG MOVE*

– Digital: *Harald Reisinger, RailNetEurope, Keir Fitch, DG MOVE*

Chairs of the KPI and benchmarking, charging and digital subgroups presented their parts of the work programme 2024. The work programme was adopted without changes.

- Renewal of mandate PRIME industry co-chair

Alain Quinet was confirmed as PRIME industry co-chair (no other candidates) and thanked IMs for their trust, as well as the Commission co-chair and his team for the good cooperation.

- Publication of paper on climate change adaptation

IMs adopted the decision to publish the paper on climate change adaptation. The paper will be published in the week of 11 December.

- Alain Quinet (SNCF R): Originally work of taskforce would end, but recently asked for input by the EIB and by consultants working on a study for the Commission, so intend to keep the group for the moment.
- Silvia Angelo (OeBB Infra): Need to adapt our financial reporting, and work on cost of climate change adaptation.

6. Deep dive study on network condition

- Presentation of the study 10', *Ulla Braubach, civity Management Consultants*

- Ulla Braubach (civity Management Consultants) presented main findings of the study.
- A summary has been prepared for possible publication. IMs have time to scrutinize it and send comments until the 20th of December. Will then be published early in the new year.
- Kristian Schmidt (DG MOVE): Politically, the maintenance may be the less attractive than building new infrastructure or funding new operations through PSO in terms of immediate

visibility and is therefore often the lesser priority. This study will give IMs some evidence to show to governments why maintenance is important. We will use the findings in our discussions with Member States.

7. Other business

Next meeting: 27 June 2024 in Brussels.

End of PRIME Meeting
