

Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe

21st Plenary Meeting,

22 June 2023

Summary Record

CCAB-3B

*Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette, European Commission
Rue Froissart 36, Brussels and via Webex*

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

1. Welcome

Alain Quinet (AQ) welcomed participants and gave an overview of PRIME work and achievements since the last Plenary: The four subgroups (KPI, Digital, Safety & Charging) have carried on with their workplan. The task force on climate change is ready to share first results. A workshop on capacity was held in December. Deep dive study on network condition ongoing. AQ thanked the support team for their views and analyses.

2. Adoption of agenda and approval of the summary of the 20th meeting

The agenda was adopted.

The minutes that had been circulated to IMs ahead of the meeting already contained comments from CER, ProRail and OeBB Infra. The summary record was adopted without further changes.

3. Upcoming Commission initiatives

Kristian Schmidt (KS) gave an overview of ongoing/upcoming Commission initiatives:

Solidarity lanes

Supporting Ukraine remains a key priority. Solidarity lanes have been a success, transported volumes were originally rising, but have been going back in March and April. Future extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is unsure.

CEF EU-Ukraine Association Agreement signed on 6 June in Lviv. Ukrainian authorities and companies will be able to apply for funding under future CEF transport calls in the current (2021-2027) programming period. The next call will be launched in September 2023.

Pilot projects to boost cross-border rail

In the Action plan to boost long-distance and cross-border passenger rail of December 2021, the Commission identified 10 actions to remove obstacles to long-distance cross-border rail. The Action plan also introduced "pilot services" as an instrument for operators and competent authorities to address obstacles on the ground, based on an actual rail service under preparation. On 31 January 2023, the Commission announced it will support 10 pilot projects to establish new rail services or improve existing ones.

Kick-off meetings with the proposers have been held. Follow-up of the kick-off meetings is underway / under preparation. Support by RNE has been secured, especially for cross-border capacity coordination, and several infrastructure managers are affected by the pilot services and asked to cooperate.

Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs)

On 30 March 2023, the Railway Interoperability and Safety (RISC) Committee adopted the 2023 revision package amending nine Technical Specifications for rail Interoperability (TSI). Their subsequent adoption by the Commission successfully concludes several years of intense negotiations. This will contribute to the much-needed completion of the Single European Rail Area by an EU-wide harmonisation and simplification of the technical, safety and operational framework for the railways. Formal adoption by the Commission planned for July 2023. Infrastructure Managers should remove national safety and operational rules at IM level that are not in line with the new legal framework.

Train Drivers' Directive

The possibility for train drivers to work seamlessly across borders relies on harmonised certification of drivers. The current Train Drivers' Directive needs to be revised as some of the requirements of the Directive are outdated. The current content of the certificate is of limited value. Language requirements are a complex issue. The Commission's proposal is expected to be adopted after summer 2023.

Taxonomy

On 13 June, the Commission adopted the Sustainable Finance package which includes a new set of measures to strengthen the EU sustainable finance framework in order to support companies and the financial sector, while encouraging the private funding of transition projects and technologies. This will include a new set of EU Taxonomy criteria, including on rail components:

The following activities related to components were included under the climate change mitigation objective:

- Manufacture of rail rolling stock constituents: rail constituents detailed in Point 2.7 of Annex II to Directive (EU) 2016/797 and essential to the environmental performance, operation and functioning over the lifetime of Taxonomy-aligned rail rolling stock.
 - Key rail infrastructure constituents were added to the updated activity "infrastructure for rail transport". The amended criteria cover assembled railway track fixtures and rail constituents detailed in Points 2.2 to 2.6 to Annex II of Directive (EU) 2016/797, linked
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to Taxonomy-aligned rail infrastructure and including digital tools enabling an increase in efficiency, capacity or energy saving.

Rail Market Monitoring report (RMMS)

A trend emerging clearly from the upcoming report is that, despite the progress achieved in liberalising the market, an increasing share of passenger services are operated under the PSO regime: 66% in 2020 versus 60% in 2018. Despite the COVID crisis, rail attracted almost 42 billion Euro worth of investment in 2020, or 94 EUR per inhabitant in the EU. The high-speed network continues to expand, with almost 1500 additional km of lines since 2015.

Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC)

The complexity and scope of this project requires comprehensive preparation and testing, to ensure the transition works. Important progress has already been achieved through the European DAC Delivery Programme (EDDP), under the umbrella of Europe's Rail. The technical requirements of a standardised DAC are already largely defined. The most important issues at this stage are the need to set up a pre-deployment entity to ensure that a comprehensive migration strategy can be developed, and large tests can be performed, and the funding of the deployment of DAC.

The Commission is currently discussing internally how to mobilise EU resources for both the pre-deployment and the deployment phases. Member States will also be invited to contribute.

CEF project selection

Calls are massively oversubscribed. Funding will now be open to Moldova and Ukraine. No new funding for CEF available from the MFF review. Going forward, it will be important to have projects with a clear added value at European level. Maturity of projects is a "killing factor". This is based on the experience from CEF 1, where some budget will be lost due to endless project extensions.

Suggestion to organise a discussion on the cost of ERTMS in PRIME. Unit costs are going up despite it having been made a European standard. IMs are also competing for resources for deployment, should cooperate on this. The Commission team working on ERTMS should be reinforced. TSIs have been changed very recently and only minor changes should be made now. ERTMS should be cheaper in future, but this is not possible if the specifications change all the time. Track side approval through the agency is very complicated, there is no direct communication.

4. Presentation on COM proposal on cross-border rail traffic – better capacity management and coordination

Sandro Santamato, Head of Unit, Single European Rail Area, DG MOVE

Presentation of an outline of the upcoming Commission proposal on capacity management.

IM questions focused on the future role of rail freight corridors and the roles and interrelationship of ENIM and the network coordinator. IMs highlighted the need for a clear

hierarchy and division of tasks, as well as a need to have all Member States on board. It would be useful to have an exchange with the Commission once the proposal has been adopted.

DG MOVE explained that the infrastructure planning tasks of the rail freight corridors will be taken over by the European transport corridors, the RFC Regulation will be repealed. With regard to ENIM and the network coordinator, similar bodies already exist in PRIME and RNE, it will also be for IMs to see how they want to organise the relationship.

5. Upcoming Commission Guidelines on Track Access Charges

Vincenzo Carpinelli, Seconded National Expert, Single European Rail Area, DG MOVE

Overview on the state of play regarding the preparatory work on Guidelines for Track Access Charges.

Commission would publish guidelines, a change to the actual legislation is not foreseen. The objective is to use capacity efficiently and to get more trains on the network. Charging systems are very different from one MS to another, simply waiving TACs is not an option, also not possible to arrive at a harmonised level of charging across the EU, but it would be interesting to look at more harmonised charging for cross-border trains.

LISEA explained that it is set up as a concession and receives no compensation from the State, so LISEA needs more traffic but cannot lower charges unless there actually is more traffic.

6. Strategic discussion on Climate change adaptation

Moderator: Olivier Trannoy, SNCF RESEAU

Panelists:

- *María Luisa Domínguez González, President, ADIF*
- *Roberto Maiorana, Director General, Trafikverket*
- *Alain Quinet, Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Affairs, SNCF RESEAU*
- *Eddy Liegeois, Head of Unit, Transport Networks, DG MOVE*

IMs face common challenge as climate effects will be more pronounced in Europe than elsewhere. Average temperatures +2,2 degrees compared to +1,2 for the planet as a whole. Higher intensity and frequency of extreme weather events like heat waves and drought.

A task force involving 11 IMs looked into questions of climate change adaptation.

Most IMs carry out climate risk analyses – notably ADIF and PRORAIL have systematically built climate change risks matrixes. Most IMs have adapted or are adapting their maintenance policies and construction to climate change. Most IMs are designing a mid to long-term approach to adapt their infrastructure to climate change. But methodologies vary substantially across IMs.

Issues that were addressed include:

- Adapting operating and maintenance practices (e.g. operations: trains slowed down during heatwaves, trains cancelled in the event of weather warnings; maintenance: control of vegetation, increased surveillance, etc.)
- Renovating and modernising the network offers intrinsic improvement in resilience (e.g. opportunity to deploy more resilient components)
- Advancing knowledge (e.g. current and foreseeable resilience margins, economic cost of action versus reduction in risk)
- Investing by order of merit: eco-resilience versus retrofitting

Points raised by the panel:

- For new lines, the design is directly adapted in the beginning to increase resilience. ADIF is changing all processes in maintenance. ADIF keeps a risk map, including a reliability index (number of failures) and availability index (delay minutes due to weather events).
- There is a need to factor in climate change impacts (rising sea levels, floods, heavy snowfall) in planning. For a new tunnel, SE is using an extreme case scenario, with 1.5m sea level rise for planning.
- Climate adaptation will become more important part of TEN-T. Adaptation will also be a topic at the Connecting Europe Days in Brussels in April 2024. Funding is a relevant aspect. Synergies, for example with environmental protection need to be explored. In coordination with DG CLIMA (which has ongoing studies), MOVE will look at vulnerabilities in the different modes and regions, as well as measures to address them. Costs and investment needs will be assessed in view of the preparation of the next long-term budget.

7. Deep dive study on network condition

Ulla Braubach, civity Management Consultants

Presentation on the first part of the deep dive on network condition.

A second part will be carried out in Autumn and will be presented at the Plenary meeting in December, following which PRIME can decide on publication of a summary, as was done for past deep dive studies.

Important to benchmark network condition. This is also a safety issue, should be transparent.

DB explained that it will be busy tackling its investment backlog until 2030.

8. PRIME deliveries – Subgroup activities – Work Plan 2023

- Presentation and approval of publication of the external KPI report, update on work of the KPI group

Jude Carey, Irish Rail, KPI subgroup co-chair

Raymond Geurts van Kessel, ProRail, KPI subgroup co-chair

Jude Carey (Irish Rail) presented the external KPI report. He highlighted the risk that when people change in a company, there is a risk of drop in participation in the benchmarking, important that IMs remain committed at company level.

The Plenary approved publication of the external KPI report, to be published on the PRIME website on 23 June 2023, the Commission will tweet on the publication. (@Transport_EU). For IMs that would wish to communicate more largely within their countries, a communication kit has also been prepared that can provide useful input to national IMs' communication teams. Alain Quinet and Roberto Maiorana underlined the importance of the report and thanked the subgroup and its chairs.

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

Harald Reisinger presented the work of the digital subgroup. Keir Fitch underlined the role of the group in ensuring compatibility between work done in PRIME, ERA and the joint undertaking and announced an update to TAP and TAF specifications for interoperability in the next year.

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

Ludwig Koschutnig presented the work of the safety subgroup. Kristian Schmidt highlighted the need to learn better from near misses. ERA is a good place to collect knowledge on incidents, trying to improve reporting. There is a need to check whether the current control pyramids are doing their job.

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

Maria Alvarez Cuadrado presented the work of the charging subgroup. At the upcoming subgroup meeting in the Autumn, hosted by SNCF R in Paris, IMs will have the opportunity to discuss market opening and charging with a number of academic experts.

Next meeting: 1 December 2023, Madrid.