EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

Moving Europe towards a sustainable and
safe railway system without frontiers.

DECISION n°392

of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Railways adopting the Terms of Reference of the Fourth Railway Package Steering Group and replacing Decision n° 339 of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Railways

THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

Having regard to:

Regulation (EU) N° 2016/796 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Railways[1] (hereinafter referred to as "the Agency") and repealing Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 (hereinafter referred to as "the Regulation"), and, in particular, Articles 5 and 51(1)(w) thereof,

Whereas:

1. The Management Board (hereinafter referred to as "the Board" or "the Management Board") has, through Decision N° 339, updated for the fifth time the Terms of Reference of the Fourth Railway Package Readiness Assurance;

2. The aforementioned decision expires at the end of 2025;

3. The Fourth Railway Package Readiness Assurance is now called the Fourth Railway Package Steering Group;

4. It would be required to rename the Terms of Reference mentioned in recital 1 and extend the mandate of the Fourth Railway Package Steering Group;

5. The most satisfactory way to carry out the intention in recital 4 would be to draw up new Terms of Reference as an Annex to this Decision

---

1 OJ L 138 26.5.2016, p. 1-43
120 Rue Marc Lefrancq | BP 20392 | FR-59307 Valenciennes Cedex
Tel. +33 (0)327 09 65 00 | era.europa.eu

1 / 7

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The Terms of Reference of the Fourth Railway Package Steering Group, as set out in the Annex to this Decision, are hereby adopted.

Article 2

This Decision replaces Management Board Decision No. 339 which is now repealed.

Article 3

The implementation of this Decision shall be monitored on an annual basis with a view to collect return of experience and drive any improvements, as needed.

Article 4

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following its adoption and shall be valid until 31/12/2028 with the possibility of renewal. It shall be published on the Agency's website.

For the Management Board

On 18/11/2025,
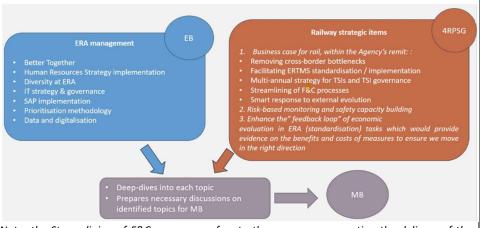
Hinne Groot

Hinne GROOT
The Chairperson

Annex

Fourth Railway Package Steering Group Terms of Reference

Key Principles

Background	The Fourth Railway Package (4RP) Readiness Assurance activity was established following an NL proposal in June 2017, and its Terms of Reference (ToR) were first adopted by the Management Board (MB) on 26 September 2017. The scope and deadlines for this initial readiness test were extended in February 2018 until 2020. The MB has since revised the ToR and extended the mandate of the now called 4th Railway Package Steering Group (4RP-SG) multiple times. In January 2021, the ToR were updated to encompass the monitoring of 4RP implementation across all involved parties (ERA, Member States, NSAs, and the sector). The mandate was subsequently extended: • Until the end of 2023 (Decision No. 291 of 16 March 2022). • Until the end of 2025 (Decision No. 339 of 20 November 2023).
Purpose	The purpose of the current update is to respond to the initiative taken by the MB to streamline its proceedings and focus them on strategic matters, by strengthening the contributions and preparatory role of the EB and 4th RPSG as follows: - the EB to look after the administrative and managerial strategic items of the Agency - the 4RP-SG to follow **strategic items related to the railway agenda**, marking the clear correspondence with the Agency's SPD priorities and the Agency's Regulation. The strategic steering for the 4RP-SG, including the scope delimitation from the EB and the expected contributions to the MB proceedings are included in the following diagram. Efforts are coordinated to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity across EB and 4RP-SG. *Note: the Streamlining of F&C processes refers to the processes supporting the delivery of the authority tasks. In terms of budget implementation and monitoring, this is not in scope of the 4th RPSG focus and would be done through the SPD Dashboard, as standalone item on the MB agenda (already current practice).*

	By ensuring **a proper preparatory work for the MB on such matters**, the strategic scope of the 4RP-SG has a close and indispensable **contribution to the Agency's objective on making rail more interoperable, cost-efficient, safe and future proof, as per the direction taken with SPD 2026-2028.**

Underpinning assumptions	1. There shall be **no duplication** between 4RP-SG, EB and MB or any other competent fora. On the contrary, the 4RP-SG will prepare the necessary discussions on railway strategic matters for the MB. The latter will be the entity charged to take decisions (e.g. through the SPD). 2. There shall be **a prioritization and time-phased implementation** of topics since as such all topics are complex and require time-intensive handling. Prioritization shall be decided based on the urgency / importance of the topics for the SPD priorities. 3. The organisations contributing to the proceedings of the 4RPSG and their representatives shall act in an **open, transparent and constructive manner**; their inputs shall be based on evidence and rationale behind the analysis and proposals shall be always provided. On the Agency's side, there shall be openness to objectively assess the input and suggestions provided. 4. The preparatory work driven by the 4RPSG **shall not be limited to quick fixes**; depending on the scope of the analysis and the proposals stemming from the 4th RPSG, there shall be openness to discuss and analyse measures which might require changes of processes / legal provisions 5. Opinions and positions taken during the Steering Group meetings by its members are **not binding** for the final opinions or positions of their organisations. The Steering group informs the Management Board of these recommendations in due time.

Scope for 2026-2028	The 4RP-SG is specifically mandated to carry out the necessary analyses, gather proposals, test options, and provide input to the Management Board on the following topics:
	 • Facilitating the business case for rail:
	     o Streamlining of authority processes
	     o Removing cross-border bottlenecks and progressing towards SERA
	     o Multi-annual strategy for TSIs and TSI governance
	     o Contributing to facilitating ERTMS standardisation / implementation, while taking the roles and contributions of other stakeholders into account
	     o Smart response to external evolution (e.g. innovation, cybersecurity, climate resilience, military mobility, HSR)
	 • Risk-based monitoring and safety capacity building
	 • Enhance the" feedback loop" of economic evaluation in ERA (standardisation) tasks which would provide evidence on the benefits

| | and costs of measures to ensure we move in the right direction
The cooperation between ERA and NSAs is considered to be included in all topics. Careful attention will be given to including inputs related to areas of work of other entities like NIBs, NoBo, AsBos, ECM Certification bodies etc., in line with their relevance for the strategic topics discussed.

Out of scope (but relevant for the context)

• The EC programme and activities for its legal acts (including the review of their transposition by MS),
• Work done in other groups or working parties of the Agency

The competence of the Management Board to decide on implementing decisions related to 4RP-SG will remain unchanged.

Prioritisation
Based on the direction taken with SPD 2026-2028 and the various workshops and iterations with MB, EC, NSAs and sector, and considering prioritisation will be required for the period 2026-2028, a first proposal of prioritisation (from items in paragraph scope 2026-2028) includes:

(I)   **Streamlining of authority tasks** (with a focus on VA, VA CTT and ERTMS TA), encompassing not only quick fixes and automation, but also a more structural reflection to simplify the processes and make them as fit-for-purpose as possible.

(II) **Removing cross-border bottlenecks and progressing towards SERA, including Agency's contribution for ERTMS coordinated deployment at EU level**
This is key in the context of the key policy priorities like military mobility, HSR, ERTMS deployment etc. (to be coordinated with the ERTMS coordinator, the European Commission, and other stakeholders to ensure synergy)

(III) **Risk-based monitoring of NSAs, pro-active collection and analysis of occurrence data, and link to capacity building**
This should help the Agency steer its efforts where they most matter, while facilitating good practice exchange across the EU MSs. Expanding the scope of the analysis to information in relation to NoBos, AsBos, ECM Certification bodies, NIBs could further feed the reflection and line to take on meaningful and comprehensive risk-based monitoring.

(IV) **Multi-annual vision for TSIs, including the balance between innovation and stability**
The period 2026-2028 will focus on delivery and optimized governance of the current set of proposed changes, while the strategic approach beyond 2028 will be started under this period and might require further extension of the term of reference in the future.

It would be assumed that the order of priority is in descending order, based on the list above.

This could be updated depending on the evolution of external factors, under the MB request. For all the above there would be a key need to always resort to |

	economic evidence and strong data backing the proposals.
	In order to adapt to unforeseen developments, this ToR may be reviewed annually to reassess its functioning, priorities and membership.
Organisation	***Composition and leadership***
	The 4RP-SG is led by the Chair of the MB.
	The 4RPSG is composed of representatives who ensure strategic focus, including:
	• Members of the Agency Management Board.
	○ Representatives from NSAs.
	○ Representatives from the railway sector.
	○ Representatives from the European Commission.
	• One representative from a relevant EU Agency with similar tasks (e.g., related to SSC and Vehicle Authorisation VA).
	• The Agency's management team.
	Representativeness
	To maximize efficiency, the group's final size is determined by the Steering Group itself, balancing efficiency with the need to include key stakeholders. To ensure the SG's effectiveness, members are expected to have demonstrated expertise in the subject area and to actively contribute during and in-between meetings. Overall, the Steering Group's membership should cover the main fields and areas of expertise linked to the priority topics, from various user perspectives.
	For the 2026-2028 mandate, the current composition may be enlarged by consensus to ensure appropriate participation, and the group will consider the possibility of allowing additional observers per topic, who would bring concrete evidence to the table of discussion for each of the identified topics / sub-topics.
	Individual participants can sponsor specific priority topics (see above).
	The Steering group may establish ad-hoc sub-group(s) to discuss specific question or recommendations. To ensure that the appropriate knowledge will be available for the particular subjects, members of the subgroups may be specific experts on the particular subject, not being member of the Steering Group. The sub-group(s) report to the Steering group who takes a final position.
	The representation of the sector organisations to the streams of work under the 4RPSG will be designed to ensure the possibility of providing direct input according to the topic of interest. The overarching objective is to collect direct and relevant evidence, while avoiding meetings of very large size.
	In this respect the sector organisations could appoint a representative contributor to the 4RPSG proceedings and choose to attend in line with the priority topic discussed, by actively bringing their most relevant and hands-on knowledge and input to the discussions.
	Such representation can be agreed at the beginning of each of the priority topics streams of work (see next point).
	The chair of the Steering Group will report regularly in the Management Board.
	The chair or another person delegated by the Steering Group can provide regular updates of the work done in the Steering Group to the NRB- and NSA Networks, as requested and needed. The provision of double-information will be avoided.

Working method and Internal Decision Making	For each of the priority topics tackled (see above) there should be a short work plan at the beginning listing: - expectations - types of inputs required - method - frequency of meetings - list of direct contributors in addition to the members of the 4th RPSG
Deliverables	For each priority topic chosen it is expected to have: - a repository of input entries collected with back up evidence - analysis and assessment of the inputs collected: - if it is about changes: they can be retained, grouped, rejected; they can be categorised as quick fixes; automation; process improvement (e.g. require PA VA change, other legal documents change etc.). A clear track of the assessment and of the follow up should be listed - Recommendations to the MB and follow up of implementation The 4RP-SG regularly reports on its activities to the Agency Management Board and provides an overview of the outcomes of the various priority topics. Such inputs are reflected by the MB for possible future decision making. The 4RP Steering Group will take its positions by consensus or the chair will report indicating the issues with no common opinion. The follow up from such advice and recommendations will be also presented to the Agency Management Board, including the feedback, if any, of the concerned organisation(s).