

EUMEDRAIL: DELEGATIONS FROM EGYPT, ISRAEL, JORDAN AND PALESTINE MET IN THE HAGUE TO DISCUSS RAIL SAFETY

VALENCIENNES, France, **Europe** – 21st March 2019 – The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Netherlands hosted the latest EUMedRail seminar in The Hague (20-21 March) organised by the EU Agency for Railways in the framework of the EUMedRail project, in cooperation with ILT (National Safety Authority of the Netherlands). Main topics of the agenda had been railway safety, the distribution of tasks between the different actors in the railway safety framework and the role, organisation and activities of the NSA (National Safety Authority).

This event gathered delegations from Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Palestine¹ along with European experts who came together to debate these key issues aiming to improve railway safety performance.

The opening remarks were delivered by the Deputy Head of Unit on Rail Freight and Rail Safety of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Mrs Marinke van der Kroon; the Senior Inspector of the National Safety Authority of the Netherlands, Mr Krijn van Herwaarden; the Railway Safety Policy Officer of the European Commission, Mr Giordano Rigon and the EUMedRail Project Manager, Mr Peter Mihm.

Throughout the seminar, the centre of the discussions related to the main activities of NSAs, including the issue of safety certificates to the railway undertaking before it has access to the railway infrastructure. In addition, the experts explained that the NSA is also responsible for the vehicle authorisation and for staff competence of train drivers, whose requirements were also harmonised to set common conditions, and safeguard rail competitiveness and safe operations. The second day was subject to an interactive discussion and involvement of beneficiaries. It started with a presentation on the supervision task by the NSA, the responsibility to monitor safety performance and to enforce the legal framework. Participants were invited to provide their own solutions to a case study on supervision and could put into practice their level of understanding.

The delegations concluded the conference with a visit to the Port of Rotterdam - the biggest port infrastructure of Europe - where they received a technical debrief on safety and intermodality, including a visit to the new Maasvlakte II.

Good practices and experiences from the Dutch authorities, panel discussions and presentations from experts seconded to the Agency were at the centre of this two-day event. Promoting the exchange of best practices between the EU and EUMedRail beneficiaries, in the field of railway safety, is essential to raise awareness and to promote capacity building in the Neighbourhood countries.

¹ Legal disclaimer: this designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

BACKGROUND: The EuroMed Transport Rail Project “EUMedRail” is funded by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR) of the European Commission with a budget of 2 million euros for the period 2017-2020. It focuses on technical and regulatory assistance to Southern Mediterranean countries which are covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP): Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The project supports the implementation of the Action 12 of the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region 2014/2020, on Safety and Interoperability.



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