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## Dear reader,

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of EUMedRail project aiming to strengthen railway safety and interoperability in the Southern Mediterranean region through the exchange of best practices, training and networking.

The newsletter focuses on the implementation of project activities, its progress and results. It also provides information on railway developments at Mediterranean and European level. It also gives an overview on the upcoming activities. For more information, please contact us at [EUMedRail@era.europa.eu](mailto:EUMedRail@era.europa.eu)

## The EUMedRail project

The EuroMed Transport Rail Safety and Interoperability project, EUMedRail, is funded by the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR) of the European Commission. The project provides technical assistance to national authorities and railway operators of the southern Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine<sup>[1]</sup> and Tunisia. The project supports the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean region (RTAP), and the process of regulatory convergence of railway systems with the EU framework and international norms.

## Editorial – Paving the way to restore confidence to safely resume railway transport

COVID-19 hit hard Europe beginning of 2020. While rail freight operators could maintain most of its services, passenger rail transport suffered the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdowns. Similar to European railways, the EUMedRail project got aware that neighbours from the Southern Mediterranean region have been affected also badly by the COVID-19 with a negative impact on society and economy. Most railways in the region were facing difficulties, further aggravated by the pandemic. Algeria and Israel railways had to interrupt passenger train services while freight train services could mainly be maintained. Touched by COVID-19, ONCF and ENR showed a high level of resilience and responsibility to ensure as far as reasonable business continuation. Together with other railway companies, ONCF participated actively in COVID-19 taskforces sharing experiences on best practices and together with Tunisian and Algerian railways participated at the UIC COVID-19 [webinar 7<sup>th</sup> of 2020 for African railways](#). Due to COVID-19 and protective measures taken e.g. closing of borders, social distancing,

<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

EUMedRail activities envisaged between March and July 2020 had been put on hold, rescheduled, cancelled or organised using electronic tools. In addition, the EUMedRail team did its best to scrutinise relevant information regarding protective measures against COVID-19 and to share it with its partners of the region.

Below you will find some links to the videos of webinars organised on the subject:

- **EU's COVID-19 relief measures for the rail sector.** The webinar voiced the concerns of the European rail operators, infrastructure managers and suppliers. Mr Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of the EU Agency for Railways (ERA), contributed to the debate, informing, among other issues, about the extension of the implementation of the Fourth Railway Package, initially foreseen on 16 June 2020. Click [here](#) to access the video.
- **Post-COVID: What will be the new normal for rail travel?** The webinar reflected on how COVID-19 has disrupted the sector and provided the views of some relevant senior leaders in the railway sector. Click [here](#) to access the video

#### ERA support – COVID-19 rail Protocol

To share best practices on protective measure against COVID-19, ERA mobilised its networks of authorities and stakeholders, installed a COVID-19 platform at its website and developed guidance documents together with the support of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). In May, European governments started to ease travel restrictions and the European Commission published guidelines to restore transport services and connectivity. The recommendations for the rail sector include the application of social distancing obligation, the increase of the frequency and capacity of trains and the mandatory seat reservations on long distance and regional trains with identification of name/origin and destination of passengers. To read the full text, click [here](#).



The COVID-19 rail [protocol](#) published 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 complete initiatives taken at organisational level and

provide guidance to railway authorities. It describes the leading guidelines for preparing for the resumption of rail transport. The objective of the COVID19 rail protocol is to implement good practices to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within stations and trains. The protocol lists preventive measures deemed effective and complements the measures taken by the European Commission to help Member States to relaunch mobility and tourism.



#### EUMedRail activities

Action 3: Introduction of SMS, risk-based approach, and Common Safety Methods (CSM)

Action 4: Rationalisation of the accident investigation procedures

#### EUMedRail Steering Committee



Opened by DG MOVE and DG NEAR, the EUMedRail project gathered partners on 6 November 2019 to review the EUMedRail actions held during 2019 and to plan activities for the year 2020. The EUMedRail partners informed about railway projects, regulatory reforms, improvements in safety at level crossings, issue of annual safety reports, implementation of the SMS (Safety

Management System) and activities, which might lead to the establishment of NSAs or NIBs in future.

### UfM Working Groups (WGs) on Land, Air and Maritime Transport & Logistics



On 7 and 8 November 2020, Euromed National Transport Coordinators participated in the UfM Working Groups on Land, Air and Maritime Transport & Logistics to discuss the consolidated Evaluation Report of the RTAP 2014-2020 (Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region). The meeting aimed to propose recommendations to the upcoming Regional Transport Action Plan 2021-2027.

## EUMedRail seminar on the transport of dangerous goods

The EUMedRail project organised a seminar on the transport of dangerous goods on 2 and 3 March 2020 in Belgrade in cooperation with the Directorate for Railways (Serbian NSA). The event aimed to increase the understanding on the Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods as well as the Regulations concerning the International Carriages of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID), covered by Appendix C of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF). The EU Agency for Railways promoted the inland Transport of Dangerous Goods Risk Management Framework (RMF) to support operators to reduce further the residual risks for the transport of dangerous goods.



## EUMedRail regional activities

### Seminar on Safety Management System in Algeria

The European Union Agency for Railways, in the scope of the EUMedRail project, co-organised a seminar on Safety Management System, Safety Culture and related topics, e.g. Safety at Level Crossings from rail on 26 and 27 February 2020 in Algiers (Algeria). The main objective

was to reinforce the exchange of views on safety issues (from policies, risk-management, data collection, to accident investigation) and allowed to take stock on the creation of the future National Safety Authority and body in charge of accident investigation, in Algeria.



### Bilateral meetings with EUMedRail partners

In February 2020, EUMedRail team organised bilateral face-to-face meetings with experts and representatives of Egypt and Israel to discuss railway developments and to invite them to upcoming events in the project framework. These events notably included the EUMedRail seminar on Transport of Dangerous Goods and the participation to the 40th session of the OTIF WG TECH. Due to the pandemic COVID-19 in the following time a series of bilateral meetings to exchange experiences with EUMedRail partners had been realised as teleconferences or webinars.

### EUMedRail participates in webinars on Level crossings



To share best practices on measures to reduce accidents at railways & road level crossings EUMedRail experts were invited to participate in the final conference of the SAFER-LC (Safer level crossing by integrating and optimising road-rail infrastructure management and design) project as webinar 22 April 2020. The project, led by UIC, aims at improving safety and minimize risks at level crossing). The SAFER-LC project team developed a toolbox designed to provide recommendations to policy makers on the most effective strategies to increase safety at level crossings, based on factors, such as type or users and level crossing, costs, effect mechanism. Presentations can be found following [this link](#). The UIC webinar to celebrate the [International Level Crossing Awareness Day \(ILCAD\)](#) 11<sup>th</sup> of June presented initiatives developed in Europe, USA, New Zealand and Africa on level crossing protections. Among the initiatives

presented, there were awareness campaigns to reduce the risks at level crossings, cooperation strategies with the road sector and plans to reduce LCs near stations and to eliminate LCs with high traffic or passive crossings.

## Action 12: Promotion of participation at international railway organisations

### EUMedRail webinar on OTIF and participation of EUMedRail in the 40th Session of WG TECH

On 15 June the EUMedRail organised a webinar to explain the role of Working Group Tech. Mr Bas Leermakers explained to the EUMedRail participants the competencies of the Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) to take decisions on APTU (validation of technical standards and adoption of UTPs) and ATMF (technical admission of railway material). He explained the link with the Working group TECH, tasked with the preparation and discussion of proposals for rules, which can be adopted by the CTE. Mr Leermakers presented the agenda for the Committee of Technical Experts (CTE) and the formalities to take part in WG TECH meeting.

Following the introductory seminar, EUMedRail partners participated also 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of June at the OTIF WG Tech meeting. For further information, please follow the [link](#).

## News in brief

### Safety and interoperability in the Single European Railway Area



On 16 July, ERA published its biennial report on progress on safety and interoperability. The report shows that Europe's railways remain among the safest in the world, with one fatality every 25 billion kilometres on average. Recommendations on safety focus on the rigorous application of the safety management system

(SMS) and the implementation of a positive safety culture Member States national legislations.

### [2021: the European Year of Rail](#)

On interoperability, the report highlights the need to foster ERTMS deployment and a timely introduction of the technical specifications for interoperability (TSIs) into The [report](#) will be made available in Autumn to all partners of the project.

### 2021: the European Year of Rail

The European Commission proposed to devote 2021 to events, campaigns and initiatives to promote rail as a sustainable, innovative and safe mode of transport. The Commission will provide more information by March 2021, including the strategy on the objective of climate neutrality by 2050. In this context, ERA published a [report](#) on the contribution of rail transport to the achievement of these objectives. The report contains guidelines relating to connectivity, multimodality, structuring projects, financing, etc.

## Announcements

9-10 September 2020: 41st session of the OTIF standing working group TECH (WG TECH)

16 September 2020: ERA webinar on a Compelling Vision for the Target Rail System

19-22 October 2020: seminar on European railway regulations to support safe and interoperable transport

3-4 November 2020: EUMedRail Steering Committee

2-3 December 2020: webinar on the Integration of Human and Organisational Factors (HOF) in Railway Automation

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**EUMedRail**  
EuroMed Transport Project



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Making the railway system work better for society.

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