

# EU Agency for Railways continues with EUMedRail project

Targeting Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon, the EUMedRail project aims to strengthen railway safety and interoperability in the South Mediterranean region.



One of the key tasks of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) is to promote European standards, regulation, and practices to third countries. In line with this objective, the European Commission (EC) released a grant to develop a technical assistance project on railway safety and interoperability with the Southern Mediterranean partners in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The project is based on the conditions of the [Regional Transport Action Plan](#) for the Mediterranean region, signed by the Ministers of Transport of the region in 2013 for the period 2014-2020.

Targeting Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine<sup>1</sup> and Lebanon, the EUMedRail project aims to strengthen railway safety and interoperability in the South Mediterranean from 2017 to 2020. The promotion of Safety Management System (SMS) and safety standards will improve safe railway operation and the railway sector in the region. [Passengers](#) and freight will benefit from better conditions, attracting more investment to stimulate economic growth.

The official kick-off in October 2017 was followed by a seminar on international railway legislation in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). While some of the EUMedRail beneficiaries are already members of OTIF, others were interested to learn more about this international organisation, which facilitates the development of contracts for the international carriage of passengers and freight by rail across member countries. Reinforcing cooperation with international organisations, the promotion of international railway transportation and the convention concerning international carriage by rail were key elements of discussion.

Present in the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) Days, EUMedRail partners gathered to introduce their respective railway systems, and to define the areas of collaboration with ERA. The requests for capacity building workshops on accident investigation, safety management systems, the issuing of safety certificates to railway undertakings, the migration strategies to ERTMS and railway safety reporting were taken into account.

## EUMedRail Action Plan

With a specifically tailored EUMedRail Action Plan, the project has initiated several technical assistance activities to provide technical and legal support on railway safety reforms, particularly to establish Railway Safety Authorities and independent National Investigation Bodies. The European Safety Management System is at the core of the project and attracted numerous international attendees to participate in seminars. Based on the Railway Safety Directive, the project raised awareness of the legal framework to control risks and analyse hazards. Moreover, to facilitate a transfer of know-how, the project has launched a Secondment Programme open to staff from the Ministries of Transport and railway operators of the EUMedRail partners. Algerian, Egyptian, Jordanian and Moroccan experts have already participated in this Programme, and their representatives integrated teams in the Agency dealing with the implementation of safety management systems, ERTMS, safety reporting and safety culture.

The involvement of European railway administrations has been key to illustrate best practices of the safety regulatory framework. The National Safety Authorities of France and the Netherlands presented their main mission delivering safety certificates, vehicle authorisation, licences to train drivers and monitoring supervision. Railway accident investigators from Portugal, Croatia and Romania also informed about the methodology and the practical procedures in the accident investigation process in seminars on the National Investigation Bodies.

The project continues in 2020 with topics of interest including the transport of dangerous goods, the licensing of train drivers and the improved governance, supervision and cooperation of the rail sector stakeholders. Technical visits and secondments to the Agency will be arranged to facilitate the exchange of experiences, promote and support the implementation of Safety Management System.

### Reference:

1. 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.

By Global Railway Review

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