

Making the railway system  
work better for society.

## Questions and Answers

### ERA webinar: Railways in the World

15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Q:** Does ERA support calls by CER and UNIFE in an open letter to the Presidents of the EU to extend the EU Year of Rail in light of Covid-19?

**A:** The European Year of Rail is a very important signal. It is a signal to the whole world that railways are important and that railways have a very strong contribution to the objectives of the Green Deal. As – because of COVID – many of the planned events cannot take place in 2021, ERA fully agrees with extending the approach and the label of "European Year of Rail 2021". That will – by the way – also apply for some events that ERA has to postpone from 2021 to 2022.

**Q:** What advice does ERA have for member state governments like Ireland in facilitating modal shift to Rail? Ireland has the lowest % share of rail freight and is under pressure from road haulage lobbies. How can this be overcome at national level?

**A:** The European Commission has set the political goal to increase by 50% the rail freight traffic compared to 2015 by 2030 and to double it by 2050 with the ultimate goal to reach a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050. All measures taken with the Green Deal should allow the EU to become the first carbon neutral economy by 2050. In a report to be released on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, ERA will propose six clusters of measures to promote rail freight and to develop reliable and seamless connections which should eventually help reaching those ambitious European political goals. It goes from developing a green logistic chain through a multimodal strategy especially by ensuring a better synergy between the maritime and the railway sectors to implementing fully new technologies like the Digital Automatic Coupling. This report will also be presented during a Webinar organised the day of its release: [https://www.era.europa.eu/content/free-webinar-how-rail-freight-helps-achieving-climate-goals\\_en](https://www.era.europa.eu/content/free-webinar-how-rail-freight-helps-achieving-climate-goals_en).

**Q:** Will the EU also open the rail market for new operators in the six western Balkan countries mentioned?

**A:** The long-term aim is to integrate all Western Balkan countries into the Single European Railway Area, comprising market aspects, comprising safety aspects, comprising interoperability aspects – in every respect.

**Q:** Is Hyperloop an option to accelerate traffic between EU and Asia?

**A:** Hyperloop is a new concept of guided land transport that requires a specific infrastructure and a new concept of operations. Provided that such infrastructure is funded, installed and that the relevant authorities (from China to EU) have issued their operational approval, Hyperloop could become an option to accelerate traffic between EU and Asia.

**Q:** Which measures will be taken to make night trains run smoother on an international level?

**A:** ERA promotes night train services within the limits of its work program and resources. One good example is a presentation given during the Transport Community Treaty's 8<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on Railways on 21 January 2021. Please see: <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WB-Night-Trains-Connection-Possibility.pdf>

Q: Where is it possible to download the public documents of the ERA-OSJD Contact Group?

A: You can find more information about ERA-OSJD cooperation, including the documents, on the ERA website: [https://www.era.europa.eu/agency/stakeholder-relations\\_en](https://www.era.europa.eu/agency/stakeholder-relations_en)

Q: Do you have any case studies to show efficiencies over the years of cooperation?

A: The performance of all Agency activities is constantly monitored and checked in order to measure the efficiency of the resources deployed to the activity in question. This is also the case for the international relations. In addition, the Agency is developing in 2021 a strategy for achieving efficiency gains, which will look at short-term efficiency gains, as well as structural ones. The strategy will cover all activities of the agencies, including international cooperation.

Q: How and when does ERA the independent route compatibility check by rolling Stock operators to be an actual working process? Specifically: When will software tools to facilitate that check be available and have access to the registers for infrastructure and rolling stock? It is also known that not all national technical restrictions can be transparently made visible in the RINF. How will those be taken into consideration in order to facilitate safe railway traffic?

A: The ERA Route Compatibility Check (RCC) is currently included in the work in progress in order to make it an operational system and officially release it for use. The project has started and we expect to have a first release by Q3 2021. Indeed, RINF does not host data at a detailed level - especially restrictions at national level but as the RCC is based on this data, the tool will be similarly limited in cases like this. The RCC is intended to be an assistive tool for planning purposes but it will not guarantee that no further checks need to be run. Of course as RINF gets developed, if in the future more information are made available there, this will be reflected in the RCC as well.

Q: Is there cooperation with China as well?

A: China is also OSJD member and has access to the documents of the ERA-OSJD Contact Group.

Q: Is there any platform, analogue to TIS, for Russian and Chinese train running information?

A: Yes for Russia (and other CIS countries). The platform is called ASOUP (АСОУП) which provides messages to the RU when its train passes arrival or departure points. The train running messages (txt format) from ASOUP of type 201 has been successfully transformed in 2021 by the OSJD-ERA Contact Group into TIS train running information messages (xml format based on TAF TSI regulation). Details will be available in the comparative analysis for TAF subsystem which is just finalised and will be shortly added on the ERA website: [https://www.era.europa.eu/agency/stakeholder-relations\\_en](https://www.era.europa.eu/agency/stakeholder-relations_en) . For China unfortunately no information is available to ERA.

Q: On green deal, what is the strategy?

A: There is a dedicate ERA Webinar about "Game changer for a carbon neutral economy / Railway contribution to the Green Deal". Please see: [https://www.era.europa.eu/content/free-webinar-game-changer-carbon-neutral-economy\\_en](https://www.era.europa.eu/content/free-webinar-game-changer-carbon-neutral-economy_en)

The Green Deal and related initiatives in the railway area were presented by DG MOVE in the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ERA-OSJD Contact Group on 12-14 May 2020, further news are being considered / promoted as appropriate in the Agency's contributions to the joint work.

Q: Does the Agency intend to help the sector promoting the DAC (Digital Automatic Coupler) deployment beyond the EU borders?

A: The first step should be define the concrete specifications of DAC (Digital Automatic Coupler) to be deployed in the EU. The research program Shift to Rail has a concrete research project EDDP (European DAC Delivery Program) ongoing.

ERA is currently working in the framework of the 2022 TSI revision package to include the relevant part of the specifications of the DAC to be provided by S2R/EDDP into the TSI WAG and , if required TSI LOC&PAS, TSI CCS, etc. On top of the usual stakeholders, S2R is also part of the working group in charge of this task.

These DAC specifications are going to be part of TSI WAG and therefore its scope is limited to the vehicles for which this TSI is applicable, without prejudice of further Agency actions in order to promote the deployment of DAC outside EU borders, as far as this is technically feasible and economically efficient.

Note: The TSI WAG applies to vehicles intended to be operated on the following track gauges: 1435 mm, 1600 mm and 1524 mm. The TSI WAG does not apply to 1520 mm track gauge.

Contacts for further queries:

[https://www.era.europa.eu/can-we-help-you/contact-us-0\\_en](https://www.era.europa.eu/can-we-help-you/contact-us-0_en)