

## Substantial time savings for passenger and freight cross-border rail possible if technical and operational issues are solved

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**A report by the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) identifies strong potential for time savings for rail freight, from 50 minutes up to 6 hours, when solving the technical and operational issues identified for the analysed freight corridors. And a potential decrease of the current journey time of 70 - 115 minutes by around 10 - 15 minutes for passenger rail in the case of Vienna (Austria) – Győr (Hungary) connection.**

Today, ERA presented in Brussels the **Cross-border Rail Transport Potential Report** explaining the growth potential of cross-border rail traffic that would derive from a further removal of technical and operational barriers. The focus is on both passenger and freight rail transportation in Europe covering cross-border trips. The report also assesses how the further removal of technical and operational barriers at European cross-border sections would contribute to the attractiveness and competitiveness of rail transport.

The study is a factual analysis of four cross-border sections, two for passengers and two for freight rail:

- Rail passenger connection Vienna (Austria) – Győr (Hungary), along RFC7 and rail passenger connection Berlin (Germany) and Kostrzyn (Poland);
- Freight rail cross-border section Giurgiu Nord (Romania) - Ruse Razpredel (Bulgaria) - RFC7, and Brennero (Italy) - Staatsgrenze nächst Steinach in Tirol (Austria).

The four case studies present an in-depth review of the literature and collected data. The cases on cross-border passenger transport build primarily on qualitative inputs, including observations on international high speed rail connections. The two case studies focusing on freight provide a quantitative evaluation of the impacts of technical and operational barriers on travel time, which in turn adversely affect rail volumes and the modal split.

Based on the findings of the study, ERA proposes solutions and emphasizes the need for further reduction of the national rules, and further adaptation of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs). ERA considers that TSIs can further contribute to lowering some barriers by closing open points and reducing, where appropriate, specific cases. Doing so would improve the prospects of international rail transport.

EU Agency for Railways Executive Director, Josef Doppelbauer stated that “Immediate action is needed to remove barriers to cross-border rail transport – both for passenger and freight – in order to finally see the rail modal share grow. As European authority, ERA will make its contribution by further reducing national rules, improve European TSIs, support regulation to improve cross-border coordination (TEN-T revision), and as system authority for vehicle authorization. However, if we do not put out the investment volume for improving infrastructure and customer experience, essential modal share targets are at risk and won’t be recovered.”

The study also presents relevant information and good practice cases related to night trains and high speed rail services.

The Report is published on our website and can be downloaded following this link: <https://www.era.europa.eu/content/press-briefing-future-cross-border-rail>

### **Background information:**

**About the EU Agency for Railways:** The European Union Agency for Railways was established in Valenciennes in 2004, and has 196 employees representing more than 22 European Member States.

ERA has been providing EU Member States and the European Commission with technical assistance in the development and implementation of the Single European Railway Area. This comprises enhancing technical interoperability and harmonising rules, promoting simplified access for customers, developing a common approach to safety and safety culture, advising on telematics applications and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System), monitoring National Safety Authorities and Notified Bodies and facilitating the exchange of information between the railway actors in Europe.

Since 16th June 2019 the EU Agency for Railways is mandated to issue single safety certificates and vehicle (type) authorisations valid in multiple European countries and to ensure an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System.

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