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ERA NEWS

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION
AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS



RESPECT, IMPARTIALITY, UNCONDITIONAL SOLIDARITY

Dear readers,

It is always hard to return to 'business as usual' after a tragic event - and for the Agency, this has certainly been the case after the horrific train crash that occurred on 28 February near the town of Larissa in Greece. This is not the place to comment on the 'what', nor the 'why'. But I can say, on behalf of each and every employee at ERA that our **heartfelt condolences go out to the families affected by this tragedy** - and that **we are more than ever committed to work on moving forward the European rail safety framework** in close cooperation with our partners from the EU Member States.

Allow me a second observation, again without commenting on what is subject to an ongoing investigation. As I was invited to join an EU delegation traveling to Athens in the aftermath of the accident, I got to speak personally with key stakeholders from the Greek rail sector and the government. Being on location and listening to their side of the story made me realize that for what is to come - a complete reboot of the Greek railway system, as Greek government officials called it themselves, our best contribution should be delivered in the European spirit of **respect, impartiality, and unconditional solidarity**.

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Moving on to 'business as usual', boosting rail freight in Europe may be a familiar topic, however the need for urgent action is greater than before. Therefore, I am more than pleased to rekindle our collaboration with Karima Delli, chairwoman of the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament, and the many representatives of the European rail freight sector for a **joint declaration to boost rail freight** (page 3). Related to that, on page 7 we talk about data interchange for combined freight transport.

After ERA signing the EUAN Charter on Diversity and Inclusion earlier this month, it is great to learn more about the **Diversity Ambassadors initiative** by the European Commission (pages 4-5). Diversity and inclusion are key factors determining the future of our sector. Equally important to the future of our sector is to get young people interested in it, showing how

technically challenging it is while being green and truly European – no better way to do it than through the **European Railway Challenge** (pages 8 and 9).

While talking earlier about the spirit in which we should interact with our European partners, that may as well go for **the Agency's monitoring programme of National Safety Authorities** (NSAs, page 7). As you can see, 'business as usual' does not necessarily have to mean 'boring'. Enjoy the read!

Best regards,



Josef Doppelbauer
ERA Executive Director



Committed to Safety!



KARIMA DELLI, ERA, AND THE RAIL FREIGHT SECTOR SIGN JOINT DECLARATION TO ACCELERATE MODAL SHIFT



On Wednesday 29 March 2023, Karima Delli, the chairwoman of the transport and tourism committee (TRAN) of the European Parliament, Josef Doppelbauer, the Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways, as well as several CEOs of rail freight companies have called on the decision-makers to implement ambitious policies to concretely foster the transport of goods by train.

"In May 2020, we called for relaunching rail freight across the European Union, in order to achieve a 30% modal share by 2030. Three years later, this modal share has slightly decreased, although the volume has got higher", said Karima Delli.

In this statement, the stakeholders make several recommendations **to facilitate modal shift as well as to achieve the 30% modal share by 2030**. Many issues are raised, such as track access charges, the implementation of the European rail traffic management system, relevant state aids regimes as well as a review of the governance regime of rail freight corridors.

*"The statement confirms our commitment to prioritise rail freight, which is not only more economical but also **emits 9 times less gCO₂e than road freight**",* says Josef Doppelbauer. *"Shifting from long-distance road to rail*

for distances over 700 km could save 40 million tonnes of CO₂ per year and increase rail's modal share for freight to 36% in the EU. These impressive figures provide a compelling call to action for informed and sustainable decision-making."

Issuing this statement at the end of Q1 2023 is significant, as major milestones for freight transport in Europe are being launched by the European Commission this year, including the **TEN-T revision**, and the **Greening Freight / Digital Mobility Packages**.

The statement then takes into account those current and upcoming legislative developments, as well as addresses issues related to national public policies.

"We are absolutely aware about the fact that rail freight cannot meet all the needs. All modes of transports must be considered adequately with this regard. Rail freight has however been left behind for years and it is vital to make it a matter of top priority. We then call on the Member States and the European Commission to address the current challenges effectively. I really hope our voice will be heard", Mrs Delli concluded.

A press conference in the European Parliament was organised under participation of Karima Delli, Josef Doppelbauer, and the rail sector represented by Alberto Mazzola, Executive Director of CER, and Conor Feighan, Secretary General of ERFA.

Further info:

[Joint Rail Freight Declaration](#)
[Joint Press Statement](#)



DIVERSITY AMBASSADORS IN TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

An interview with Ruth Lopian,
Policy Officer - Equality Coordinator, European Commission

ERA: Could you tell us more about the Diversity Ambassadors in Transport initiative, and why it was created:

Ruth Lopian: Transportation is a crucial sector for the European Union, **employing over 10 million workers** and facilitating mobility and the delivery of goods. However, the sector faces **challenges**, such as an ageing workforce and lack of diversity. The employment rate of persons with disabilities is below 50%, and **only 22% of transport workers in the EU are women**. To address these issues, the EU Commission launched the **Women in Transport - Platform for Change** initiative in 2017, promoting women workers in transport professions.

In 2019, the Commission launched the **Ambassadors for Diversity in Transport initiative**, aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion across all modes of transport. The initiative covers a range of under-represented or disadvantaged groups, including women, older persons, persons with disabilities or reduced mobility, LGBTIQ persons, persons with migrant or minority ethnic backgrounds, and others. The objective is to raise awareness and promote the benefits of diversity in the transport sector.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic delaying the initiative's launch until October 2022, the network **currently counts around 70 Ambassadors**, representing workers and transport users. The Commission hopes to

increase the number of diversity ambassadors over time, and this interview aims to raise awareness and interest in the initiative. The transport sector is essential for the EU's economy, but it needs to become more diverse to remain resilient and competitive, especially in times of crises.



ERA: Who can become an Ambassador, and what are the criteria?

RL: Anyone committed **to promoting inclusion, diversity and equality** in the transport sector, both among the **transport workforce** and among **transport users**, can become an

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Ambassador for Diversity in Transport. Ambassadors are free to engage in the activities that suit them best, bearing in mind their individual circumstances.

Ambassadors should of course have certain qualities and fulfil certain **criteria**. However, it is not required to fulfil them all to join the network. They should:

- Have **diversity, equality and inclusion as personal values**;
- Have a **genuine interest** in improving diversity, inclusion and equality within the transport sector;
- Believe in the mission, goals, and values of the Ambassadors' project and be willing to actively share information with others in their networks (community, professional, digital or personal networks) and **raise the awareness** of their networks on diversity topics;
- Show a **high level of commitment** and be willing to dedicate time to the Ambassadors' project;
- Take a **broader perspective** and think beyond the point of view of a particular group;
- Be able/willing to relate to others, to show **mutual respect** and have good **communication skills**;
- Be a representative of a (underrepresented) transport user group or groups and be active in **giving a voice to those who are more vulnerable**, less vocal or are defending a certain cause, to better cater for the needs of all transport users;
- Be working or potentially **working in the transport sector** (including as heads of transport companies or organisations, academia, etc.), and who are committed to promote diversity;
- Have previous **experience in the field of diversity and inclusion** in transport or elsewhere;
- Already have a **good network** and/or are willing to reach out to people.

ERA: As a woman working in the transport sector, what message do you have for other women, who are considering a career in transport?

RL: First and foremost, don't let **gender stereotypes or societal expectations** hold you back. You are just as capable as any man to excel in the transport industry, whether you are interested in engineering, logistics, operations, or management. The transport sector can offer opportunities for very varied educational backgrounds, even those where you would not instantly think that these are useful for the sector. Think for instance about architects, lawyers, interior designers, photographers, chefs, etc.

Secondly, seek out **mentors and role models** who can offer guidance and support as you navigate your career path. Look for women who have successfully broken through barriers in the industry and learn from their experiences and insights. We found a number of fantastic initiatives and role models in the context of the '[Women in Rail award](#)', that the Women in Transport Platform launched together with the rail industry in 2021.

Additionally, take advantage of any **training, education, or professional development** opportunities that can help you build your skills and knowledge. The transport industry is constantly evolving, so staying up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies is essential for success, notably also in view of the challenges of the green and digital transitions. Lastly, do not be afraid to speak up and advocate for yourself and other women in the industry. Help **creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace** where all workers, including women, can thrive and achieve their full potential.

These suggestions are of course valid for all underrepresented groups in the transport sector.

And lastly: join the [Women in Transport Platform](#) or become a [Diversity Ambassador!](#)

Working Together for Safer Railways

NSA MONITORING

WORKING ON THE 2ND CYCLE



In December 2021, ERA completed the first cycle of monitoring National Safety Authorities (NSAs) as mandated under the Fourth Railway Package, having carried out, on behalf of the Commission, the audits of 26 NSAs over roughly three years (25 EU NSAs and 1 volunteer non-EU NSA). The Agency is currently in the middle of the second cycle of monitoring National Safety Authorities.

The auditing process of each NSA takes several months and it results in an audit report where **observations and deficiencies are raised**, when needed. An observation identifies shortcomings in NSA processes for which the NSA in question is invited to come up with an action plan to address the issue, while a deficiency is a finding that prevents the concerned NSA from effectively performing its tasks in relation to railway safety

and interoperability, **therefore the NSA is obliged to take action.**

An audit starts much ahead of the on-site visit and requires good preparation. It is performed **in very close cooperation with the contact person nominated by the audited NSA.** The audit team reviews documents provided by the audited NSA. Some preliminary interviews with members of the sector from the concerned Member State are carried out (e.g. railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, national investigation body) to find out how the NSA cooperates with its stakeholders.

During the on-site visit, interviews with NSA management and staff are performed. As a result of all collected information and evidence, **the preliminary findings are being established while maintaining a constructive exchange with the NSA** and its management.

What lessons does the Agency take away from the first cycle of NSA monitoring? *“We found the spirit of NSA audits to be collaborative”,* says Maurizio Greco, leader of ERA’s

monitoring team. *“Many NSAs fully subscribe to the European process and **see the audit as an opportunity to improve their own processes.**”* Often NSAs are restricted by national legislation or have limited room for maneuver. This leads to a situation where not all deficiencies and observations raised can be addressed by the NSA alone – **further action at national level may be required.**

EMBRACING THE EUROPEAN SPIRIT

*“In the first cycle of audits, the scope of the audits was focused on **competence and supervision**; in the second cycle, the scope of the audits can potentially include all the tasks of NSAs in relation to safety and interoperability”* asserts Julie Dinimant, NSA monitoring project manager at the Agency.

“We see that NSAs are committed to improve following the audits performed during the first audit cycle”, she adds. *“The audits can help NSAs, but also the Member States, to **better comprehend and embrace the European approach.**”* Does an EU-audit ever create resentment among national authorities? *“Usually not,”* says Maurizio Greco, *“in the end we are not coming in to ‘police’ anybody. **The overall purpose is to help NSAs reinforcing their leadership role in developing and improving safety and interoperability in railways.**”*

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Agency's analysis and monitoring activities ■

EDICT PROJECT: COMBINED TRANSPORT ALIGNED WITH TAF TSI



The EDICT project is a co-funded initiative by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), aimed at **improving data interoperability for Combined Transport (CT) stakeholders in Europe**. The project is coordinated by UIRR, the industry association of CT, and comprises nine key stakeholders. With a budget of €3.1 million, the project is scheduled to run for 24 months from September 2022.

The EDICT project builds on the success of Digital Train 1.0 and 2.0, which supported rail interoperability and data exchange. It also leverages the work done within the ELETA project to initiate data exchange on train running and forecast information. The project aims to promote data exchange **in compliance with the Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Telematic Applications for Freight (TAF TSI)** among terminals, in line with Rail-Collective Decision-Making (CDM) requirements.

The overall objective of the EDICT project is to remove interoperability barriers for TAF-TSI-related CT messages by **implementing data exchange with identifiable and eligible stakeholders**. The project focuses on **boosting the attractiveness of international rail freight** and is structured around three major components:

1) Implementation of **electronic data exchange between terminals and the rail sector**, including the definition of

harmonized timestamps, adaptations of Terminal Operating Systems (TOS), and design of a common and standardized interface for terminals.

2) Development of a **common Quality Management System for European Combined Transport, scheduled regularly running (non-ad hoc) rail freight operations (Q-ELETA)**, including the development of a methodology to devise milestones/time stamps of the production process, harmonized delay/irregularity codes, and a view to improving CT performance, in particular punctuality.

3) **Initiating data exchange with new stakeholders, particularly end-customers such as shippers, Logistics Service Providers, and freight forwarders**, including the integration of Estimated Time of Pick-up Time (ETP) based on train ETA, extension of the successful market solution CESAR for tracking and tracing, development of registers, and promotion of existing applications such as KV 4.0, a data hub for Combined Transport.

The EDICT consortium will propose **business-oriented solutions for the integration of terminal managers in the rail sector data exchange**, new monitoring schemes to improve the production processes of CT trains in Europe, and **new ways of exchanging data with CT stakeholders**. The consortium will also prepare and propose recommendations to the TAF TSI Regulation.

The EDICT consortium will organize a digital event during the Munich Transport Fair on May 10, 2023, at 14h00 in Room B62, Hall B6, and [registrations](#) are open. ■

INTERVIEW WITH PROF. DR. RAPHAEL PFAFF, INITIATOR OF THE EUROPEAN RAILWAY CHALLENGE



The FH Aachen team takes its winning lap at the Railway Challenge 2022 - with ten wagons

ERA: How did you get the idea of organising a 'continental' version of the railway challenge?

We really liked the idea of conveying this youthful and attractive image of railway, especially in the light of the skills gap. While it helps us to gain visibility among younger people, it is also a very compact version of a rail vehicle project with all phases **from Request for Quotation to Conformity Assessment** of the actual vehicle: **all this can be done within two semesters.**

Attending the existing challenge in UK has become more difficult since Brexit and there must be so many strong teams in Europe - that we hope to bring together in the centre of the European Union.

What does it take to participate - how challenging is it?

The first FH Aachen team was registered by their professor and didn't know what they had to expect, neither was there any budget allocated. We currently run on 10 to 15 students from different departments, that receive roughly 10.000 € per year for ongoing updates to the locomotive, the first build was twice that much. It is important to provide one

or two mentors to the team and give them access to a workshop as well as some track for testing. It is **probably the most important task of the mentors to reduce the fear in the team** members. They appear to be very reluctant to finalise their designs, however it is important to plan backwards from the competition and order items with long lead times in December or January for installation in April.



This may sound horrible, but the outcome amazes fellow professors and me every time. Also the participants enjoy the teamwork and the competitive spirit, as our team member Harshil Patel put it: *"Participating in an International competition requires perseverance and a willingness to learn from your mistakes. It's a journey that will push you to your limits, but the growth you'll experience is priceless."*



Raphael Pfaff is professor for mechanical engineering and mechatronics at the university of applied sciences in Aachen. In his early career, he completed an apprenticeship in carpentry, and studied mathematics and control engineering, before he went on to work for Siemens and Wabtec as system engineer.

In his spare time, he tries to get young people interested in the railway sector - and he is active in a cycling club in his home town of Wetter (= "weather")

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And yes, night time access to your workshop is non-negotiable.

In case you plan to gather a team for the 2024 challenge, visit railwaychallenge.eu and feel free to contact us for any question!

PRICELESS EXPERIENCE

The European Commission proclaimed 2023 the European Year of Skills – plays right in your hand, does it?

I think that the railway challenge can help to achieve some of the aims of the European Year of Skills, as we **educate in highly relevant skills for the railway industry, foster industrial sponsoring of the training program** and we have some good examples of third country talent that went into our teams, with the team members staying in the European Railway Sector. But it is a special occasion to gather the teams for the first European Railway Challenge in a year dedicated to skills development and education, we look forward to it!



Introducing "Molly", the winning locomotive of the 2022 challenge!



For those interested in joining you for the event from 2-4 June in Bad Schussenried – what should they bring?

It will be an outdoor event in southern Germany, we sincerely hope that you will need sunscreen however being close to the alps, be prepared for occasional rain or thunderstorm. **In case you are hiring, bring business cards: there will be plenty of students with relevant experience** and in the right phase of their education for an internship, a thesis or their first job!

It would be helpful for us if you register for free at railwaychallenge.eu. ■



Check out the
team's
Instagram for
more pictures!

IPA WORKSHOP "TRAIN DRIVER TRAINING AND LICENSING"



On 23 February 2023 the EU Agency for Railways organised a **Workshop "Train Driver training and licensing"** at Europe House in Pristina. Experts from Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat discussed how to harmonize train driver training and licensing in the region and how to attract new talents to rail. ■

IPA TC ERTMS TRAINING

From 18 to 20 April 2023 the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Transport Community will organise an ERTMS training in cooperation with the railway company CFL in Luxembourg.

This training will comprise theoretical training by ERA and practical sessions organised by CFL. As this training is sponsored by the European **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)**, **only candidates from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia or Türkiye** can participate. At this time, most places are already taken.

For more information please [click here](#) ■

IPA TRAINEESHIPS AUTUMN 2023

At the beginning of December 2019, ERA and the European Commission's Directorate General DG NEAR signed a three years contract "Continuation of support to the IPA II beneficiaries by the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) 2020 - 2022". This contract has been extended to the end of 2023.

In this context, the EU Agency for Railways is going to host 2 trainees from **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia or Türkiye** from September to December 2023 included. Only candidates from the aforementioned countries are eligible to apply for traineeship. In order to apply, just send a motivation letter and a CV in Europass format to ipa@era.europa.eu ■

ERA BLOOD DRIVE 25 APRIL VALENCIENNES

The 1st ERA Blood Drive will take place on 25 April at the EFS Maison du don in Valenciennes. Anybody **willing and available is most welcome to join!** Just contact ERAClub@era.europa.eu, and/or click on the below link for more information. ■

[Maison du Don de Valenciennes](#)



Moving Europe towards a sustainable and safe railway system without frontiers

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