ERA Takes Action to Reduce Fragmentation in the European Rail Data Landscape

Brussels, 06 December 2023

The European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) has taken significant steps towards its mission of fostering a sustainable and safe railway system without frontiers. Today, ERA announces the official launch of the ERA Railway Factsheets, an intuitive tool aimed at unlocking data and addressing fragmentation within the European railway data landscape. Importantly, ERA presents its fundamental work on linked data and the ERA knowledge graph: the data architecture that enables efficiency gains for the entire European railway sector.

The ERA Factsheets offer a comprehensive overview of the rail sector across European countries with one-click access. Covering aspects such as transport statistics, railway organisations, rolling stock, infrastructure, safety, market structure, and the legal framework, the tool unlocks data from ERA and other organisations, providing a broad and accurate representation of the European railway landscape.

Whereas ERA Factsheets bring fragmented data together in an accessible format, ERA's linked data project changes the fundamentals on how railway data is defined and shared. Today, railway data is typically kept in isolated and incompatible databases. Linked data is central to ERA's strategic plan to overcome challenges such as data gaps, unaligned definitions, and accessibility barriers. It sets the foundation for more efficient data sharing between railway actors across Europe and novel applications. ERA presents the substantial progress that has been achieved and several future use cases.

Through linked data and the Factsheets, ERA is taking a crucial step towards increasing the efficiency of railway operations, filling knowledge gaps, and facilitating informed policymaking.

Josef Doppelbauer, ERA's Executive Director, emphasises the significance of this advancement: *"Linked Data and the ERA Railway Factsheets contribute to our mission to create a sustainable and safe railway system for Europe. They provide tangible solutions to historical challenges in the European railway data landscape. By addressing fragmentation and enhancing accessibility, we aim to streamline operations and facilitate evidence-based policymaking to empower European railways."*

The ERA Railway Factsheets are set to be regularly updated, reflecting the commitment to ensure that the information remains current and relevant over time. ERA encourages stakeholders, innovators, and citizens to explore the Factsheets, available on ERA's website, and provide feedback to contribute to the continuous improvement of this pivotal tool: https://www.era.europa.eu/content/era-railway-factsheets

About the EU Agency for Railways:

The European Union Agency for Railways was established in Valenciennes in 2004.

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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