



**Danish
Presidency**
Council of the
European Union



CUTTING COST IN RAIL

**Harmonised Rules and Innovative Processes
& Solutions for a Market-oriented Railway**

High-level Event & Discussion

By invitation Only

04 - 05 November 2025, Copenhagen

Making rail transport more cost-efficient is key to unlocking its full potential.

This applies to all levels of the rail system, both for passenger and freight services. For national governments, the costs of maintaining and renewing existing rail infrastructure – or building new rail infrastructure – can become a barrier to the functioning and expansion of the railway. Taking the cost out of the sector is therefore imperative to making rail competitive again. Reduction of technical complexity, and smart deployment of innovation are further key factors on the path to greater competitiveness.

Joint efforts must be made to improve the cost-efficiency of rail transport, based on thorough reviews of the technical, regulatory, innovation and market landscape.

Representatives of EU national governments, European institutions, national and EU regulators, and the European rail sector gather to address the pain points through an open exchange in a workshop format.

Day I

- 11h45 Participants arrive at Trafikstyrelsen Carsten Niebuhrs Gade 43, 1577 København (we meet by the reception)
- 12h00 Departure from Trafikstyrelsen to the projekt site at Rødbyhavn via Copenhagen Airport
- 12h20 Pick up of a limited number of participants at Copenhagen Airport
- 14h20 Arrive at the project site and presentation of the Fehmarn Belt Project
- 17h20 Departure from RødbyHavn to Copenhagen
- 19h30 Standing Dinner and Reception at the Ministry of Transport, Frederiksholms Kanal 27 F, 1220 København

Day II

- 08h15 Breakfast and registration

Welcome Addresses

Oana Gherghinescu, Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA)

Flemming Schiller, Danish Deputy Permanent Secretary of State for Transport and Rail Director

Opening Address

Kristian Schmidt, Director of Land Transport, DG MOVE, European Commission (live from Brussels)

- 09h30 Feature Presentations:

Cost of Rail

Jacob Heinsen, Danish Permanent Secretary of State for Transport

Cost of Non-Interoperability

Oana Gherghinescu, ERA Executive Director

10h00

Panel I - The Role of Harmonisation

Discussion on the advantages, challenges and possible solutions of the common European mission to harmonise railway regulation across Member States. There are many arguments in favour of harmonising railway regulation, such as increased safety, interoperability for cross-border rail transport and more streamlined and efficient approval processes. However, there may also be a counter-argument that the amount of national or EU railway regulation with too many specific cases creates unnecessary administrative or operational burdens that leads to slower processes, hampered cross-border transport making rail less competitive, less standardised and large infrastructure projects like Fehmarn Belt less beneficial. In some cases, removing regulatory burdens could be a solution. As part of Part 1, there will be a panel discussion on the relationship between TSIs and national rules, and on whether deregulation or further standardisation in some areas could help to reduce the costs of European railway.

Two examples that will be discussed in more detail after a first panel are vehicle authorisation at ERA and ETCS. Under the Fourth Railway Package a process for EU-wide vehicle authorisation and safety certification was established, which has led to ERA facing resource challenges where it was meant to make them more efficient. The other example is ETCS which continues to develop in terms of specifications and functionalities, but lags behind in terms of deployment and cost efficiency. Both vehicle authorisations and ETCS face key upcoming challenges from large technological upgrades such as DAC and FRMCS.

Introduction to Panel I: The Role of Harmonisation

Moderator: **Joachim Lücking**, Head of Unit Rail Safety and Interoperability at European Commission

Plenary

10h15	<p>Start of parallel workshops</p> <div> <p>Workshop A TSI and National Rules <i>Rapporteur:</i> Wawrzyniec Perschke, Policy Officer, European Commission</p> <p><i>Impulse speakers:</i> Oscar Martos, ERA Project Manager Christian Vesterager, Deputy Director General, Trafikstyrelsen, NSA Denmark</p> </div> <div> <p>Workshop B Vehicle Authorisation and handling future large-scale retrofits <i>Rapporteur:</i> Flemming Jensen, CEO, DSB</p> <p><i>Impulse speakers:</i> Flemming Jensen, CEO, DSB Martin Schroeder, Economic Evaluation Officer, ERA</p> </div> <div> <p>Workshop C ETCS complexity/need for simplification <i>Rapporteur:</i> Peter Jonasson, CEO, Banedanmark</p> <p><i>Impulse speakers:</i> Peter Jonasson, CEO, Banedanmark</p> </div>
10h45	Coffee Break

11h15	<p>Continuation of parallel workshops</p> <div> <p>Workshop A TSI and National Rules <i>Impulse speakers:</i> Clio Liégeois, Belgian SPF Mobilité et Transports Mitchell van Balen, Economic Evaluation Officer, ERA</p> </div> <div> <p>Workshop B Vehicle Authorisation and handling future large-scale retrofits <i>Impulse speakers:</i> Carl Adam Holmberg, CEO Snälltåget Marcel de la Haye, CER Technical Director</p> </div> <div> <p>Workshop C ETCS complexity/need for simplification <i>Impulse speakers:</i> Jo De Bosschere, Head of ERTMS Unit, ERA Ian Conlon, Head of System Pillar Unit, EU-Rail</p> </div>
11h45	<p>Plenary Session: Feedback from the Rapporteurs Moderator: Joachim Lücking, Head of Unit Rail Safety and Interoperability at European Commission</p> <p>Rapporteur A: Wawrzyniec Perschke, Policy Officer, European Commission Rapporteur B: Flemming Jensen, CEO, DSB Rapporteur C: Peter Jonasson, CEO, Banedanmark</p>
12h15	Open Q&A in the plenary
12h45	Lunch

13h45	Feature Presentation I - The Cost of Rail from a Global Perspective Olaf Merk , Head of Transport Research Committee Secretariat, International Transport Forum
14h00	Introduction to Panel II - Supply Market and Competitiveness <i>Due to suboptimal levels of harmonisation and standardisation, rail products are customised for each European network reducing economies of scale. The lack of scale results in rail products being technically complex, expensive to develop in terms of research and development or industrial capacity, and in suppliers being unable or uninterested to serve small niche markets especially in smaller Member States. At the same time, there is an overall very high demand of railway products across Europe, with an expected increase in demand over the coming years. As a consequence, prices of rail products are high and the supply market is highly concentrated in many countries with negative effects on competition and risks of vendor lock-in. At the same time, industrial capacity is also an issue with procurement of very tailor-made products being often delayed. Panellists will discuss possible solutions to the supply market challenges.</i> Moderator: Giorgio Travaini , Executive Director of EU-Rail
14h15	<i>Discussion Impulses:</i> Kevin Cogo , COO Alstom Transport Carole Coune , AERRL Secretary General Gerhard Greiter , CEO Region North-East Europe at Siemens Mobility Bjørne Grimsrud , Managing Director for the Norwegian Institute for Transport Economics Anne Hougard Olesen , CFO, Banedanmark Jürgen Müller , Director for Strategy and Rolling Stock, DSB Enno Wiebe , UNIFE Director-General
14h45	Plenary Discussion
15h45	Coffee Break

16h15	Introduction to Panel III - Cost efficiency of Rail Infrastructure <i>Railways are the transport mode with highest interaction between vehicle and network. Trains cannot run without a well maintained and high performing infrastructure. However, that leads to rail networks being expensive to develop and to maintain, generating high costs for Member States and for railway undertaking paying track access charges. Denmark is facing at the same time important investments in the signalling programme to upgrade its network performance but also a backlog in maintenance. This is an issue faced by many other infrastructure managers that have been investigating within PRIME the issues of raising operating costs and cost efficiency. Panellists will discuss possible solutions to the high cost of rail infrastructure.</i> Moderator: Oana Gherghinescu , Executive Director of ERA
16h25	<i>Discussion Impulses:</i> Jasmin Bigdon , CTO Deutsche Bahn AG Radek Čech , Director of International Affairs and Strategy Department, Správa Železnic Matthias Ruete , European ERTMS Coordinator Laurence Daziano , Europe Director, SNCF Réseau Hinne Groot , Coordinator International Rail Affairs, Dutch Ministry for Infrastructure and Water Management Monika Heimig , EIM Executive Director
17h00	Plenary Discussion
18h00	<i>Closing Plenary - Presentation of Presidency document on findings from the conference</i> Flemming Schiller , Danish Deputy Permanent Secretary of State for Transport and Rail Director Joachim Lücking , Head of Unit Rail Safety and Interoperability at European Commission Oana Gherghinescu , Executive Director of ERA Giorgio Travaini , Executive Director of EU-Rail
18h30	End of event
19h00	Dinner



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