



Community of European Railway and
Infrastructure Companies (CER)
European Rail Infrastructure Managers
(EIM)
International Union of Wagon Keepers
(UIP)
European Rail Supply Industry (UNIFE)

Stéphane Séjourné
Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

Henna Virkkunen
Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy

Raffaele Fitto
Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms

Ekaterina Zaharieva
Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation

Apostolos Tzitzikostas
Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism

Piotr Serafin
Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration

European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

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A Railway-Specific Joint Undertaking for Europe's Future

Dear Executive Vice-Presidents,

Dear Commissioners,

Europe has placed rail at the centre of its competitiveness, climate, defence and connectivity agenda. Yet these objectives cannot be achieved with today's pace of innovation and deployment. Without a coordinated European innovation programme dedicated to our critical railway system, the gap between political ambition and implementation will continue to widen.

Europe must modernise and digitalise its railway network and accelerate deployment. This objective is not optional; they are essential if Europe, with its railway actors and its industry, is to remain competitive while meeting its climate and mobility – including military mobility – goals. At the same time, the European Rail Supply Industry is heavily challenged by competitors from China benefiting from massive subsidies in the fields of innovation and technology, posing a threat not only for jobs but also for the technological leadership of Europe's railway systems.

In the coming years, public budgets at both European and national level will remain under considerable pressure. The railway sector will therefore be required to deliver more with less: greater capacity, better performance, enhanced interoperability and higher reliability, all while ensuring the most efficient use of available resources.

Meeting these challenges requires a step change in coordinated European rail research and innovation. Fragmented initiatives or isolated research projects will not deliver the systemic transformation Europe requires. Success depends on a coordinated European approach bringing together infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, manufacturers, suppliers, research organisations and public authorities under a common strategic framework.

For this reason, we strongly advocate **the continuation and strengthening of a railway-specific Joint Undertaking** within the next European research and innovation framework programme. No other European instrument combines

long-term industrial commitment, system-level governance and coordinated deployment in the way a Joint Undertaking does. Discontinuing the railway Joint Undertaking would fragment European research efforts, slow deployment of common solutions, weaken Europe's industrial base and ultimately increase the cost and duration of railway transformation. At a time when Europe seeks greater strategic autonomy, this would send the wrong signal to industry and investors alike.

The next Railway Joint Undertaking should pursue one overarching objective: **Enabling Europe's Cost-Efficient Railway Transformation**. This means delivering strategic innovations that simultaneously increase capacity, interoperability, automation and safety while reducing lifecycle costs and accelerating deployment. To achieve this, the programme should focus on a limited number of flagship European programmes: the completion, validation and deployment of the Future Railway Mobile Communication System (FRMCS); the industrialisation and deployment of Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) for European rail freight; the next generation of cost-efficient ERTMS and automated train operations; and the development of globally competitive high-speed rolling stock in line with the European High-Speed Rail Action Plan. Together, these programmes will increase network capacity, reduce lifecycle costs, accelerate interoperability and provide the technological foundation for a more competitive, affordable and globally competitive European railway system.

Since the establishment of a first JU (Shift2Rail), the railway sector has repeatedly demonstrated the value of collaborative and co-funded European research. Abandoning this proven collaborative model at precisely the moment Europe needs faster innovation and market deployment would undermine years of progress. Europe's railway transformation cannot succeed through fragmented national or project-by-project initiatives. It requires sustained European coordination over the coming decade. **The next Railway Joint Undertaking should not be seen solely as a research programme. It should be regarded as Europe's strategic industrial transformation programme for rail.**

We therefore urge the European Commission to make a dedicated railway Joint Undertaking an integral pillar of the next Framework Programme. This is not simply a continuation of a successful instrument; it is a strategic investment in Europe's competitiveness, technological sovereignty and transport resilience. Maintaining European leadership in key railway technologies is no longer only an economic objective; it has become a matter of strategic autonomy, security of supply and long-term industrial resilience. Europe must remain the global leader in railway technology. Achieving this ambition will require a shared commitment from European institutions and the railway sector. It is therefore strategic that the European sector aligns and gets the proper support and investment to reinforce its technological leadership.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your services to discuss the strategic priorities, expected deliverables and investment needs of the next railway Joint Undertaking. The European railway sector stands ready to work in partnership with the Commission to shape and deliver Europe's next generation of railway innovation.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Beroud
CER Chair & CEO of the Polish State Railways (PKP SA)



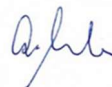
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EIM Chair & Deputy Managing Director, SNCF Réseau



Peter Reinshagen
UIP President



Martin Sion
UNIFE Chair & CEO of Alstom



Alberto Mazzola
CER Executive Director



Monika Heiming
EIM Executive Director



Gilles Peterhans
UIP Secretary General



Enno Wiebe
UNIFE Director General