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EU Council gives green light to Shift²Rail and FRP technical pillar

Written by Kevin Smith



MINISTERS that make up Europe's Transport Council today adopted a favourable position on the legal framework for the regulation establishing the Shift²Rail Joint Undertaking, while the council has also completed its work on the technical pillar of the Fourth Railway Package, which includes revising the role of the European Railway Agency (ERA).

Shift²Rail is a joint effort by the European railway industry and the European Union (EU) to redefine railway research with the aim of achieving three primary objectives: enhancing the capacity of the European railway system to cope with increased user demand, increasing the quality and reliability of railway services, and significantly reducing the lifecycle costs of the overall system.

Shift²Rail will encompass research, innovation and demonstration activities in all aspects of the railway, with investments, which will be co-financed by the EU and private sector under the Horizon 2010 programme, expected to amount to €920m.

"The council's decision shows the right approach for rail research and the opportunity to revitalise the European railway system in technical terms," CER executive director Mr Libor Lochman says.

Unife and CER also praised the council for completing its work on the Fourth Railway Package's technical pillar which consists of the revised interoperability directive, safety directive, and will transform ERA from a purely regulatory institution into an authority responsible for vehicle authorisation and safety certification.

With the European Parliament already adopting its position on the legislation following its [first reading](#), the path is now clear for discussions to begin between the European Parliament, Council and European Commission (EC). Unife hopes that the technical pillar will be adopted early during the Italian presidency of the EU which is set to begin in July.