



Joint Rail Sector Declaration on Digitalisation of Railways



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Digitalisation is ever more present in all aspects of life, and offers enormous opportunities and challenges. The rail sector, as the backbone of transport in Europe, is not new to the digital age, and is today intensifying its use of digital technologies in order to match the pace and scope of digitalisation in the wider transport chain and to adapt to customer expectations on safety, security, punctuality, capacity, transparency, and information availability. Intense and constructive cooperation of the rail sector with the European Commission is key to accelerate this process.

The shared objective of all rail stakeholders is to offer highly efficient and attractive transport options to their customers, and digitalisation is a key tool to achieve this in a fast-moving technology environment. To foster the rail sector's attractiveness and competitiveness, we are continuously adapting to the changing needs of end-users, for whom commuting mobile apps and real-time information has become part of everyday life.

The sector therefore welcomes numerous initiatives on open data and expects that any new legislative initiative on data policy will take into consideration the already existing sectorial legislation. This will allow to better promote transport data opening while taking into account specificities of railways for the benefit of customers.

Digital traffic management systems, digital energy management solutions, ever-increasing infotainment offer, e-ticketing, digital tracking and tracing applications, Big Data applications, and the use of Internet of Things, and common interfaces are just a few examples of how the rail sector is deploying the latest technologies for telematic applications for passenger and freight services in the interest of the customers and contributing to the Digital Single Market.

These efforts by the rail sector should be underpinned by a strong political and financial support from the European Commission. In the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), dedicated CEF funding should be made available to foster automation and digitalisation of the rail sector. The combination of Automated Train Protection (ATP), Automated Train Operations (ATO) and Maintenance, and Automated Train Supervision (ATS) will increase capacity, performance (punctuality and speed), interoperability, safety and last, but not least, productivity. ERTMS is recognized by the Sector as a success condition for these improvements and efficiency gain, its deployment will require additional resources in order to accelerate its rapid roll-out (especially in the framework of the revised European ERTMS Deployment Plan adopted in January 2017) and unlock the economies of scale and efficiency gains that it will bring to the rail system. Making digital railways a priority will also spread positive effects with regard to facilitating maintenance (including predictive maintenance, instrumentation of assets, processes and personnel with powerful Information and Communication Technology) and reducing cost over life cycle. In this regard, a ring-fenced budget for railway subsystems, in particular existing infrastructure and vehicles (rolling stock) should be considered.

Shift2Rail, the joint undertaking seeking focused research and innovation (R&I) and market-driven solutions by accelerating the integration of new and advanced technologies into innovative rail product solutions, is delivering new digital technologies contributing to the evolution of rail transport among others. This is made possible due to a joint effort of a large number stakeholders of the European rail sector. To tackle the ongoing mega-trends (e.g. urbanisation, growing interest for environmental issues, ageing population) and place railways as the backbone of future digital sustainable mobility in cities and outside, it is of great importance to increase the European funding instruments for rail research, development, innovation, and deployment, following Shift2Rail, by including a “Shift2Rail 2.0”, with digitalisation at its heart, in the 9th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and promoting cross-industries collaboration to handle common key issues (e.g. cyber security) and improve transfer of knowledge between sectors.

We, the Signatories of this Joint Declaration, are calling on the European Commission to uphold digitalisation as one of its key priorities and to ensure that the political importance of the topic is reflected in the funding commitments in the next MFF. We reaffirm our commitment to provide products and services that use the digital technologies for the benefit of people.

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