

## TTE Council supports SHIFT<sup>2</sup>RAIL

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*The Transport Ministers Council of the European Union (TTE), reunited at the middle of March, adopted its position on a draft regulation of the EU Council aimed to establish a public-private partnership called Shift2Rail Joint Initiative that would manage a work program on research and innovation to support the development of better railway services across Europe. The Shift2Rail objective is to double railway transport capacity, to reduce lifecycle costs by 50% and to increase the reliability and punctuality of railway transport services by 50%. The Shift2Rail mandate will end on 31 December 2024.*

Shift2Rail, a technological project launched by the Association of the European Rail Industry (UNIFE), will play a major role in coordinating and informing interested parties about the research and innovation of railway services across Europe. The technological project will manage all railway-related research and innovation actions co-financed by the EU. Shift2Rail will actively promote the implication of all relevant interested parties, including, for instance, railway equipment manufacturers, passenger association, freight transport beneficiaries, as well as the relevant scientific community.

The Shift2Rail performance will be measured with the help of quantity indicators, including a 100% increase of the railway system capacity, a 50% reduction of lifecycle costs and a 50% increase of reliability and punctuality.

The innovative technologies and solutions to be developed, proven and validated by Shift2Rail are expected to stimulate the competitiveness of the EU railway sector compared to other transport modes and foreign competition, as well as to create jobs and increase exports.

The budget proposed for SHIFT<sup>2</sup>RAIL in the financing period 2014-2020 is EUR 920 Million, EUR 450 Million of which will be allocated by the European Union and EUR 470 Million will come from the railway industry partners involved in the development of the research and technological innovation initiative. For research and innovation, of the EUR 450 Million allocated by the EU, EUR 180 Million will be allocated to the associated members and the rest of EUR 180 Million will be attributed to other partners. This objective seeks to attract the SMEs and the research institutes into the project.

“SHIFT<sup>2</sup>RAIL is one of the top transport priorities of the Hellenic Presidency, it will move rail transport forward, and help the market grow. The European Rail Industry should remain the leader of the global market and SHIFT<sup>2</sup>RAIL is the instrument to achieve this”, declared Michalis Papadopoulos, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks for the Hellenic Republic.

“Rail is facing significant competition from other transport modes and, from other regions of the world; in order to combat this SHIFT<sup>2</sup>RAIL combines a significant amount of EU and sector R&D resources with a long-term vision that will produce tangible results that contribute to the EU’s ambitious transport goals”, pointed out Olivier Onidi, Director for the European Mobility Network at the European Commission.

Henri Poupart-Lafarge, President of Alstom Transport and Chairman of UNIFE, highlighted why the sector needs such dedicated funds to invest in rail R&D to increase the attractiveness of the rail mode and the competitiveness of the European rail industry, which accounts for 50% of the world market for rail supplies and services.

[ by Elena Ilie ]