

IRG Rail

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Network Meeting in Lisbon – 29 April

IRG-Rail held its first 2019 Network Meeting in Lisbon on April 29th

IRG-Rail had its first yearly Network Meeting, under the Portuguese Chairmanship of Mr. João Carvalho and the Vice-Chairmanship of Mr. Serge Drugmand from the Belgium Regulatory Body. Several representatives of Member states were also present.

The Network meeting was intended to ensure coordination of proposals to be considered by the IRG-Rail's Plenary Assembly, which will take place on the 27th of May in Porto. This was a valuable opportunity for Members to communicate with the Presidency and review the work developed by the IRG-Rail's working groups and sub-groups.

The Presidency also gave feedback on the meetings held with stakeholders of the sector, highlighting three main topics:

- i. According to stakeholders, a 5th Railway Package is not necessary and the appropriate implementation of Fourth Railway Package is absolutely paramount. Most of the countries still need to transpose the legislation and there is much to be done. The new Commission should focus on this matter;
- ii. Rail operators must shift their mind-set from rail to mobility. As passengers are demanding door-to-door multimode travel solutions as compared to traditional modality products, competition from ride and car-sharing services offer ultrafast, flexible and inexpensive demand response compared to rail options. Additionally, electric vehicles hold the promise of more environmentally friendly alternatives, while self-driving autonomous vehicles are serving to reduce the costs of road travel when compared to those of rail; and
- iii. Internet giants and digital start-ups are all pushing multimode transportation platforms, and offer easy-to-use digital customer interface options that cater to customer demands for seamless integrated planning, booking, payment, and on-board conveniences. The blueprint for transformation draws upon three key digital actions: 1) develop new business models and offerings, 2) digitalize core operations, and 3) build a robust internal digital foundation.

The group's discussion was beneficial and revealed the close collaboration of the Member

regulatory bodies and working groups. Lastly, the pace for contributions was set for the upcoming Plenary Assembly, giving way to the deliberations of the most recent IRG-Rails' working outputs.

