

# IRG Rail

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## First Strategy Committee of IRG-Rail in 2019 – Lisbon, 28th of January

The first IRG-Rail Strategy Committee of the year 2019 took place in Lisbon, last 28<sup>th</sup> of January. President João Carvalho chaired and Serge Drugmand co-chaired the first meeting of the Portuguese Presidency. Several issues were discussed with all IRG-Rail members, looking to improve the functioning of IRG-Rail to better respond to the challenges of the sector.

Nowadays, the rail sector faces many challenges, in particular with higher costs in development investments and operational costs, heavy reliance on public funding, administrative and technical barriers, a lack of homogeneity in governance structures and different approaches to liberalisation of rail markets, pursuant of Directive 2012/34/EU.

The European Commission has created a range of measures to overcome these challenges and launched a series of four railway packages all designed to introduce competition. Several improvements have been achieved all over the years with these measures. However, to address some unsolved issues and enhance competitiveness of EU rail services, the Commission started the 4th Railway Package. The railway sector is required to compete with other means of transport, particularly roads to attain environmental regions. When it comes to railway reform, it is essential for policy makers and experts to learn from other countries' experiences.

As previously said by a former IRG-Rail President, *“the idea of IRG-Rail is that we can be more effective as national rail regulators if we learn from each other, cooperate in particular cross-border issues, and define common positions on drafts for new European legislation”*.

