

# IRG Rail

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## IRG-Rail Stakeholders meetings Brussels, 1-2 April 2019

Representatives of industry and passengers met this week in Brussels with IRG-Rail Chair and Vice-Chair to debate sector challenges

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, in Brussels, IRG-Rail Presidency held meetings with industry and passengers' representatives. These meetings sought, above all, optimising stakeholder engagement and building a collective understanding in the underlying factors that promote the rail sector. The stakeholders expressed their concerns' and stated their positions on the main challenges of the sector and entities they represent. The industry's representatives praised IRG-Rail's initiative for the added value of coordinating with the sectors' stakeholders.

The first round of meetings with representatives of Stakeholders organizations allowed not only the discussion of several open questions and areas of concern, but also the presentation of the key work areas for 2019. Further discussion included subjects such as, included i) issues rising from automation and digitalization, ii) the global challenges the sector is facing, such as lack of investment and stronger environmental requirements, iii) harmonization of procedures and legislation among Member States and, iv) work towards a multi-modal strategy for transport.

Stakeholder experiences and expectations for the market were also addressed. IRG-Rail President, Mr. João Carvalho and Vice-President, Mr. Serge Drugmand, met with several entities, namely:

- ERA – European Union Agency for Railways, represented by Mr. Joseph Doppelbauer. As mentioned by ERA, *“the objective of the Agency is to contribute, on technical matters, to the implementation of the European Union legislation aimed at improving the competitive position of the railway sector by enhancing the level of interoperability of railway systems, and at developing a common approach to safety on the European railway system, in order to contribute to creating a European railway area without frontiers and guaranteeing a high level of safety.”*;
- EPF – European Passengers' Federation, represented by Mr. Michel Quidort and Mr. Arrien Kruyt. EPF is an *“association of passenger organisations and organisations promoting sustainable mobility committed to improving standards on public transport and long-distance international rail services in Europe.”*;
- UIRR – International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport, represented by Mr. Ralf Charley, Mr. Eric Feyen and Mr. Akos Ersek. UIRR presents itself as *“the industry*

*association for the sector of Combined Transport in Brussels. Its members are Combined Transport Operators and Combined Transport Terminals. UIRR actively promotes Combined Transport, primarily towards European decision-makers and facilitates the enhancement of the sector, while also supporting the daily functioning of this ecologically and economically sustainable mode of long(er) distance freight transport."*

- CER - Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies, represented by Mr. Libor Lochman. As mentioned by CER, "*CER's role is to represent the interests of its members on the EU policy-making scene, in particular to support an improved business and regulatory environment for European railway operators and railway infrastructure companies*".

IRG-Rail President reiterated the commitment to working closely with stakeholders. The success of railway sector requires a strategic approach that prioritizes key capacity challenges that, if addressed, can unlock the true potential of this sector. Additional regulation needs to be implemented to safeguard competition from distortions and to ensure businesses are not hindered. EU regulators and associations are doing a lot already, but more will need to be done and this is a discussion to be continued.

IRG-Rail is committed to deal with genuine concerns that stakeholders may have. This commitment is underpinned by listening carefully and responding appropriately to complaints raised by stakeholders and by continue to promote meetings with stakeholders organizations, in order to facilitate knowledge exchange and focus on relevant issues across the industry.