



Kick-Off of three Shift2Rail lighthouse projects: Roll2Rail, IT2Rail and In2Rail

A combined kick-off meeting of three new EU rail research and development projects (Roll2Rail, IT2Rail and In2Rail) took place today in Brussels. These three projects have been selected by the European Commission following the first “Mobility for Growth” call of the Horizon 2020 Programme. These projects endeavour to launch key research activities that will feed into the Innovation Programmes of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking. Roll2Rail and IT2Rail will be coordinated by UNIFE, the European Rail Industry Association, while Network Rail, the UK Infrastructure Manager, will coordinate In2Rail.

The kick-off meeting brought together 200 participants from the rail industry sector (representing railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, industry, SMEs, research institutions and academia from Western, Central, and Eastern EU Member states) involved in the projects and high level representatives from the European Commission (Keir Fitch – Head of Unit, Research & Innovative Transport Systems, DG Move), the European Railway Agency (Josef Doppelbauer –Executive Director) and the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (Christos Economou – Interim Executive Director). Following this collective launch ceremony, each of these three projects held their individual kick-off meetings in the afternoon.

The regulation establishing the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking was adopted by the Council of the EU in June 2014 with full support of the European Parliament, following five years of investigation and work of key European Rail sector players under the coordination of UNIFE and in cooperation with the European Commission. Such a Joint Undertaking for rail research is of paramount importance since the European leadership of the global rail market can only be maintained if a critical mass of committed EU industry joins forces to develop innovative, high-capacity, and high-quality products with a long-term vision. The award and official start of these lighthouse projects is the first of many stepping stones along the way to achieving the ambitious EU transport and competitiveness goals of the initiative.

Roll2Rail aims to develop key technologies and to remove identified blocking points for innovation in the field of railway vehicles as part of a longer term strategy to revolutionise the rolling stock of the future. At the end of the project all the results will be further developed, leading to demonstration in real vehicles or relevant environments feeding into Innovation Programme 1.

IT2Rail aims to create a seamless travel experience through a complete multimodal travel offering, connecting the first and last mile to long distance journeys combining air, rail, coach and other services whilst offering a seamless access to all travel services, enhancing the travel experience through the integration of a wealth of travel services supported by innovative digital technologies. IT2RAIL will feed into the proposed work of Innovation Programme 4.

In2Rail aims to set the foundation for a resilient, consistent, cost-efficient, high capacity, and digitalised European rail network. A holistic approach covering Smart Infrastructures, Intelligent Mobility Management (I2M) and Rail Power Supply and Energy Management will be applied. In2Rail will feed into Innovation Programmes 2 and 3.

Philippe Citroën, Director General of UNIFE, the European Rail Industry Association, commented: *"UNIFE is pleased to be part of these three projects which will carry out the preliminary work of the future core research activities of Shift2Rail—this is a major milestone for our industry which is currently facing immense competition from outside of Europe."*

Alison Smith, Head of Technology & Innovation for Network Rail, added: *"The In2Rail project is a key step on the journey to deliver the railway of the future, and for Network Rail, the project presents a significant and hugely exciting opportunity to improve the railway - an opportunity not to be missed by us or the other project partners."*

Keir Fitch, Head of Unit, Research & Innovative Transport Systems at the European Commission's DG-Move, commented: *"DG-Move looks forward to a fruitful cooperation on these Shift2Rail lighthouse projects which represent the real start-up of the research and innovation work of Shift2Rail."*

The presentations slides from the morning kickoff event will be available on the UNIFE website shortly. For more information on the Roll2Rail, IT2Rail and In2Rail lighthouse projects please contact Nicolas Furio at nicolas.furio@unife.org.