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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
Council on 8 June 2026
Presentation of the sixth Progress Report of the Platform on International
Rail Passenger Transport (IRP)
- Information from Austria and the Netherlands

1.1. The IRP Platform

This Integrated Progress Report of the Ministerial Platform on International Rail Passenger Transport (IRP) sets forth the progress made, over the 2025-2026 period, regarding the ministers' declaration of the Ministries of Transport of the EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway. During the Transport Council on June 4, 2020, the European countries embraced the initiative to work on a common agenda aimed at fostering and supporting the improvement of international railway passenger transport in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. As a result of the political declaration, a joint platform of the EU Member States¹, Norway and Switzerland was set up to further facilitate discussions. In 2022, the United Kingdom acceded as an observer. The platform is supported by sector parties and the consumer organisations including BEUC / European Passenger Federation (EPF). It also involves representatives of the European Commission, European Union Agency for Railways, OTIF, and EU-Rail.

¹ With the exception of Cyprus and Malta.

Panteia supported the Platform in drafting the fifth progress report. In 2025 the Platform decided to continue its work until 2030 with a view to support the market development of international rail services. The stakeholders revised their mandate and formed the Sector Delivery Group (SDG) to contribute to the 6th Progress Report.

1.2. Progress

The Platform concentrated its work in 2025-2026 on monitoring the results in the international rail passenger market and on the progress made in the various barriers to be solved for an accelerated market development.

Monitoring results

All platform members have monitored the development of international rail services. Good practice cases have been presented from i.e. Austria, Italy, Germany, Croatia, Bosnia, Denmark, Sweden. Data on the development of four key market segments were collected:

- Regional cross-border rail passenger transport;
- Long distance cross-border rail passenger transport;
- High-speed cross-border transport;
- Cross-border night trains.

The report highlights an enduring positive trend regarding the number of cross-border night trains and high-speed trains (22% more cross-border service connections). In addition, more services are expected to be launched in the years ahead. The capacity of cross-border high-speed trains can be estimated at 50 mln. passengers annually already. This shows a positive trend and contribution of cross-border rail to sustainable transport.

Priority areas of further work for the platform / SDG

The Platform, in close coordination with the SDG, decided to work on the following issues:

- Customer experience and rail ticketing;
- Capacity management and role of Member States coordination
- Rolling stock availability (financing and certification)
- Pilots and corridors

Relevant initiatives at EU level (e.g. the recently published rail ticketing proposals as well as the EU plan for high-speed rail), will feed into the national and sectoral workstreams.

On the issue of railway capacity, the Platform cooperated with the network of executive boards of the EU rail freight corridors to develop a common procedure for coordinating the strategic guidance frameworks of Member States, as foreseen in the recently adopted Regulation. By October 2027 such coordination should be finalised for the first time.

Finally, the Platform is currently considering to develop a long-term (2040) vision on international rail passenger services in order to align policy efforts of all parties. Many Member States are already doing this for planning purposes at national level, and the sector has developed first concepts (Eurolink by RailnetEurope).

