



The Group of Representative Bodies (GRB)

Mr Olivier Onidi
European Commission
Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
Directorate B – European mobility network

Brussels, 15.07.2015

Shift²Rail

Dear Mr Onidi,

Within the European railway sector, the Joint Undertaking SHIFT²RAIL is broadly acknowledged to be the first European initiative focussing on research and innovation (R&I) and market-driven solutions by accelerating the demonstration and integration of new and advanced technologies into innovative solutions for the operational railway.

The Group of Representative Bodies (GRB) would like to emphasise that the SHIFT²RAIL initiative will be key in supporting the implementation of the objectives of the Transport White Paper (2011) and the realisation of the Single European Railway Area (SERA).

A significant number of GRB members have made great efforts to initiate, build up and/or shape the SHIFT²RAIL Joint Undertaking. We note however that after the first phase of euphoria about a breakthrough in rail research and innovation, progress has slowed to a pace that is both disappointing and not very motivational.

GRB is concerned by the delays in the setting-up and implementation of the joint undertaking. SHIFT²RAIL has been in the development pipeline of the European Commission for many years and the initiative has met with broad consensus among the sector stakeholders. Europe cannot afford to hold back the start of this significant R&I programme any longer, which all the investors were expecting – and for which resourcing plans were prepared – in the first quarter of 2015. We are disappointed that this is being delayed by administrative processes that could threaten the competitiveness of the European rail sector.

The Group of Representative Bodies calls upon the European Commission and its relevant services to significantly accelerate the setting-up of SHIFT²RAIL to start the research and innovation activities as soon as possible. GRB is ready and on hand to provide whatever help and assistance it can to stimulate the successful start-up of SHIFT²RAIL.

In this context I am convinced that your personal engagement is absolutely vital and I hope to receive feedback from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Doherty
GRB chair

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