

## Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director, EU Agency for Railways

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Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to EIM !

EIM, the association of European rail infrastructure managers, was established in 2002, following the adoption of the First EU Railway Package. ERA, the EU Agency for Railways, was established only two years later in 2004, following the adoption of the Second Railway Package.

Since then, the pace of change has been a challenging but necessary one. ERA has developed the first generations of Technical Specifications Interoperability (TSI), most of them are relevant for rail infrastructure managers. ERA has also drastically reduced national rules to make the necessary step towards a true European railway system. ERA has also become the system authority for the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), which is currently being deployed by rail infrastructure managers on their networks. All these changes have required close and constant cooperation with EIM.

One can state that over time, ERA and EIM have truly become strategic partners. This partnership is set to continue as we have entered a new decade of rail infrastructure development. This phase brings by new generations of TSIs, digitalisation, standardisation and new initiatives to bring by the single European Railway Area (SERA) with infrastructure as its seamless backbone.

Therefore, rail infrastructure managers have been given a special role in the European Commission's plan to complete the SERA since the adoption of the very first of the four subsequent Railway Packages. Rail infrastructure managers will be at the heart of the project that creates the rail network that we all long for – one that crosses borders seamlessly, absorbs a high volume of freight traffic and therefore lightens the burden on our roads. A network that is resilient and coordinated at European level, to show to European citizens the intrinsic value of rail transport, and its essential role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emission. This network will increasingly be managed digitally, for better quality at lower cost.

ERA is looking forward to the continuation of the excellent cooperation with EIM and its members to deliver a truly European rail infrastructure area in which no boundaries exist and railway undertakings are free to cross the EU from one edge to another.

As the Executive Director of ERA, I know that I can count on EIM, its constructive spirit and optimism to make the single European railway area not a remote dream but a reality within this decade. The entire European Union Agency for Railways wishes EIM all the best for its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on its journey ... with ERA !



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