



Press Release

Brussels, 27 October 2020

Memorandum of Understanding signed between Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking and the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community

The signature of the Memorandum of Understanding took place on Monday 26 October, during the Transport Community Ministerial Meeting.

The Transport Community is an International Organization established by the Treaty establishing the Transport Community that was signed on 9 October 2017 and comprises the following Parties: the European Union and the South East European Parties being the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo*¹, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia.

In the framework of the Transport Community, the involved South East European Parties committed themselves to develop and implement a Regional Rail Strategy in the Western Balkans. In this context the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community set up a Rail Action Plan.

The objective of this agreement is to promote cooperation on rail Research & Innovation between the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking and the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community to contribute to the modernization of the rail sector in the Western Balkan region through the deployment of new technologies and innovative solutions.

“This Memorandum of Understanding is very important for us because digitalisation and the fostering of rail interoperability are crucial aspects of railway system transformation. Shift2Rail can contribute to this process by creating opportunities for testing demonstrations and delivering quick wins resulting from Shift2Rail Research & Innovation”, explains Mr. Carlo Borghini, Executive Director of Shift2Rail.

The cooperation will start during the ongoing programming period under Horizon 2020, and will continue in the new programming period that is expected to start in the second half of 2021, under Horizon Europe.

Commenting on the new agreement, the Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community, Mr. Matej Zakonjsek, stated “In an effort to make traveling and transporting goods by rail attractive for citizens and companies in the Western Balkans, Transport Community is proud to cooperate with Shift 2 Rail. This Memorandum of Understanding is a testament of our joint dedication to bring innovation and digital solutions to Western Balkans, shift more cargo from roads to rail and, in doing so, make the region’s transport system more competitive and better connected with the EU. Rail system investments will make the region more economically viable and facilitate development. We are looking forward to working together with Shift2Rail on achieving these important goals.”

¹ (*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Shift2Rail believes that working together with the Permanent Secretariat will make a significant contribution to strengthening the European connection at the border of the European Union.

About the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (S2R JU)

Shift2Rail is the first European rail public private partnership tasked with developing strategically focused research and innovation (R&I) and market-driven solutions, integrating these to create the railway systems of the future. With a total value of €920 million for the period 2014-2020, funded through the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union, Shift2Rail is promoting the competitiveness of the European rail industry, ensuring the attractiveness of rail as a safe and sustainable low carbon transport mode. This way, Shift2Rail aims to meet the changing transport/mobility needs of EU citizens and the economy.

Shift2Rail Communication (+32 2 541 83 74) - communication@s2r.europa.eu

Contact: Caroline Kearney, Chief Communication Officer - caroline.kearney@s2r.europa.eu

<http://www.shift2rail.org>

