

EU and ASEAN unite for Seamless Railway Operations in the region

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, May 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On 8 May 2024, the two-day EU-ASEAN Workshop on Seamless Railway Operations, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, concluded successfully, marking a significant step forward in advancing railway connectivity within the region.

The event aimed at discussing the study on Seamless Railway Operations in ASEAN prepared under the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI), a demand-driven programme that supports ASEAN regional integration by strengthening the EU-ASEAN networks and exchanging knowledge and experience in policy areas of joint interests.



Participants at the EU-ASEAN Workshop on Seamless Railway Operations, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Over 40 participants from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States attended the event in person and virtually. They represented government agencies, international organisations, railway operators, industry, and academia.

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Ms Shazrina Binti Mohd Hanifiah, Ministry of Transport of Malaysia

Ms Shazrina Binti Mohd Hanifiah, Principal Assistant Secretary, Rail Division, Ministry of Transport of Malaysia, representing the Chairman of the ASEAN Railway Sub-Working Group (ARSWG), stated at the opening of the event: ‘Fostering closer cooperation between the EU and ASEAN Member States helps to unlock the full potential of rail transport as a driver of economic growth, trade facilitation, and sustainable development.’ Mr Harvey Rouse, Head of the International Relations Unit of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Mobility

and Transport (DG MOVE), informed: ‘The EU is actively supporting this ASEAN regional process and its ambitions and, since 2017, the ASEAN-EU Senior Transport Officials Dialogue (STOD) has

been established to facilitate the exchanges across all transport modes and help identify and promote cooperation in new areas.'

At the event, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) gave insights into challenges and solutions with regard to the EU policy on interoperability on the European railway network.

The study on Seamless Railway Operations in ASEAN, discussed in the workshop, focuses on the Singapore-Kunming Rail Line (SKRL) and the prospect of implementing a common traffic management system across ASEAN Member States. It highlights the importance of political will, customer-oriented services and the need for open procedures and harmonisation of operational rules for successful railway connectivity.

Based on the draft study, attendees of the two-day event engaged in meaningful sessions around enhancing railway infrastructure, cross-border regulatory alignment, and the economic impact of international railway transport. Participants also visited the Operation Control Center (OCC) of the Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (MRT) at the Sungai Buloh station in Malaysia.

Some recommendations stemming from the event include harmonising regional railway infrastructure, addressing missing cross-border links, and maintaining a register of infrastructure. The establishment of an ASEAN railway interoperability roadmap, bilateral agreements, and cross-acceptance of rail-related rules were part of the recommendations proposed to streamline operations. Additionally, from the study recommendations, the bankability of railway corridors and focusing on railway safety were proposed as one of the crucial steps to improve railway connectivity. Finally, in order to avoid limitations to interoperability and to enable future capacity increase without building new infrastructure, the study recommended to attain at an early stage a high-level political understanding of the need to adopt a unified, standardised command, control and signalling system.

The workshop showcased the commitment of both regions to advancing sustainable transportation solutions and fostering greater sustainable connectivity. The study's conclusions and recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for advancing railway connectivity and good basis for further cooperation. By leveraging the collective expertise of the EU and ASEAN, the region is poised to improving seamless interoperability in ASEAN.

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