Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking

2013/0445(NLE) - 15/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 638 votes to 29, with 7 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking.

Parliament made the following amendments to the Commission proposal :

Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking: the JU was created in order to coordinate and manage Union research and innovation investments in the European rail sector, and established until 31 December 2024.

To take account of the duration of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), Parliament proposed that **all calls for proposals should be launched by 31 December 2020.** In duly justified cases calls for proposals may be launched until 31 December 2021.

Objectives: the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking should have the following objectives:

- contribute to the achievement of the Single European Railway Area with a user-friendly (including for persons with reduced mobility), competitive, efficient and sustainable European rail system,
- play a central role in rail-related research and innovation actions funded at Union level, ensuring coordination among projects and providing all stakeholders with relevant information;
- implement measures that promote the participation of SMEs, universities and Research Centres;
- seek complementarity and close synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds ("ESIF") in order to help close the research and innovation divide in Europe.

The **S2R Master plan** must include the creation of Innovation Programmes in areas such as ; (i) cost-efficient and Reliable Trains, including High Capacity Trains and High Speed Trains ; (b) cost-efficient, sustainable and Reliable High Capacity Infrastructure.

Financial contribution: the maximum Union contribution, including contributions from countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), to the Joint Undertaking to cover administrative costs and operational costs should be **EUR 450 million** (as stated in the Commission proposal).

Members stipulated that the delegation agreement shall address the following elements inter alia:

- the arrangements regarding the provision of data necessary to ensure that the Commission is able to meet its dissemination and reporting obligations; including on the **single portal for participants** as well as through other Horizon 2020 electronic means of dissemination managed by the Commission;
- provisions for the **publication of calls for proposals** of the S2RJoint Undertaking also on the single portal for participants as well as through other Horizon 2020 electronic means of dissemination managed by the Commission.

Rules for participation and dissemination: with a view to the overall aim of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of achieving greater simplification and harmonisation of the European research and innovation funding landscape, Joint Undertakings should avoid sets of rules that are different from those of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.

Duty to divulge information: the amended text contains a new provision stating that the staff of the Joint Undertaking, the Executive Director and the members of the Governing Board should without delay notify OLAF of any instances of fraud which have come to their attention in the fulfilment of their duties or remit, without in any way being made accountable for them as a result.

The Executive Director should be appointed by the Governing Board on the grounds of merit, from a list of candidates proposed by the Commission, after an open and transparent competition. **The European Parliament shall be entitled to object**.

Before being appointed, the candidate selected by the Governing Board shall **answer the questions** put by the members of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Budgetary Control of the European Parliament. On **management of the budget**, the Executive Director shall submit to the European Parliament, at the latter's request any information required for the smooth application of the discharge procedure

Evaluation: by **30 June 2017** the Commission shall organise an independent interim evaluation of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking, including an assessment of the involvement and openness to small and medium enterprises, as well as the administrative functioning of the S2R Joint Undertaking with a special focus on addressing any administrative challenges or burdens. The Commission should send that report to the European Parliament and to the Council by 31 December 2017.

The results of the independent interim evaluation of the Joint Undertaking should be taken into account in the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020.