



2023/2699

1.12.2023

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2023/2699

of 27 November 2023

on the TEN-T cross-border railway connections between Brussels and Luxembourg on the North–Sea Mediterranean Core Network Corridor (part of the EuroCap–Rail project)

(notified under document C(2023)7384)

(only the Dutch and French texts are authentic)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 47(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) As acknowledged by the consecutive Work Plans for the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor, the cross–border railway project EuroCap–Rail is the railway link that aims to modernise the Brussels–Luxembourg link, going further to Strasbourg, achieving a high-performance line connecting the three European institutional capitals. When completed, it will improve local, short-distance cross–border, national, and international traffic flows from Benelux to Switzerland and Italy.
- (2) Decarbonising transport is a key policy objective of the Union. The Commission Communication ‘The European Green Deal’ ⁽²⁾ of 11 December 2019 has confirmed and strengthened the Union’s ambitions towards fighting climate change.
- (3) In this context, fostering railway transport to move goods and passengers, as outlined by the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy ⁽³⁾, is an important Union transport policy and a long-standing priority for the implementation of the TEN-T network.
- (4) Through the completion of the cross–border railway project EuroCap–Rail, the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor will be equipped and modernised with modern, safe and energy efficient railway transport infrastructure contributing to the achievement of the above objectives.
- (5) The EuroCap–Rail project is pre-identified on the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor in Part III of the Annex to Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁴⁾.
- (6) The EuroCap–Rail project is an important cross-border railway project involving Belgium and Luxembourg, benefitting France as well as other Member States, which rely on a modern rail connection from the Benelux to Switzerland and Italy.
- (7) This project implies the creation of new infrastructure and the improvement of existing infrastructure. In order to support the coordinated and timely implementation of the project, it is necessary to adopt provisions laying down a description of the necessary actions and the timetable for their implementation.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘The European Green Deal’, COM(2019)640 final.

⁽³⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, ‘Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future’, COM (2020) 789 final.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014 (OJ L 249, 14.7.2021, p. 38).

- (8) This will help achieving the cross-border objectives of the Work Plan for the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor.
- (9) Belgium and Luxembourg have already carried out significant works, including studies and infrastructure works, for the realisation of the EuroCap–Rail project.
- (10) For these reasons, it is important to identify the remaining actions necessary for the full completion of the project, so that European and national resources can be optimised, in line with respective planning and applicable co-financing rates, together with the available financial resources at national and regional level.
- (11) In order to monitor progress of the project's implementation, the Member States concerned should provide the Commission with regular reports on the matter, concerning the sections situated in their respective territories, and notify any delays encountered.
- (12) The implementation timetable set out by this Decision should be without prejudice to the fulfilment of the requirements defined in the international and Union law, including provisions to protect the environment and human health. This timetable should allow to plan and fully optimise the availability of funding, without prejudging the financial commitment of a Member State or of the Union. It should, under no circumstances, compromise the Union's and Member State's standards for environmental protection and public participation.
- (13) Member States concerned should comply with Union environmental legislation, in particular Council Directive 92/43/EEC ⁽⁵⁾ and Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁶⁾. Mitigation measures should be applied to sections that fall into Natura 2000 sites and conditions are set to allow works to be carried out during the most appropriate periods.
- (14) Without prejudice to Article 47(2) second subparagraph of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, it is appropriate to foresee a review clause in this Decision.
- (15) Belgium and Luxembourg have approved the measures provided for in this Decision.
- (16) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee referred to in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Subject matter

This Decision lays down a description of the actions and the implementation timetable for the cross-border railway project EuroCap–Rail between Brussels and Luxembourg.

Article 2

Actions and timetable

Belgium and Luxembourg shall ensure the timely implementation of the following actions:

On line 161 (Brussels – Namur)

- (a) Watermael – Ottignies: 4-lane upgrading work to increase traffic capacity and speed by December 2026:
 - railway engineering works (tracks, catenaries and signalling) for the renewal of existing tracks and the addition of 2 new tracks between Watermael (included) and Ottignies station (not included) by December 2026.

⁽⁵⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

⁽⁶⁾ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1).

- (b) Ottignies – Louvain-La-Neuve junction: 4-lane upgrading work to increase traffic capacity and speed by December 2028:
- Construction of the station platforms to accommodate the renewed tracks by December 2028;
 - Railway engineering works (tracks, catenaries and signalling) for the renewal of tracks in Ottignies station (inclusive) up to the Louvain-La-Neuve junction (inclusive) by December 2028.
- (c) Junction Louvain-La-Neuve to Gembloux: work to increase in traffic speed by December 2028:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2028;
 - replacement or adaptation of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient in view of the increase in speed by December 2028;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment of large excavated material with a view to facilitating water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2028;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms of the unmanned stopping points of Mont-Saint-Guibert, Blanmont, Chastre and Ernage by December 2028;
 - revision of the signalling in view of the speed increase by December 2028;
 - re-electrification of the section with a 3kV compound catenary by December 2028.
- (d) Gembloux – Rhisnes: work to increase in traffic speed by December 2027:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2026;
 - replacement or adaptation of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient in view of the increase in speed by December 2026;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment of large excavated material with a view to facilitating water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2026;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms of the unmanned stopping points of Loncée, Beuzet, Saint-Denis-Bovesse, by December 2026;
 - revision of the signalling in view of the speed increase by December 2027;
 - re-electrification of the section with a 3kV compound catenary by December 2026;
 - removal of level crossings 56 and 58 by December 2026.
- (e) Rhisnes – Namur: work to increase in traffic speed by December 2029:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2029;
 - replacement of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient given the increase in speed by December 2029;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment to grind rock wall and large excavated material to facilitate water discharge and maintenance operations by December 2029;
 - extension and raising of the station platform of the unmanned stopping point of Rhisnes by December 2029;
 - revision of the signalling in view of the speed increase by December 2029;
 - re-electrification of the section with a 3kV compound catenary by December 2029;
 - construction of a new switching station in Rhisnes by December 2029.

On line 162 (Namur – Luxembourg border)

- (a) Ciney – Haversin: work to increase in traffic speed by December 2027:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2025;

- replacement of engineering structures whose gauge has become insufficient in view of the increase in speed by December 2025;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment to grind rock wall and large excavated material to facilitate water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2025;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms of the unmanned stopping points of Leignon and Chapois by December 2025;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2027;
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed 3kV/25kV catenary by December 2025;
 - removal of the Leignon and Chapois level crossings by December 2024.
- (b) Haversin – Marloie: work to increase in traffic speed by December 2028:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2028;
 - replacement of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient given the increase in speed by December 2028;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment to grind rock wall and large excavated material to facilitate water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2028;
 - extension and raising of the station platform of the Aye unmanned stopping point by December 2028;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2028;
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed 3kV/25kV catenary by December 2028;
 - rectification of railway curves by December 2027.
- (c) Gare de Marloie: comprehensive redevelopment of the railway infrastructure:
- upgrading and complete replacement of track infrastructure by June 2025;
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed catenary 3kV/25kV by December 2025;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2025;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms by December 2026.
- (d) Marloie – Jemelle: work to increase of traffic speed by December 2029.
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2029;
 - replacement of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient given the increase in speed by December 2029;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment to grind rock wall and large excavated material to facilitate water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2029;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2025;
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed 3kV/25kV catenary by December 2029;
- (e) Jemelle – Grupont: work to increase of traffic speed by December 2029:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 to 2,25 m) by December 2029;
 - replacement of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient in view of the increase in speed by December 2029;
 - remediation of the railway track platform including the treatment of rock faces and large excavated material to facilitate water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2029;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms of the Forrières unmanned stopping point by December 2029;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2029.
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed 3kV/25kV catenary by December 2029;

- (f) Grupont – Hatrival: increase of traffic speed by December 2027:
- regularise the track spacing at 2,25 m (currently varying between 2,00 and 2,25 m) by December 2025;
 - replacement of engineering structures the gauge of which has become insufficient in view of the increase in speed by December 2025;
 - remediation of the railway track platforms including the treatment of rock faces and large excavated material to facilitate water drainage and maintenance operations by December 2025;
 - extension and raising of the station platforms of the unmanned stopping points of Grupont and Poix-Saint-Hubert by December 2025;
 - installation of new signalling by December 2027;
 - re-electrification of the section with a mixed 3kV/25kV catenary by December 2025;
 - rectification of railway curves by December 2025.
- (g) Ciney – Hatrival: voltage switching from 3kV to 25kV by December 2029:
- installation of a 25kV supply on the Namur – Hatrival section with the construction of a new switching station, a distribution substation and 7 autotransformer substations by December 2029;
 - installation of a new zone of phase separation and new zone of voltage separation by December 2029;
 - adaptation of the current catenary of line 43 to allow 25kV supply from Marloie station to Melreux by December 2029.

On line n°8, Luxembourg

- (a) Construction of a new railway line between Luxembourg and Bettembourg by the end of 2026 with testing, homologation, certification and training by the end 2028:
- railway track platform works – Livange-Bettembourg section, by September 2025;
 - railway track platform works – Howald-Hesperange section, by August 2025;
 - railway track platform works – Hesperange-Berchem section, by November 2025;
 - finalization of the connection of the new line at Bettembourg station, by November 2026;
 - completion of the connection of the new railway line at Howald station by December 2026;
 - completion of works on the railway line by December 2026.
- (b) Redevelopment of Bettembourg station:
- commissioning of the new signal box at Bettembourg station by December 2026;
 - study of the redevelopment of Bettembourg station by December 2023;
 - start of work at Bettembourg station: 2026;
 - end of work at Bettembourg station: 2033.

Article 3

Reporting

Belgium and Luxembourg shall report at least once a year to the Commission and to the European Coordinator for the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor on the progress in implementing the actions referred to in Article 2 and shall notify any delay encountered, specifying the causes for the delay and indicating the corrective measures taken. For this purpose, those Member States may use, when appropriate, the content of the Annual Status Reports to be submitted under the Connecting Europe Facility Grant Agreements.

*Article 4***Review**

By 31 December 2025 at the latest, the Commission shall, following a request from Belgium and Luxembourg, or at its own initiative, carry out a review of the actions and of the timetable referred to in Article 2, with the assistance of the European Coordinator for the North Sea–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor.

Article 5

This Decision is addressed to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Done at Brussels, 27 November 2023.

For the Commission
Adina VĂLEAN
Member of the Commission
