

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF  
RAILWAYS (UIC) AND THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE  
(WWF-CEE)**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been concluded between the International Union of Railways (hereafter referred to as "UIC"), represented by François Davenne, Director General, and the WWF Central and Eastern Europe (hereafter referred to as "WWF-CEE"), represented by Andreas Beckmann, on behalf of WWF-CEE's legal entities in Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

UIC and WWF-CEE may each be referred to individually as "a Party" or collectively as "the Parties".

**HAVING REGARD** to the fact that UIC is the trade association which represents the rail sector worldwide, supported by regional strategies developed by railway operators and infrastructure managers.

**HAVING REGARD** to the fact that UIC brings together more than 200 members from all six continents, including integrated railway companies and infrastructure managers.

**HAVING REGARD** to the fact that WWF-CEE, as part of the global WWF network, is working in Central and Southeastern Europe to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and nature, to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature.

**HAVING REGARD** to the fact that WWF-CEE's strategy includes ensuring that the development of transport infrastructure and extensions consider the environment, including in particular ecological corridors in the Danube and Carpathian ecoregions and the countries of southeast Europe, including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

**RECOGNISING** that the key objective of this agreement is to take immediate action for a more sustainable future for the railways in Central and Southeastern Europe.

**RECOGNISING** each of the Parties' activities in their respective fields of expertise.

**CONSIDERING** that close cooperation is needed in order to reap mutual benefit in developing areas of shared interest in environment and sustainability (the list is non-exhaustive and may be added to at a later stage).

**CONSCIOUS** that collaboration on initiatives is beneficial for both Parties.

**ASPIRING** to bolster cooperation and deepen their relationship.

## **Preamble**

The transport sector is part of the problem in respect of numerous negative social and ecological developments, but railways can be part of the solution. The main purpose of this MoU is to promote environmentally conscious rail transport in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe by enhancing international cooperation between the Parties.

UIC intends to achieve its objectives in these respects by working in collaboration with various organisations actively involved in development and railway transport with a view to mobilising and complementing its own expertise and resources.

WWF-CEE intends to integrate requirements for ecological coherence in transport infrastructure plans and policies in cooperation with relevant stakeholders from different fields of experience (transport infrastructure providers, spatial planners, nature conservationists, land managers, etc.).

## **UIC**

Sustainable development is considered one of the main global challenges faced by the world today and is an important aspect of transport development. UIC and its members work continuously to demonstrate that rail can be part of the solution to the challenge of sustainable development.

UIC is supporting all efforts made by its members to increase the effectiveness, sustainability and profitability of rail transport for the benefit of customers and society as a whole, as well as the environment. Its key objectives include promotion of railway transport through expertise and capacity building, as well as knowledge sharing with its members. UIC strives to achieve these objectives through:

- development of global and regional railway studies concerning environment and sustainability within the Sustainable Development Unit,
- development of international railway solutions (IRSs) for railway activities,
- organisation of targeted topical seminars, workshops and conferences to help its members to discuss and share their experience,
- development of a worldwide network for expertise, training and human resources, taking into account the characteristics of each region and including the development of customised training modules and best practice guides for the rail training community.

Acting on behalf of the worldwide community of railway operators and infrastructure managers, the UIC Sustainable Development Unit takes a leading role in actions to mitigate climate change by contributing to a reduction in carbon footprint, promoting sustainable land use and supporting a shift towards a more sustainable balance of transport modes. UIC is also working on related key issues, such as the promotion of sustainable use of resources (ballast, concrete, steel, water, etc.) and reduction of the railways' external costs in order to help the railways to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **WWF-CEE**

WWF-CEE (formerly WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme) was established in 1998 to lead, coordinate, and implement WWF's conservation efforts to preserve, restore and sustainably manage the natural values of the Danube-Carpathian ecoregion. WWF-CEE coordinates a wide range of projects in the fields of forestry, large carnivores, ecological corridors, wetlands, protected areas management, policy advocacy, and Green Economy. WWF-CEE is committed to the sustainable and integrated development of the region and seeks to support the implementation of EU-related policies. To reach its goals, WWF-CEE creates partnerships with authorities, businesses, and civil society at local, regional, national, and transnational levels and is a well-known player within the framework of the Carpathian Convention and the EUSDR, as well as an observer to relevant working groups (Biodiversity, Forestry, Sustainable Transport, Spatial Planning) and priority areas (PA1a and 1b, PA6).

The WWF-CEE Vienna office coordinates WWF-CEE's five legal entities in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. All of WWF-CEE's legal entities have been involved in promoting integrated approaches to infrastructure planning, transport infrastructure in particular, both at a policy and project level. Examples include advocacy work towards DG Move or EUSDR PA1a and 1b and involvement in stakeholder platforms for TEN-T projects in Austria and Romania. The organisation, therefore, has an excellent understanding of which stakeholders need to be involved in integrated planning and project implementation, of what information is needed and which issues need to be tackled in order to achieve sustainable results, and of identifying the biggest gaps. It is also very experienced in facilitating intercultural and interdisciplinary communication and conflict resolution. WWF-CEE has extensive experience in the leadership of EU-financed transnational projects.

WWF-CEE has experienced various conflicts between nature conservation and regional development in the Danube-Carpathian region. Its analysis has shown that facilitated dialogue and cooperation between transport, nature conservation, and spatial planning sectors, etc. are preconditions for all stakeholders involved in sustainable projects. WWF-CEE maintains links with WWF's internal Infrastructure Area of Collective Action and Innovation, an initiative within the WWF network to exchange experience and develop a global strategy for WWF interventions with infrastructure builders.

## **CORE DOMAINS OF COMMON INTEREST FOR DIALOGUE ON WORK AND COOPERATION**

Within the UIC Sustainable Development Unit, the Sustainable Land Use (SLU) Sector provides strategy, guidance and leadership for UIC members with respect to the following issues:

- Vegetation management
- Biodiversity
- Soil quality

UIC aims to keep the public informed in relation to the environmental problems faced by the world today and involves its members in the decision-making process. In addition, the SLU Sector aims to provide a mechanism for the exchange of knowledge amongst the railway community and external parties in the domain of sustainable land use and promote the importance of these issues in the railway sector.

The goal of this MoU is for the Parties to make a net positive contribution to nature. In recognition of their common interests and objectives, the Parties set the objective together of building overall cooperation on the following issues:

- Establishing mutual dialogue in domains of common interest and an option for information exchange in the following fields:

<b>UIC</b>	<b>WWF-CEE</b>
Biodiversity	Biodiversity
Vegetation management	Ecological connectivity and corridors
Soil quality	Large carnivores
Water quality	Landscapes, including forests and wetlands

- Engaging in dialogue with railway stakeholders regarding their expectations, action plans and progress in respect of the fields outlined above,
- Providing a platform for relevant partners from transport, spatial planning and the environmental sector,
- Providing a clear strategic vision based on analysis of context, trends and scenarios in areas of common interest,
- Encouraging railway stakeholders to commit to the UN SDGs relevant to the railways, including:
  - SDG 15 with regard to targets 15.5 and 15.8
  - SDG 12 with regard to target 12.4
  - SDG 11 with regard to target 11.2
  - SDG 3 with regard to target 3.9
- Promoting best practice and encouraging dialogue between all railway stakeholders in order to reconcile competitiveness and biodiversity protection,
- Encouraging the transformation of railway infrastructure corridors into ecological corridors

and contributing to the green and blue belt through adaptive management of the lands bordering railway lines and the deployment of maintenance agreements with third parties,

- Prioritising the improvement of maintenance agreements established with third parties,
- Developing scientific knowledge for railways in domains of common interest,
- Minimising conflicts between transport planning and green infrastructure objectives,
- Preparing catalogues of measures to provide solutions for existing and planned railways and a solid basis for future planning of railways,
- Contributing to the national strategies (in domains of common interest) of countries in which the Parties operate,
- Proposing key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the impact of the railways on the environment,
- Raising awareness of and training employees on biodiversity and its relevance to their jobs,
- Promoting and encouraging nature-friendly initiatives and providing due recognition for such actions and practices,
- Preparing strategic action plans on key issues (e.g. protected species) to provide added value for the railways and the community as a whole.

#### **Article I: Commitment**

- Through this MoU, the Parties wish to establish and develop a framework for dialogue on work and cooperation to their mutual benefit in fields of shared interest.
- The geographical scope of this agreement will be limited to the following countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

#### **Article II: Exchange of contact**

The Parties shall:

- supply each other with lists of identified contact points to facilitate cooperation.
- invite each other to their respective meetings where appropriate and when addressing issues of common interest,
- keep each other appropriately informed of all decisions, activities and non-confidential initiatives in areas of shared interest.

#### **Article III: Exchange of best practice**

- The Parties shall strive to formalise, maintain and share their strategic visions, efforts and solutions.
- As far as possible, the Parties shall also strive to promote information sharing and to coordinate their work. In order to achieve the goals set out by this MoU, the Parties may consult each other, if necessary, on matters of common interest.

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- The Parties shall develop common actions that favour benchmarking and exchange on best practice in different fields within the transport sector based on the interests expressed above, i.e. road, airline, inland waterway transport.
- Exchange of data between the Parties shall be encouraged to promote a better understanding of the railways and to carry out specific studies for KPIs on biodiversity.
- The Parties shall, where possible, identify relevant expertise which may be beneficial to the other Party's work, specifically in the fields of research and training.
- The Parties shall exchange views on how to improve strategies to address key issues (see table on page 4) for railway operators and infrastructure managers.

#### **Articles IV: Better regional integration of railway transport**

- The Parties shall define actions for wildlife and habitat conservation that foster a regional approach within the railway system with regard to technical, operational and knowledge-related issues.

#### **Article V: Promotion of priority railway projects**

- Identification of priority railway projects that can contribute to reducing habitat fragmentation and ecosystem loss.
- Promotion of such projects based on areas of common interest as described in the table on page 4 in international fora, technical workshops and other events in order to raise awareness of their importance.
- Preparation of guidelines and recommendations for integrated transport infrastructure planning, construction, management and monitoring.
- The Parties shall contribute to events held within the context of international agreements and conventions, i.e. climate and biodiversity COPs, along with other key stakeholders from the transport sector.

#### **Article VI: Improving connections between different transport modes**

- The Parties shall analyse data on wildlife, e.g. in respect of vehicle collisions and roadkill, in collaboration with other transport modes and shall integrate the results into the electronic database with a view to proposing new mitigation measures.

#### **Article VII: Cooperation on training activities in the field of railway expertise**

- The Parties shall promote additional training activities in the fields of biodiversity, vegetation management, soil and water resource protection for the benefit of their members and in line with national interests.

### **Article VIII: Confidentiality**

- It is understood that both Parties commit to respecting the confidentiality of working documents, meetings, etc. as the case may be. They shall not disseminate any documentation belonging to the other Party without its prior written consent.

### **Article IX: Duration and miscellaneous**

- This MoU is concluded for an initial period of three years and may be extended if agreed by both Parties in writing. It may be terminated by either Party on the basis of six months' written notice sent to the other Party.
- Designated representatives of both Parties shall meet at least once per year to review and plan cooperation.
- Cooperation within the framework of this MoU reflects the desire of both Parties for joint actions in the fields described. Nevertheless, it does not contain or imply any legal or financial obligations or responsibilities derived from the execution or absence of execution of all or part of the actions foreseen by the present MoU for whatever reason.

### **Article X: Signature and entry into force**

- This MoU shall be signed by authorised representatives in two copies in English on the date and in the place indicated below.
- This MoU shall enter into force upon its signature by the two Parties and following validation by the UIC General Assembly which is to take place on 30 June 2020.

Signed in Paris on .....

François Davenne



UIC Director General

Andreas Beckmann



Regional CEO, WWF-CEE

11 May 2020

