AGREEMENT

between the National Safety Authorities (NSA) for railways of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic concerning the cooperation in the field of safety and interoperability of railway transport

Concluded today 29th October 2025 between:

Railway Administration Executive Agency (herein after referred to as RAEA) as the National Safety Authority for railways of the Republic of Bulgaria, with address 5 Gen. Iosif Gurko Street, Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria, represented for the purposes of this agreement by Ms. Kalinka Velikova, Executive Director,

on the one hand

and **Regulatory Authority for Railways** (hereinafter referred to as RAS), the National Safety Authority for railways of the Hellenic Republic, with address, 33 Stadiou Street, Athens, PC 10559 represented for the purposes of this agreement of this agreement by Ms. Georgia Ayfantopoulou, President

on the other hand,

individually referred to hereinafter as "Party" and collectively as "Parties"

The signing Parties agree to sign the present Cooperation Agreement, establishing the conditions under which the parties shall apply Art. 10 (8) and Art. 12 (5) of Directive (EU) 2016/798 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on railway safety, focused on enhancing railway safety within the EU. It outlines measures to improve safety and facilitate market access for rail transport services by revising the roles of national safety authorities and the European Union Agency for Railways. The signing parties also agree to sign the present Cooperation Agreement establishing the application of Art. 21 (8) of the Directive (EU) 2016/797 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the interoperability of the railway system within the European Union, establishing the conditions to be met to achieve interoperability within the Union rail system in a manner compatible with Directive (EU) 2016/798 in order to define an optimal level of technical harmonization, to make it possible to facilitate, improve and develop rail transport services within the Union. As such, the present Agreement will lay down practical provisions on the coordination and interaction between National Safety Authorities for railways in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic, the exchange of essential safety-related information and mutual interest aspects on the issuance of single safety certificates, safety authorizations and vehicle authorization for placing on the market and vehicle type authorization, as well joint supervision, in accordance with applicable European Union and national legislation.

The objective is to ensure that the safety management systems implemented by each RU guarantees familiarity and compliance with concerned national rules for the respective operational area, by taking into account the specificities of the border sections.

(4) The purpose of the cooperation established between the Parties is to maintain at least an equivalent level of safety of the Parties while avoiding duplication, omission or conflict in terms of actions to be taken by RUs and IMs.

(5) This cooperation agreement also includes the sharing of information on rail safety, as well as measures to be taken, determined by one Party and related to the other.

(6) Both Parties agree to inform each other before taking any action or decision that could affect the activities or decisions of the other Party. This agreement defines the general cooperation and arrangements between the Parties in accordance with the relevant European, Bulgarian, and Greek regulations.

(7) This agreement does not affect the principle of territorial and legal competence of the two of NSAs. The agreement shall set out no limitations whatsoever to the respective competences granted to the Parties.

(8) Technical annexes may be attached to the agreement in order to arrange cooperation on individual activities in accordance with the agreements between the RU in a third country and the RU or IM in possession of a SSC or SA allowing them to operate on the concerned railway network.

(9) For RAEA, the agreement and the technical annexes are signed by the Executive Director of RAEA. For RAS, the agreement and the technical annexes are signed by the President of RAS.

Article 2. LEGAL BASIS

This agreement corresponds to the defined regulatory framework of the European legislation with direct effect (Regulations and Decisions), the Directives transposed into the relevant national legislation of the Parties, as well as the specific national legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic:

A. European legislation:

– Directive (EU) 2016/798 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on railway safety;

– Directive (EU) 2016/797 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the interoperability of the rail system within the European Union;

– Regulation (EU) 2016/796 of the European parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Railways and repealing Regulation (EC) No 881/2004;

B. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Hellenic Republic regulating the cross-border rail traffic, concluded in Alexandroupolis on 26 February 2020.

C. Regulations of the Bulgarian Party:

– Rail Transport Act, promulgated SG No. 97 of 28.11.2000;

Ordinance No. 56 of 14.02.2003 on the requirements, conditions, and procedures for training candidates to acquire the legal capacity required of personnel responsible for the safety of rail transport, or for the recognition of such legal capacity, and the procedures for conducting examinations of personnel responsible for transport safety;

Ordinance No. 57 dated 9.06.2004 for achieving interoperability of the national railway system with the railway system within the European Union issued by the Minister of Transport and Communications;

– Ordinance No. 58 of August 2, 2006 on the rules for technical operation, train traffic, and signaling in rail transport;

Ordinance No. 59 of 05.12.2006 on safety management of railway transport.

– RULES for the technical operation of the railway infrastructure of the State Enterprise "National Railway Infrastructure Company";

– RULES for train traffic and shunting operations in railway transport.

D. Regulations of the Greek Party:

– Law 4632/2019 is a Greek law that mainly focuses on integrating European Union directives related to railway interoperability and safety into Greek legislation. Specifically, it transposes Directives 2016/797, 2016/798, and 2016/2370 into Greek law. The law also addresses other provisions related to railway operations, licensing, interoperability and railway safety.

– Law 5220/2025 focused on upgrading railway safety, creating the new "Hellenic Railways S.A." (company, and restructuring the National Organization for the Investigation of Air and Railway Accidents and Transport Safety. The law, published in the Official Gazette (FEK A 131) on July 21, 2025, addresses the safety, personnel assessment, and oversight of the railway network.

- Ministerial Decision ΑΣ10/77243/580/13-02-2019 (B' 698) "General traffic regulation - Part B - traffic and shunting regulation

Article 3. BORDER-CROSSING RAILWAY SECTIONS AND BORDER STATIONS

(1) For the purpose of the present Agreement of the relevant provisions in the above-mentioned Implementing Regulations (EU) 2018/761, (EU) 2018/762, (EU) 2018/763 and (EU) 2018/545, it is necessary to define the railway lines crossing the border with similar specifications and similar operating rules.

(7) The working groups meet, consecutively in Bulgaria and Greece or electronically, according to a decision taken at the regular annual meetings specified in Art. 4 (1) above, unless the Parties agree otherwise.

(8) The signatories of this agreement (or their representative), as well as the specified contact person, have the right to participate in the meetings of the working groups.

(9) By agreement of the Parties, interested parties (railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, etc.) may be invited to participate in the meetings of the working groups.

(10) The progress and decisions of the working groups are presented at the monitoring meetings of the agreement.

Article 5. SINGLE SAFETY CERTIFICATE, SAFETY AUTHORISATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGERS, VEHICLE TYPE AUTHORISATION AND AUTHORISATION FOR PLACING ON THE MARKET

(1) Single Safety Certificate

Article 10 of the above-mentioned Directive (EU) 2016/798 specifies that the SSC issued in the territory of one Member State may be valid without extension of the area of operation under certain conditions, up to the border station(s) of the other Member State, as defined in Art. 3 (2) and (3) of the present Agreement.

Therefore, according to Directive (EU) 2016/798, the present Agreement envisages the organization of joint certification modalities. In particular, the Parties agree to put in practice a systematic mutual consultation for every safety certification application involving operation on railway lines crossing the border, to the extent, such consultation is limited to the checking of compliance with national requirements.

(2) Safety authorisation of infrastructure managers

Article 12 of the above-mentioned Directive (EU) 2016/798 specifies that in order to be allowed to manage and operate a rail infrastructure, the infrastructure manager shall obtain a safety authorisation from the national safety authority in the Member State where the rail infrastructure is located. The safety authorization shall comprise an authorization confirming acceptance of the infrastructure manager's safety management system as provided for in Article 9 of the Directive (EU) 2016/798, and shall include the procedures and provisions fulfilling the requirements necessary for the safe design, maintenance and operation of the railway infrastructure, including, where appropriate, the maintenance and operation of the traffic control and signalling system. The national safety authority shall explain the requirements for the safety authorizations and the documents required, where appropriate in the form of an application guidance document. In the case of cross-border infrastructure, the competent national safety authorities shall cooperate in order to issue the safety authorisations.
Regarding cross-border infrastructures, and recognising the need of the IM to implement common requirements within their activities on the territory of Bulgaria and Greece, this cooperation agreement is intended to provide a framework for coordinated authorizations

(5) The Parties agree to determine, depending on the type and size of the audited RU or IM, the necessary information for cooperation and the practical means of exchange contributing to the effective and efficient performance of the supervisory activity.

(6) This information can be derived from the following items:
– Plan(s) for supervision of common rail projects;
– Risks identified as a result of the supervisory activity;
– Evaluations of the level of implementation of common railway projects;
– Feedback on methods used for supervision;
– Difficulties in implementing applicable international, European and national supervisory regulations;
– Common principles and methods.

(7) The Parties to the agreement guarantee the performance of activities as follows:
– To notify their counterparty as early as possible before an inspection;
– The concerned Party may, if it wishes, send a member of its staff to accompany the Commission in the role of observer;
– Any finding of safety concerns related to the territory of another competent party to be provided to that party and the European Union Agency for Railways without delay and without conditions by the other Party that identified the problem in the event of a serious and imminent risk to the safety of operations requiring the application of immediate safeguards measures.

(8) The Parties agree to inform each other when one of the Parties requests the revocation or suspension in its territory of a SSC issued to a Railway Undertaking for both territories.

(9) The Parties shall cooperate where necessary to ensure clear and consistent communication with the RUs.

(10) The Parties agree on a case-by-case basis and where appropriate to carry out any administrative formalities that may be necessary for entry into adjacent territory.

(11) Additional practical arrangements may be agreed as a result of experience with the application of these provisions.

(12) The Parties hereby undertake to share their plans for the supervision of RUs operating between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic, including their subcontractors, in order to carry out, where possible, a coordinated management of their supervision activities.

(13) Inspection plans (in particular the schedule of inspections and their topics) are shared at meetings provided for in the agreement to verify that joint inspections of RUs are appropriate and to avoid, where possible, simultaneous planning and/or redundant activities, controlling the same person. Where common themes are identified, the parties share the results.

(14) These provisions do not exclude the application at any time, within the scope of each Party's own powers, of additional supervision actions considered necessary for the RU, including in emergency cases.

In case of a breach of safety rules, either Party to this agreement may withdraw this temporary authorization at any time and shall inform the other Party on such action.

Article 9. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL SAFETY AUTHORITIES IN CASE OF CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURES

National safety authorities involved in the supervision of an infrastructure manager with cross-border infrastructure(s) or of a railway undertaking operating in more than one Member State should coordinate their approach to supervision in accordance with Article 17(7) and (9) of Directive (EU) 2016/798.
After the granting of the safety authorization, national safety authorities shall promptly decide which of them is to have a leading role for coordinating the supervision of the correct application and effectiveness of the safety management system, without prejudice to the obligations of the national safety authorities under points (d) and (j) of Article 16(2) and Article 17 of Directive (EU) 2016/798.

This Agreement provides a framework for cooperation between RAEA and RAS in cases of cross-border infrastructures, in accordance with Commission recommendation (EU) 2019/780 of 16 May 2019 on practical arrangements for issuing safety authorisations to infrastructure managers. The two NSAs should:

– Discuss all safety issues before, during and after the issuing of safety authorisation in the case of cross-border infrastructures;

– Discuss any requests for additional information that affect the timing of the assessment or have the potential to affect the work of the other national safety authorities concerned;

– Request from each other any relevant information relating to the applicant;

– Exchange all relevant information which may have an impact on the safety assessment process, including on implementation of relevant national rules, notified to the Commission by their respective Member State.

Article 10. SHARING OF GOOD PRACTICES

(1) According to this agreement, the Parties undertake to exchange good practices and provide appropriate feedback in order to improve the performance of the obligations assigned to them and to maintain the continuous improvement of the safety of the railway transport system. Sharing of good practices refers to the process of disseminating and adopting effective methods and strategies across different contexts, often with the goal of improving performance and efficiency. It involves identifying, documenting, and sharing successful approaches to enhance learning, reduce errors, and foster innovation.

(2) The Parties hereby agree to cooperate in the following ways and to properly share their practices to carry out common oversight activities:

– Other matters of mutual interest.

The designated contact person(s) for the responsibilities set out in this Article on the side of the Republic of Bulgaria and on the side of the Hellenic Republic shall provide an up-to-date email address through which direct communication will be established between the respective officials in order to exchange information and prevent duplication of documents submitted by third parties.

The above contact persons shall be designated for the sole purpose of ensuring the proper implementation of the activities under this Agreement. They have not been designated, and are not responsible for requests from third parties.

(3) The correspondence in connection with the fulfillment of the obligations of the Parties under the agreement during the implementation of the projects, the operational communication between the teams from each Party as well as the issued decisions shall be in English, as "common language".

(4) Each Party shall bear the costs of translating documents prepared by the other Party when they are necessary for its part of the assessment.

(5) The Parties to the agreement choose the most appropriate channel for communication, encouraging the use of electronic means for their communication.

Article 12. CONFIDENTIALITY

(1) International, European and national regulations on the right of access to documents apply. The Parties undertake not to distribute mutually provided/prepared documents or information shared between them. The Parties will be responsible for their employees' compliance with this obligation.

(2) Unless the relevant parties have agreed to the disclosure of information or it is already in the public domain, the obligation of confidentiality also applies to annual railway safety reports, the NSA monitoring program and reports, information freely communicated by individuals in the course of monitored activities as well as information about security events provided by the NSA.

(3) In case of mutual consent to provide information to third parties, this information shall be processed in accordance with the relevant European and national regulations on the protection of natural persons related to the processing of personal data.

(4) Whenever a third party requests access to or disclosure of confidential documents or information about one of the Parties, the latter is obliged to communicate it to the other Party. The designated Party forwards the request to the NSA that provided the relevant documents or information. Requests will be considered by the relevant NSA within a reasonable period of time and in accordance with national law as to whether the request is admissible.

(5) The present agreement shall be published on the websites of the Parties, i.e. RAEA and RAS, as of the date of its entry in force, and the Parties will ensure an adequate communication with the interested representatives of the railway sector.

For and On behalf:
of RAEA

Kalinka Velikova
Executive Director

For and On behalf
of RAS:

Georgia Ayfantopoulou
President