



## GCU JOINT COMMITTEE

# TOWARDS DIGITAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE GENERAL CONTRACT OF USE (GCU)

## INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNICATION PLATFORM / MESSAGE BROKER CONCEPT

### Background

Use of information technologies (ICT), or, in other words, digitalisation of transport operations is believed to considerably facilitate the achievement of a more efficient, modern and sustainable European transport system, in a quick and cost-effective manner. Digitalisation in rail transport and logistics is an important driver for efficiency, simplification, lowering costs, and a better use of resources and existing infrastructures. Fostering Digitalisation for bilateral and multilateral data exchanges within the rail freight sector will facilitate an effective and correct management of data and speed-up their processing.

### Why do we need a GCU communication platform?

The current practice for the exchange of information within the GCU today is characterised by bilateral communication via the usual channels such as e-mails and faxes. In this sense and to allow for a reduction of the manual handling of and the automation of data exchanges between railway undertakings and wagon keepers, you should have received new amendment proposals relating to the GCU Appendix 4, the new Appendix 15 and 16 which aim at introducing the possibility to develop machine-to machine exchange of information via XML within the GCU.

In this context and to facilitate the processing of information and support multilateral exchanges, the GCU Joint Committee has taken the initiative to develop an IT solution to be available to all signatories without any additional user fees. The objective is to introduce a central communication platform using the current GCU website as a kind of central message broker. It shall serve as single point of entry or a one-stop-shop for providing (pushing) and querying operational and technical information from both the wagon keepers' side and the railway undertakings.

### **What will the communication platform cover and how is the project setup?**

In a first phase, the message broker concept will be developed to facilitate the routing via standards messages in different format of following information:

1. Push Wagon Performance information (new Appendix 15, see amendment Nr. A2018-02)
2. Push Wagon Damage reports (amended Appendix 4, see amendment Nr. A2018-03)
3. Query Technical wagon information (new Appendix 16, see amendment Nr. A2018-01)

The project timelines are set as to allow the IT tool to go live on the GCU website by January 2019. Currently, the mandated IT company, Interconnectiv, have started the IT developments and test companies (big and small) have been contacted to be involved during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2018 as project partners for the final validation of the system functionalities for the defined uses cases. During the whole development and testing phases, two project managers will interface with Interconnectiv and report to the GCU Joint Committee about the progress and, if the case may be any technical issue.

### **How will the signatories be kept informed?**

The documentation of the message broker functionalities is of course key for its successful introduction in the GCU framework. A tutorial for the initial system setup and user configuration as well as a short description and the process steps for the use cases will be prepared in 3 languages (EN/DE/FR) and should be available during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2018.

In the meantime, you will find hereunder the contact details of the two project managers which are available for any general question you may have on the project itself.

- **Ulrike Makower**, Project Manager, e-mail: [makower@raildata.coop](mailto:makower@raildata.coop)  
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