

# PRESS RELEASE



## STAFFER

### STAFFER, an Erasmus+ project for skills development in rail, officially launched

*Brussels, 2 December 2020*

Rail is a major driver in the strategic European objective of smart, green and sustainable growth. Responsible for less than 2% of final transport energy use, rail will serve as the backbone of tomorrow's eco-friendly European transport system. However, the sector is currently experiencing a severe skill shortage as a large share of its workforce will retire in the next 10 years just as technological developments demand increased skills capabilities. The **Skill Training Alliance For the Future European Rail system** – known as **STAFFER** – gathers 32 partners from across the European Union and its rail community under a stakeholder partnership to address this challenge.

Officially convened for the first time digitally on 30 November, the consortium aims to develop a holistic blueprint strategy that identifies present and emerging skills needs while working with industry and Vocational & Education Training (VET) institutions to design concrete training and educational curricula. They will improve employability and career opportunities in our sector by establishing cross-European mobility programmes and creating work-based internships for students, apprentices, and staff. STAFFER plans to deliver human capital solutions at all levels of the rail value chain, covering the needs of both the supply industry and the railway operating community.

The 4-year long project is funded through the **Erasmus+ programme of the European Union** led by the Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (**DG EAC**). The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (**EACEA**) is the contracting authority and monitors project implementation. As a project implementing the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills, an initiative on the European Skills Agenda 2020, STAFFER will be followed by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (**DG EMPL**) from an education and training policy point of view. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (**DG GROW**) and the Directorate-General for

Mobility and Transport (**DG MOVE**) will examine the sector policy aspects of the project. The latter three DGs attended this launch event. **Pavol Krempaský, EACEA project officer**, noted that STAFFER is one of 21 Sector Skills Alliances Blueprint projects approved since 2017 and that it has the potential to be a flagship for the sector.

Together, this alliance will give European rail professionals and their future colleagues the tools needed to continue empowering rail as an essential enabler of sustainable mobility and economic recovery. With the talent it needs to navigate the twin green and digital transitions, the sector will be able to provide more and improved products and services. As such the project is key to achieving EU Green Deal goals.

General Coordinator **Angela Di Febraro, Professor of Transportation Engineering at University of Genoa (UniGe)**, highlighted the importance of the project by stating: *“STAFFER will be instrumental as it will set the framework for strategic cooperation among key stakeholders of the rail sector – particularly in the context of the upcoming European Year of Rail 2021. Under the umbrella of our rail Skills Alliance, businesses, education and training institutions, professional associations, and other partners will develop and implement together strategies to address skills gaps and shortages, by developing occupational profiles, vocational programmes and qualifications, as well as designing a long-term action plan to be rolled out at the European, national, and regional levels”.*

More information on STAFFER will be available on its soon to be launched website, Twitter and LinkedIn channels.

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