

PRESS RELEASE

The Multinational “Support Ukraine Rail Task Force” is Launched

BRUSSELS and WASHINGTON DC, March 21, 2022

Leading rail sector officials in Europe and the USA have today announced the formation of the Multinational “Support Ukraine Rail Task Force” in order to coordinate technical, mechanical, and policy support for Ukrainian freight and passenger rail companies.

Jolene Molitoris, former Administrator of the US Federal Railroad Administration will be joined by Nick Brooks, Secretary General of the Alliance of Rail New Entrants in Europe (ALLRAIL); Ray Chambers, President of the American Association for Innovative Passenger Rail Operations (AIPRO) and Robert VanderClute, former Senior Vice President of the Association of American Railroads (AAR) & former Vice Chair of UIC.

An early objective will be to provide a forum for governmental organizations and passenger and freight rail associations to discuss Russia’s aggressive invasion of Ukraine and the most effective ways in which to support the Ukrainian rail sector.

“We are horrified by the unprovoked invasion of a free and independent country,” said Jolene Molitoris “The Task Force will coordinate efforts to ensure the Ukrainian rail network has the immediate technical support to continue in service. In the near term, the Task Force will work with lawmakers and regulators to provide on-going assistance.

For example: there need be more trains picking up refugees from the Ukrainian border and the other changeover hubs, e.g. Warsaw, Prague, Vienna and Frankfurt (Oder). Otherwise, given the rapid increase in Ukrainian citizens escaping the violence, there is the risk of a refugee disaster. Evacuations by rail must be sped up – before it is too late.

Alas so far, some countries – such as Germany, Austria and Poland – have only awarded contracts for dedicated evacuation trains to a subset of rail operators that, in turn, have sometimes needed several days to even get started. **The result is that hundreds of suitable rail coaches remain unused.**

Instead, contracts for evacuation trains should be made available to ALL rail operators that have available rolling stock. Also: every EU country should offer such a contract – even if the train is only transiting its territory. This will help move more refugees West.

With a consistent and non-discriminatory approach, the European rail system can **maximise the number of people getting rescued.**

Longer term, we will help Ukraine rebuild and renew with its rail system as a central part of the recovery.”

The Task Force will be meeting with stakeholders in Europe and the United States of America to discuss these issues. It will also expand its outreach to other industry leaders to further coordinate efforts.

THE MULTINATIONAL SUPPORT UKRAINE RAIL TASK FORCE:

Jolene Molitoris – Task Force Chair; Former Administrator of the United States Federal Railroad Administration

Nick Brooks – Task Force Co-Chair; Secretary General of the Alliance of Passenger Rail New Entrants in Europe – ALLRAIL

Ray Chambers – Task Force Vice-Chair and Lead-Passenger Rail; – President of the American Association for Innovative Passenger Rail Operations – AIPRO; Task Force Lead Passenger Rail

Robert VanderClute – Task Force Vice-Chair and Lead-Freight; Former Senior VP of the Association of American Railroads – AAR ; President, First Rail International LLC

Jon M. McGrath – Task Force Lead Track Reconstruction; President & CEO, McGrath Rail; former chair of the United States National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association

Charles Hogue – Task Force Lead – Workforce Issues; former National Director Government Affairs; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way/Teamsters; Vice President Labor Outreach at the American Association for Innovative Passenger Rail Operations – AIPRO

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