



## EU RAIL CAPACITY STUDY

- The Study identifies and addresses capability gaps in the logistical capacity of the European railway system to support military needs.
- The report addresses four clusters: regulatory harmonisation, infrastructure capacity, rolling stock capacity, and stakeholder coordination & contingency planning.
- Findings highlight EU progress and confirm the railway network to be a critical enabler for military mobility. The study also identifies critical gaps in legal harmonisation, interoperability, corridor resilience, rolling stock availability, and crisis response readiness.



### Regulatory Analysis and Harmonisation

- EU legal framework advanced through the [Fourth Railway Package](#) and [ERA oversight](#), but fragmentation remains at national level
- Most Member States lack specific crisis legislation for rail; the study identified Poland as a positive example for a military specific crisis framework
- Border crossings remain a bottleneck: customs, escorts, and national procedures cause delays of days or weeks
- National rules are being migrated into the Single Rule Database, but progress varies significantly among Member States



### Rolling Stock Capacity

- EU Member States own:
  - 367 'Heavy Load' wagons fit for transporting heavy equipment such as Main Battle Tanks
  - 350 known 'Regular' wagons
- Only Finland, Lithuania and Slovenia have indicated that they own (uninteroperable) locomotives
- No EU Member State owns sufficient wagons for a movement scenario. As locomotives are generally not owned, Member States rely on commercial contracts, potentially hindering rapid deployment scenarios



### Infrastructure Capacity

- [TEN-T](#) and Rail Freight Corridors form the backbone for both civilian and military movements.
- Capacity constraints were identified in axle loads, line categories, electrification, single-track stretches, loading gauges, and signalling interoperability.
- Critical bottlenecks include the Suwałki Gap, Iberian Peninsula access, Scandinavian corridors, and Balkan routes.



### Stakeholder Coordination & Contingency Plan

- Only few nations (e.g., Italy, Spain) possess independent military railway engineering units able to repair or reconstruct tracks. Infrastructure managers are prepared but may lack contingency plans in times of crisis.
- EU-level contingency mechanisms exist (e.g. [RNE](#) International Contingency Management Handbook), but mainly cover civilian incidents and require adaptation for military mobility.
- Overhead power supply and signalling are vulnerable in times of crisis and require contingency planning. Diesel or dual-mode locomotives are advised as fall-back solutions.



>> To learn more, visit the [Military Mobility page](#) on the European Defence Agency's website.