

## ERA selects new executive director

Oana Gherghinescu is currently head of the executive office at ERA.



*Gherghinescu (centre) is seen here with ERA management board chair Paloma Iribas (left) and Magda Kopczyńska (right), director-general for mobility and transport at the European Commission.  
Photo Credit: ERA*

THE management board of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) selected Oana Gherghinescu to be the next ERA executive director on March 19, one of three candidates shortlisted for the post.

Holding a doctorate in international economics, Gherghinescu is described by ERA as an accomplished leader with over 22 years of experience, including 11 years at ERA where she has latterly held the post of head of the executive office.

ERA says that Gherghinescu has played a pivotal role in shaping the success of the agency over the past decade, and combines deep institutional knowledge with a visionary approach to its future.

“Her expertise in international project management and sustainable development, combined with her commitment to innovation, makes her a great fit to lead ERA into the next chapter,” ERA says.

The other candidates in the running for the job were Laurent Cébulski, the current director general of France's Railway Safety Board (EPSF) and Matej Zakonjšek, director of Transport Community, which supports transport in the Western Balkans.

The next stage in the appointment process will be a presentation to be made by the selected candidate to the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (Tran), which is expected to take place on April 9. Appointment as executive director would then follow, with the date for Gherghinescu to start her new role yet to be confirmed.

Until the new executive director takes office, Pio Guido will continue as acting executive director of ERA. He took over as head of the agency on January 1, the day after Josef Doppelbauer stood down as executive director upon the expiry of his 10-year mandate.

"I am very honoured to be elected as the next executive director for a faster, smarter, and stronger ERA and European rail system," Gherghinescu says.

### Supply industry responds

Welcoming the choice of Gherghinescu to lead ERA, the European Rail Industry Supply Association (Unife) says that the incoming executive director will have many challenges awaiting her.

These include "decisive action" on ETCS and onboard signalling, the Future Railway Mobile Communication System (FRMCS) and the Digital Automatic Coupler (DAC), as well as harmonising operating rules and maintaining the focus on cybersecurity and digital network resilience.

The association also expects Gherghinescu to bring renewed energy and vision to optimising the delivery of ERA's key tasks, notably streamlining the vehicle authorisation process in anticipation of the expected wave of ETCS and FRMCS retrofit work, and the DAC rollout.

"Strong leadership and the adoption of pragmatic solutions is required to simplify and accelerate the introduction of innovative technology for a more efficient, attractive and competitive European railway network," says Unife director general, Enno Wiebe.

"This is what we hope the incoming ERA executive director's term will be remembered for."

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