



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 30.10.2025
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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 30.10.2025

**on the implementation of the Lisbon - Madrid high-speed rail connection on the Atlantic
European Transport Corridor in application of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the
European Parliament and of the Council**

(Only the Spanish and Portuguese texts are authentic)

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1153 and (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013¹, and in particular Article 55(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Decarbonising transport, in particular by creating the conditions for an ambitious modal shift in long-distance passenger traffic to energy-efficient transport modes, is a key policy objective of the Union. In its Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy², the Commission specifically sets the target of doubling traffic on high-speed rail by 2030.
- (2) The completion of the core network high-speed railway connection between Lisbon and Madrid is required by end of 2030, in accordance with the Article 6(1) and with the Annex I of Regulation (EU) No 2024/1679.
- (3) After the completion of the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection, railway operators should have the possibility to offer direct services between the two capital cities in about three hours. With the ambition of fully integrating the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection into the broader high-speed network of Spain and France, the adoption of the European standard nominal track gauge of 1 435 mm is a key step forward. This will strengthen competitiveness in long-distance passenger traffic. By connecting Portugal, Spain and further to France, the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection has a clear cross-border and Union dimension.
- (4) The Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection project is part of the Atlantic European Transport Corridor. The 5th Work Plan of the Atlantic Corridor (July 2022) emphasises the importance of accelerating the finalisation of this high-speed, cross border rail connection, to provide a viable alternative to the forty or so daily flights in both directions between Lisbon and Madrid.
- (5) The Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection is a complex cross-border project, involving Portugal and Spain, which requires the construction of new infrastructure

¹ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future, COM/2020/789 final

sections. All infrastructure components for the connection are essential, to ensure an adequate travel time for direct high-speed services of about three hours. Among them are the third bridge over the Tagus River in Lisbon, as well as the high-speed line sections “Lisbon-Évora”, “Évora-Caia”, “Caia-Badajoz”, “Badajoz-Talayuela” and “Talayuela-Madrid”.

- (6) Good coordination between Spain and Portugal is therefore essential. To support the coordinated and timely implementation of the project, it is necessary to adopt provisions laying down a description of the necessary actions and the timetable for their implementation.
- (7) It is also important to clearly identify the actions needed to complete the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection and the timetable for implementing it, to plan and fully optimise the availability of Union, national and regional funding and financing as well as private financing. Union co-financing has a potentially high leverage effect on national and regional decision-making for implementing the actions.
- (8) Portugal and Spain have already carried out significant actions, including studies and infrastructure works, contributing to the realisation of the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection. Most of them have been co-financed by the Union, under different programmes (Cohesion Fund, European Regional and Development Fund, Connecting Europe Facility, Recovery and Resilience Facility). Activities have been and are currently performed under several grant agreements under the Connecting Europe Facility (2014-ES-TM-0518-W, 2014-PT-TM-0627-M, 2015-ES-TM-0181-S, 2015-ES-TM-0173-S, 2016-PT-TMC-0059-M, 2016-ES-TM-0271-S, 2019-ES-TM-0252-S, 2020-PT-TMC-0047-S, 101079551-21-PT-TG).
- (9) In accordance with Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, without prejudice to Article 8(5) of that Regulation, Member States are to take appropriate measures to develop the core network by 31 December 2030. Furthermore, Article 8(5) provides that the implementation of projects of common interest depends on their degree of maturity, compliance with Union and national legal procedures, and the availability of financial resources, without prejudging the financial commitment of a Member State or the Union.
- (10) Spain and Portugal made every effort to align with the core network deadline of 2030, as substantiated by the significant advances made on the Évora-Merida and Merida-Plasencia sections. Spain is also committed to making every effort to finalise the new high-speed line section between Talayuela and Madrid by 2030. However, because of technical and financial constraints faced by Portugal, the high-speed rail connection between Lisbon and Madrid will not be finalised before the end of 2030. It should be fully concluded before the end of 2034.
- (11) Considering the planned putting into service of the new high-speed line Évora-Elvas section by mid-2026, as well as the objective of completing the entire high-speed connection by the end of 2034, it is necessary to ensure an intermediary phase to connect Lisbon to Madrid with an adequate travel time for direct services with high-speed trains of about five hours at the latest by 2030.
- (12) As the results of the studies for constructing the sections necessary to achieve the three-hour travel time by 2034 will only be available by the end of 2027, the timetable and related milestones for the construction of these sections, including the deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) and its authorisation on each of them, is to be agreed at a later stage.

- (13) The cross-border dimension of the project required the setting up of dedicated governance structures. The European Economic Interest Group ‘Alta Velocidad(e) España Portugal’ (AVEP EEIG) was established on 26 January 2001. Its corporate purpose includes performing any task within the scope of the Spain - Portugal railway connections which is entrusted to it by the Spanish or Portuguese government or by their respective infrastructure management companies Administrador de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias (ADIF) and Infraestruturas de Portugal, S.A. (IP).
- (14) To monitor the progress of implementation, the Member States concerned should each provide the Commission with regular reports on the matter, concerning the sections in their respective territories, including on the financial commitments made in the national budget plans, and notify it of any significant delays encountered.
- (15) Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 2356 of 24.4.2018 on the Évora-Mérida cross-border rail connection along the Atlantic European Transport Corridor concerns a section of the line that is covered by this Decision. It is therefore necessary to repeal it. The actions that had not yet been finalised in application of that earlier Decision are incorporated into this Decision.
- (16) The implementation timetable set out by this Decision should be without prejudice to the fulfilment of the requirements defined in the international and Union law, including provisions to protect the environment and human health. This timetable should allow all parties to plan and fully optimise the availability of funding, without prejudging the financial commitment of a Member State or the Union. It should, under no circumstances, compromise the Union's high standards for environmental protection and public participation.
- (17) The measures provided for in this Decision have been approved by Portugal and Spain.
- (18) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee referred to in Article 61 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1
Subject matter

This Decision lays down the priorities, actions and their timetable for implementing the Lisbon - Madrid high-speed rail connection project, as well as related governance provisions.

Article 2
Actions and timetable

- (1) Portugal and Spain shall ensure the implementation of the following actions to enable, at the latest by the end of 2030, direct services for high-speed trains between Lisbon and Madrid with a travel time of about five hours– split approximately into three hours from Madrid to the border and two hours from the border to Lisbon:
 - (a) the construction works on the second track in the conventional line section from Poceirão to Bombel shall start in the first half of 2026 and this section shall be put into service by the end of 2029.
 - (b) the construction works on the new high-speed line between Évora and Caia shall be completed by the end of 2025 and this section shall be put into service by mid-2026.

- (c) the Plasencia - Talayuela high-speed line section shall be put into service by the end of 2028.
 - (d) the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) shall be deployed between Évora and Elvas by the end of 2027.
 - (e) the ERTMS shall be deployed between Badajoz and Plasencia by mid-2026, and between Plasencia and Talayuela by the end of 2028.
 - (f) the ERTMS shall be concertedly deployed on the existing infrastructure between Elvas and Badajoz by the end of 2028.
 - (g) the gradual construction and putting into service of the Talayuela – Madrid high-speed line section, integrated with the progressive electrification of the Talayuela - Humanes conventional line section as a necessary enabling measure, shall ensure that the Madrid-border travel time – without intermediate stops – may be below three hours by the end of 2030.
- (2) Portugal and Spain shall ensure the timely implementation of the following actions to enable, at the latest by the end of 2034, direct high-speed services between Lisbon and Madrid with a travel time of about three hours – split approximately into two hours from Madrid to the border and about one hour from the border to Lisbon:
- (a) The studies for the Lisbon-Évora new high-speed line section, including a new Tagus River crossing in Lisbon initiated in the second half of 2024, shall be concluded by the end of 2027.
 - (b) On the basis of the results of the studies referred to in point (a), the construction of the following sections and the deployment and authorisation of ERTMS on each of them shall start on a date that ensures they will be completed and enter into service by 2034:
 - (i) the Lisbon-Évora new high-speed line section, including the third bridge over Tagus River in Lisbon;
 - (ii) the double track on the Évora - Caia high-speed line section, depending on confirmation of its justification.
 - (c) The studies for the high-speed section between Caia and Badajoz shall be commissioned by AVEP EEIG. They shall be launched in the second semester of 2025 and concluded by the end of 2027.
 - (d) On the basis of the results of the studies referred to in point (c), by the end of 2027 a decision shall be taken by Spain and Portugal on:
 - (i) the opportunity to build the high-speed section between Caia and Badajoz and, if applicable, its construction timetable, with entry into service by 2034;
 - (ii) and on the opportunity to build an international railway station.
- (3) With the overall objective of integrating the Lisbon-Madrid high-speed rail connection into the broader high-speed networks in Spain and France, which operate with the European standard nominal track gauge of 1 435 mm, Portugal and Spain shall undertake the following actions:
- (a) each develop a coordinated plan for deploying the European standard nominal track gauge of 1 435 mm on the high-speed line between Lisbon and Madrid by the end of 2027, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679

- (b) coordinate and complete the track gauge migration between Lisbon and Madrid in accordance with the plan referred in point (a) and in conformity with Regulation (EU) 2024/1679.
- (4) All the actions set out in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) shall be reflected in the national investment plans of Spain and Portugal.

Article 3 *Governance*

- (1) The completion of the actions referred to in Article 2 shall be discussed at least once a year between the representatives of Portugal and Spain in a dedicated working group established in accordance with Article 53(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, at the invitation of the European Coordinator for the Atlantic European Transport Corridor.
- (2) Through the working group referred to in paragraph 1, Portugal and Spain shall share their plans regarding the construction phases and entry into service of the different line sections referred to in Article 2, including the deployment of ERTMS, and shall jointly analyse their impact on the operation of rail transport services on the infrastructure in question.
- (3) The European Coordinator for the Atlantic European Transport Corridor may convene meetings with the highest government representatives of both parties in the event of any risks that could potentially hinder the timely completion of any of the actions set out in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) of Article 2.

Article 4 *Reporting*

Portugal and Spain shall each present a report concerning their respective actions – at least once a year, and before the meetings referred to in Article 3(1) – to the Commission and the European Coordinator for the Atlantic European Transport Corridor.

These reports shall present the progress in implementing the actions referred to in Article 2, including on the financial commitments made in the national budget plans, and shall indicate any significant delay encountered, specifying the causes and indicating the corrective measures taken. For this purpose, Member States may, when appropriate, use the content of the periodic status reports to be submitted under the Connecting Europe Facility grant agreements.

Article 5 *Repeal*

The Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 2356 of 24.4.2018 on the Évora-Mérida cross-border rail connection along the Atlantic Corridor is repealed.

Article 6 *Addressees*

This Decision is addressed to the Portuguese Republic and the Kingdom of Spain.

Done at Brussels, 30.10.2025

For the Commission
Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS
Member of the Commission