

**Priority question for written answer P-002473/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Commission measures required to implement digital automatic coupling

A report by the European Court of Auditors revealed that there is no realistic long-term plan at EU level for high-speed rail, only a fragmented and ineffective system of poorly connected national lines. The same document pointed out that the Member States' national high-speed rail lines were completed without adequate cross-border coordination. Therefore, they were not among the priorities, even if international agreements were signed. Added to this problematic background is the fact that solutions to modernise existing lines have been delayed, even though they would lead to significant savings. In parallel, another factor slowing down the development of rail transport at EU level is screw coupling for freight trains.

Digital automatic coupling responds both to climate protection needs and to needs related to the increase in the volume of efficient rail freight transport. This system will ensure increased competitiveness, facilitate the development of integrated digital services, and reduce noise and the risk of derailment.

Considering all the advantages offered by new technologies, what are the Commission's proposals and proposed financial allocations for implementing the digital automatic coupling standard as soon as possible, and what is the timetable for its implementation?

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