

# NEWOPERA PRIZE FOR RAIL FREIGHT AND INTERMODALITY

## The rail freight student competition Call for Abstracts 2025

The NEWOPERA Prize Committee is pleased to announce the inaugural competition for outstanding research in **rail freight and intermodality**. This prestigious award invites contributions from **any academic discipline** that addresses **challenges or opportunities in rail freight**, regardless of the primary field of study.

We seek exceptional research that offers fresh perspectives on the future of rail freight transportation.

### Eligibility conditions

- **PhD Category:** former Doctoral students from any European University from any discipline whose research touches upon rail freight systems
- **Master's Category:** Former Master's students from any European University with completed thesis projects that incorporate rail freight elements
- **Eligibility Period:** Theses successfully defended between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, and May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, are eligible for submission

### Research Focus Areas

We invite submissions from all disciplines that engage with **rail freight in any context**. Research must meaningfully address or incorporate aspects of rail freight systems, technologies, operations, policies, or impacts.

### Evaluation Committee:

#### Academia:

Marin Marinov, Aston University, UK  
Stefano Bruni, POLIMI, Italy  
Juan de Dios Sanz Bobi, UPM, Spain  
Federico Antoniazzi, ENPC, France  
Burkhard Stadlmann, FHOÖ, Austria  
Raphael Pfaff, RWTH, Germany  
Tatiana Molkova, UPEC, Czech Republic  
Javier Santamaria, EHU, Spain  
Nekane Correa, EHU, Spain  
Borna Abramovic, UNI Zagreb, Croatia  
Gintautas Bureika, VGTU, Lithuania  
Kay Gade, DLR, Germany

#### Industry:

Fernando Liesa, ALICE, Belgium

Giacomo Bersano, IKOS, France

Artur Fojud, UIC, France

Lars Deiterding, HACON, Germany

Ralf Kaminsky, ERRAC/SIEMENS, Belgium/Germany

Christophe Cheron, SNCF, France

Bertram Ludwig, UNIFE, Belgium

Manuel Liaño, DB, Germany

**EU/policy:**

Nicolas Furio, EU-Rail JU, Belgium

Ignacio Ballester, European Railway Agency, France

**Organisers:**

Armando Carrillo Zanuy, EURNEX, Germany

Armand Toubol, NEWOPERA, Belgium

Franco Castagnetti, NEWOPERA, Belgium

Emilio Fernandez, NEWOPERA, Belgium

## Awards and Recognition

- **PhD Category:**
  - Winner: €2,800 + Industry Visibility Package
  - Finalist: €1,500 + Industry Visibility Package
- **Master's Category:**
  - Winner: €1,200 + Industry Visibility Package
  - Finalist: €500 + Industry Visibility Package

**Industry Visibility Package includes:**

- Presentation opportunity at a high-profile industry event
- Publication of research abstract in ERRAC and EURNEX communications channels
- Networking opportunities with leading employers and innovators
- Recognition in European rail freight and logistics networks

## Abstract Template (max 4 pages, including references used in the text, tables, graphs and pictures)

All submissions must follow this template format:

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH: [Clear and concise title]
2. KEYWORDS: List 3-5 keywords relevant to your research
3. AUTHOR INFORMATION:
  - First name and last name:
  - Affiliation (university, entity)
  - Degree Program: [PhD/Master's]
  - Email:
  - Thesis Supervisor:

- Year of Thesis Defense:
- 4. **RESEARCH QUESTION/OBJECTIVES:**  
State your main research question and objectives
- 5. **METHODOLOGY:**  
Describe your research approach and methods
- 6. **KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS:**  
Summarise your main results or expected outcomes
- 7. **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:**  
Explain the significance and practical applications of your research
- 8. References used in text

## Submission Requirements

- Abstract length: Maximum 4 pages
- Format: PDF document
- File naming convention: LastName\_FirstName\_Category\_2025.pdf (e.g., Smith\_Jane\_PhD\_2025.pdf)

## Key Dates

- **Submission Deadline:** October 15, 2025 (23:59 CET)
- **Winners Announcement:** November 30, 2025 (4 abstracts will be selected: 2 master's and 2 PhDs)
- **Awards Ceremony:** Early December 2025 (Specific date and venue to be announced)

## Evaluation Criteria

Our Scientific Committee will assess all submissions according to the following criteria:

1. **Quality of Research (50%)**
  - Methodological rigor and consistency
  - Originality and innovation in approach
  - Clarity of presentation and argumentation
  - Academic soundness and thoroughness
2. **Relevance to Rail Freight Challenges (20%)**
  - Alignment with current and emerging rail freight challenges
  - Contribution to addressing key sectoral needs
  - Enhancement of rail freight competitiveness
3. **Practical Feasibility and Implementation Potential (15%)**
  - Realistic applicability in industry settings
  - Implementation readiness and pathways
  - Consideration of practical constraints and enablers
4. **Potential Impact (15%)**
  - Scale and significance of potential benefits
  - Breadth of impact across the sector
  - Long-term sustainability of proposed solutions

## Evaluation Process

Submissions will undergo a rigorous two-stage evaluation by a distinguished Scientific/ Industry/policy Committee:

1. **Initial Screening:** All abstracts will be reviewed for relevance, clarity, and alignment with competition themes
2. **Final Evaluation:** Shortlisted submissions will be assessed based on the abovementioned criteria.

## **How to Submit**

Please send your abstract to XXXX with the subject line "NEWOPERA Prize Submission - [PhD/MSc] - [Last Name]"

## **Contact Information**

For inquiries, please contact:

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