



Event: **African European Industry Dialogue on Railways at InnoTrans 2026**

Date: **23 September 2026, 12.00 – 15.00** with networking opportunities afterwards

Location: **Berlin Messe | InnoTrans | beta 8-9, hub27**

Audience: Decision-makers from government, railway authorities and operators in ODA countries and European Industry

Strengthening Railways to Boost Economic Development

Rail transport is gaining **importance in the Global South** and infrastructure development is moving from vision to investment pipelines. Countries, regional organisation and development banks have an increasing focus on infrastructure corridors for sustainable economic development, regional integration and resilient transport systems. They are looking beyond standalone projects to integrated networks that connect cities, ports, and production hubs. In this shift, **rail is recognised as an important lever** to move large volumes of people and goods, reduce logistics costs, and anchor inclusive, low-carbon growth.

Europe's own experience with the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) shows how coherent, interoperable systems accelerate regional integration. Africa is about to develop its **own continental railway standards** that shall be designed to ensure competitiveness, compatibility and adaptability compared with other international railway systems. Several African countries already use European Union (EU) or International Union of Railways (UIC) standards. European standards and **Europe's rail industry remains globally competitive** – spanning rolling stock, signalling and digital systems, operations, maintenance, and training.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) together with the African Development Bank (AfDB) are identifying ways to **strengthen railway competencies** that are essential for the planning, constructing and operating railway systems in Africa. To achieve this objective, the cooperation between BMZ and AfDB involves a dialogue with African Governments and railway infrastructure managers and operators as well as European railway operators and industry. Europe can build **long-term partnership** models for the development of railway networks with Africa and platforms like the African European Industry Dialogue on Railways at InnoTrans bring together authorities, industry, and financiers.

The event is organised by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH together with Deutsche Bahn E.C.O Group and EU Global Gateway. It aims to **strengthen collaboration among policymakers, financial institutions, and industry from Africa and Europe** and to develop shared perspectives for the development of the railway sector. It shall show the progress and opportunities for railway development in Africa and open-up business opportunities for the European railway industry in Africa by demonstrating its capabilities to the African stakeholders. The event combines the **political context, investment perspectives and industry experience**. Building on the strategic priorities of the African European cooperation, participants discuss market and investment trends as well as concrete experiences from the implementation of railway projects to identify opportunities, challenges, and concrete approaches for stronger cooperation in the railway sector.

Participants include decision-makers from government, national railway authorities, corridor development authorities and operators in Africa that are part of a study tour organised by GIZ.

Agenda

Time		Speaker
12:00	Welcome	<u>Moderation:</u> Sasank Vemuri, Programme Director TUMI Just Mobility, GIZ
12:05	Opening: EU Global Gateway approach on corridor and railway development	Sergio Oliete Josa, Head of Unit Sustainable Transport and Urban Development, DG INTPA, EU
12:10	Keynote Speech 1: Africa's Transport Future & Opportunities in Rail Transformation	Mike Salawou, Director Infrastructure and Urban Development, African Development Bank (AfDB)
12:15	Pitch session: Connecting with business opportunities in Africa	tbc
12:55	Keynote Speech 2: The German Railway Industry in Africa: Opportunities, Challenges, and Success Stories	Sarah Stark, Managing Director German Railway Industry Association (VDB)
13:00	Panel Discussion: Building effective partnerships for sustainable rail development	Mesela Nhlapo, CEO of the African Rail Industry Association (ARIA) Dr Frederick Appoh, CEO Ghana Railway Development Authority
	<u>Moderation:</u> Heiko Scholz, Global Director DB Rail Academy	Florian Kellenberger, CEO Siemens Mobility (Pty) Ltd. South Africa
13:30	Closing session: Key takeaways and next steps	Michael Krake Deputy Director General Economic Cooperation, BMZ
	Signing Ceremony: Letter of Intent between BMZ and AfDB	Michael Krake, BMZ Mike Salawou, AfDB
13:45	Networking Reception	(including light lunch)
15:00	Closing	