CBRNe4rail: preparing the rail sector against CBRNe threats

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Some iconic, historic examples of CBRNe attacks in the railways include the 1995 Tokyo metro sarin nerve agent attack and the 2004 Madrid, 2005 London and 2016 Brussels IED (Improvised Explosive Device) attacks, all of which led to many deaths and casualties. Inherent characteristics of railway premises may contribute to their attractivity to terrorist [1]. The rail environment is massive, with 1,151,314 line-kilometres in the world [2] and rail stations are considered public spaces, all of which means that a completely 'hardened' approach to security is neither feasible nor desirable. While ensuring the security of the rail environment is the main responsibility of national authorities, the rail sector has a complementary role to play [3]. Indeed, in the 'golden minutes' following a CBRNe attack, railway staff would likely act as 'immediate responders' before the arrival of First Responders (FR) like firefighters and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) [4] [5]. Furthermore, ensuring rail companies have a good 'security culture' may help mitigate impacts [6].

In line with the above challenges, the EU co-funded CBRNe4rail (CBRNe preparedness for passenger rail transport hubs) project aims to enhance railway stakeholders' awareness and response capabilities by improving security plans and providing targeted training for effective management of CBRNe emergencies. The core methodology is based on the active involvement of railway companies and FR in the codesign and implementation of all project activities. Surveys, on-site expert field visits and workshops are being used to co-create and validate a railway CBRNe security concept. Looking forward, a harmonised CBRNe training programme for the sector will be designed with and delivered to railway staff, and at least 4 in-situ training exercises will be carried out. This presentation will focus on the role of the rail sector in CBRNe preparedness and how the CBRNe4rail project is contributing.

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