

NEWSLETTER

June 2019

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Editorial



Dear Reader,

Two days ago, the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) and the National Safety Authorities (NSAs) of Bulgaria, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania and Slovenia have started working according to the new processes required by the European legislation (the so-called '4th Railway Package'). Switzerland will adopt the new regime on a case-by-case basis.

At this milestone, it is a matter close to my heart to express my sincere respect and gratitude to all railway actors that have contributed to this achievement: the representatives of industry and customers, the sector

organisations, the NSAs in each member state, the European Commission and our staff in Valenciennes.

I am convinced that the new European processes for vehicle authorisations, single safety certificates and ERTMS trackside approvals will make the railway system safer and more efficient, and therefore more sustainable and competitive.

All applications are now processed through the One-Stop Shop (OSS) IT tool. After submission of an application for a vehicle authorisation or a single safety certificate, ERA shall carry out the assessment within 5 months (1 month for checking completeness of documentation, 4 months for decision) under normal circumstances. This makes assessment processes involving multiple countries more predictable.

I want to reassure the railway organisations that the experience and knowledge built thus far will not be lost. Despite its European nature, ERA will be supported, depending on the process, by the NSAs. In the framework of specific cooperation agreements, the Agency closely cooperates with and relies on the NSAs. In the past year, multilingual experts from NSAs and ERA have been fine tuning the processes by working together on the so-called 'learning cases'. I fully understand that the sector has a healthy scepticism at this stage but I am confident that if we continue the

excellent cooperation from the past, we will be able to quickly solve any issue that may arise.

General information for the applicant, guidance on the new vehicle authorisation, single safety certificate, and ERTMS trackside approval processes and frequently asked questions have been published on the ERA website and are continuously updated.

This newsletter edition features the new ERTMS trackside approval process. We asked Florence Rouse, Director of EPSF, how she feels about the changes brought on by the new system, and we spoke with the team leaders of the vehicle authorisation, single safety certificates and ERTMS trackside approval teams, the 'architects' of the new processes. Enjoy reading!

Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of ERA

The new ERTMS trackside approval process

Applicants can now apply for Agency approvals on technical solutions involving ETCS, GSM-R or ERTMS. To achieve an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System, the approval process starts very early, before the tender is launched.

The NSA role does not change as they will continue to authorise fixed installations. However, when fixed installations include any part of ERTMS, a positive decision by the Agency is part of the authorisation request.

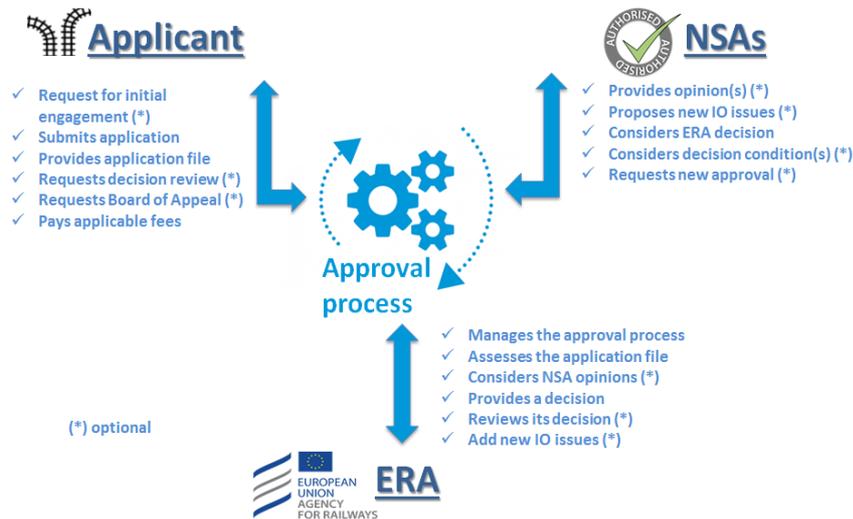
Infrastructure Managers and National Safety Authorities from Norway, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, France, Italy, and The Netherlands participated in these learning cases, which involved varying degrees of ERTMS implementation and technical solutions (level 1, level 2, high density traffic, etc.).



discussions and does not include any assessment.

After the initial engagement and at submission for approval, the applicant specifies the envisaged ERTMS solutions through the One-Stop Shop. The application file contains the project documentation describing the technical solutions, and two more specific files: the function list and the issue list. In the function list, the applicant identifies all ERTMS functions to be implemented on the trackside solution (i.e. level crossing functionality is not implemented if there are no level crossings in the project). The issue list is a collection of issues from previously implemented trackside projects that may have an impact on interoperability. By identifying the specific design requirements, the applicant demonstrates that all applicable issues of the technical solution are addressed and controlled.

Through the approval process, the Agency will assess the technical solutions, ensure that identified issues are not being repeated in new projects and that the application is compliant with the Technical Specifications of Control Command and Signalling (TSI CCS). The NSA will have access to the approval process and can provide opinions at any moment before the decision is made.



Due to the importance and novelty of the new approval process, the Agency shared and discussed it with stakeholders during workshops as well as tested it with real technical solutions.

Before submitting a formal application, the applicant should initiate a dialogue with the Agency, as set out in Recommendation 2018/C 253/01. This 'initial engagement' stage is free of charge and facilitates the approval process. It is confined to a limited number of



ERA prepares: vehicle authorisations, single safety certificates and ERTMS trackside approvals

Interview with the Team Leaders of the Planning and Approvals Delivery Unit

How does ERA ensure that the teams in charge of the applications are competent and organised?

ERA has set up a competence management system to ensure that its staff have the required competencies to complete the tasks assigned. If deemed necessary, ERA may also appoint carefully selected and well-trained experts from different organisations (NSAs, contractors, etc.).

The teams are multicultural and come from varied professional backgrounds. Combined, they have decades of experience in the railway sector. They are knowledgeable in EU railway legislation and national railway processes, and are trained in the use of the One-Stop Shop.

What is ERA's work process and organisational method?

ERA was reorganised in summer 2018 to deliver its new activities. The newly established matrix-based organisation entails a new Planning and Approvals Delivery Unit responsible for the management of the safety certification, vehicle authorisation and trackside approval activities. This unit is supported by other units within ERA to identify and assign competent staff to applications submitted in the One-Stop Shop.

ERA appoints a project team for every application and coordinates with the NSAs, when relevant. An assessment report is then produced and communicated to the applicant together with ERA's decision.

How has ERA been preparing for 16th June?

ERA has set up a learning case programme for applicants who are willing to prepare in advance for the implementation of ERA's new role. This programme gives ERA the opportunity to clarify how processes are conducted and how decisions are made. It is also effective for future applicants, as they are able to better understand the expectations for their application before they submit it. A training programme has also been developed for team members to provide further explanation on how ERA will carry out its safety certification and vehicle authorisation activities.

How will ERA treat the applications?

All applications are treated equally in accordance with our internal procedures and, when relevant, in coordination with the concerned NSA(s). The applicant has transparent access to the status and outcome of the process in the One-Stop Shop. ERA ensures the

harmonisation of the decision-making process in accordance with procedure as well as active and regular discussions between assessors.

In case of questions, who could the applicant contact?

While ERA does its best to provide guidance, applicants may still have questions. The competent body in charge of the application is the primary contact point. In the case where ERA is that body, a project manager will be appointed after the submission of an application in the One-Stop Shop and will act as contact person during the assessment process.

If the applicant disagrees with ERA's decision, it may request, within one month, that ERA perform a review of said decision. If the decision is not reversed, the applicant may lodge an appeal before the independent Board of Appeal.

General information for applicants, including [frequently asked questions](#), is provided on the ERA website. If an applicant does not find the relevant information on our website or needs to contact ERA directly, they may use the [contact form](#) available on the ERA website.

Collaboration for a successful transition: Pool of Experts

ERA can rely on the assistance of a 'Pool of Experts' who have the required language skills and expertise to facilitate ERA's new role as authorising and certifying entity. 'Pool of Experts' refers to a group of experts (e.g. appointed by an NSA) who may assist the Agency in delivering its new tasks.

Training sessions organised by ERA allow participants to better acquaint themselves with the new processes that apply as from 16 June 2019. Six

training sessions have been held since October 2018, with more to come. These sessions are instrumental in the preparation for implementation of the new legislation as they allow for a shared vision that will ensure common understanding between ERA staff and members of the 'Pool of Experts' taking part in the assessments.

Participants expressed that they were able to 'further the new relationship with the other

participants from the NSAs' and that 'it is good to have personal contact when communication is often online.' They also voiced that it is important for them to associate a human face to ERA. These sessions allow the experts to build trust by establishing relationships, by developing their intercultural competence and by demonstrating their willingness to work together to make the implementation of new processes a success.

The French NSA, EPSF, is ready for the coming changes

Interview with Florence Rouse, Director of EPSF, the French National Safety Authority



EPSF and ERA can count on many years of excellent cooperation already. Two days ago this cooperation became even more elaborate. Do you share the same view?

That's right. The relationship between ERA and EPSF has been very fruitful for many years. France is one of the EU Member States that starts the new processes now while others chose to wait for June 2020. Of course, new processes always need to mature. Nevertheless, I'm confident that we'll manage this big change for the railway sector successfully together, through close relationships and a sufficient dose of flexibility.

What will this 'new' relationship look like?

The cooperation agreement between ERA and EPSF formalises our existing relationship and is the balanced framework for our future collaboration. It includes in particular the possibility for mutual assistance: ERA requesting assistance or specific expertise from EPSF and EPSF requesting specific expertise from ERA in turn. In addition, two possibilities are

offered in order to cover ERA's needs: from EPSF's experienced team or from a single expert designated by EPSF to be included in a 'Pool of Experts'.

What makes you confident/worried?

The scope of the changes introduced since 16th June in the European railway sector is historical. This may lead to some uncertainties during the management of the first application files. It's both a challenge and an opportunity to find a common position taking into account cultural differences, language issues and different working habits of experts based everywhere in Europe. The 11 learning cases on which mixed EPSF-ERA teams worked during the past months should facilitate a smooth transition. ERA gained a better understanding of our past and present experience and of our French way of doing, and EPSF got acquainted with the new European processes.

Which elements are key for a successful transition?

Even though rules have been harmonised, and the One-Stop Shop has been created to simplify the applications for the industry, flawlessly functioning interfaces between the NSAs, the applicants and ERA are essential. Where in the past only two parties were involved (applicant and NSA), we now need to adapt to new processes with multiple parties (applicant, multiple NSAs, ERA). In order to facilitate a

mutual understanding of the needs and limitations of all parties and to mitigate contingencies, it is extremely important that applicants continue to be allowed anticipated personal discussions even before requesting 'pre-engagement' or submitting their application through the One-Stop Shop.

Are we now moving in the right direction, meaning, to the benefit of the railway sector?

While railway companies will benefit from the new simplified processes, for us at EPSF, for other NSAs and for ERA, there is still a lot of work to do. First of all, we should ensure smooth coordination and good cooperation in the calibration and the follow-up of residual concerns between certification and supervision processes, and take advantage of the certification process to focus on improvements to the safety management system of the railway companies. In addition, EPSF will negotiate bilateral agreements on border sections with its neighbouring countries. These border sections, though outside the national territory, may still be considered under a single national procedure, which is a potential benefit for the railway sector. Finally, knowing the enormous efforts the sector is taking to assimilate the new processes, I wish that further evolution of TSI rules be limited for a while, and that sufficient time for compliance be given to the companies, thus avoiding significant burden on the railway sector.



News from ERA

ERA organises the CCRCC Conference on ERTMS: 15-17 October 2019



The **3-day conference** will include workshops as well as technical and political sessions.

On **day 1**, workshops will encourage participation from attendees with sessions on transport systems of the future, vehicle upgrade and authorisation and ERTMS deployment and regulatory framework.

Day 2 is focused on technical expertise and will include sessions on ERTMS deployment, ERTMS baseline 2 upgrade of 355 multi-country freight locomotives, ERTMS regulatory and funding framework and Communication concerning GSM-R and FRMCS.

On **day 3**, the conference will focus on politics with presentations on future transport systems, rail and CCS evolution as well as several keynotes by prestigious speakers. Please find more information on [the event](#) and

keep checking the ERA website as registration will open soon.

EUMedRail and IPA projects

The EUMedRail and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) projects promote the implementation of European railway regulations, the exchange of best practices and support reforms in the Euromed and the Western Balkans regions.

In addition to seminars and technical visits, both projects organise a Secondment Programme which supports the development of expertise and brings new knowledge to the respective Ministries of Transport and railway operators.

During the last nine months, five EUMedRail project experts from Algeria, Jordan and Egypt and two IPA project experts from Serbia and Kosovo were hosted at Agency Headquarters in Valenciennes and were able to enhance their knowledge on the safety management system, reporting of accident data and statistics, reports from national investigation bodies and international railway regulation. We look forward to further integration of EUMedRail and IPA experts in our teams.

An official delegation of the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) completed a study-visit to Albania, focusing on railway incident and railway accident

investigation. This mission was organized with IPA funds of the European Union. Mr Rob Rumping and Mr Michael Rebentisch – both accident investigation experts from ERA – were welcomed by Albanian railway officials in Durrës. They appreciated intensive discussions with their Albanian partners and both sides and are looking forward to continued cooperation in future.

On 21st and 22nd May 2019, ERA invited 14 experts from the national railway accident investigation bodies of Turkey and the Western Balkans to a workshop concerning 'peer review' in Valenciennes. Under the IPA of the European Union, ERA plans to organise peer reviews of accident investigation bodies for IPA beneficiaries, in order to allow investigators to learn from each other, to exchange best practices in railway accident and railway incident investigation, to build mutual trust and to share resources in the future. A first peer review exercise is planned for autumn 2019.

Save the date



57th ETCR Training Course on EU Transport Policy and Railway Affairs from 1-12 July in Bruges. [More information.](#)

Making the railway system work better for society.

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