EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

Making the railway system
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Questions and Answers

ERA webinar: Progress on Safety towards SERA

30th June 2021

Q: How are these statics (CSI) compared to the CST? What are the desired CSI thresholds to respect?

A: Art. 5.1 of the Safety Directive (EU 2016/798) requires that Member States shall collect information on CSIs in order to provide for the monitoring of the general development of railway safety and to facilitate assessment of the achievement of the CSTs. Common Safety Targets (CSTs), instead, are defined in art. 7.1: The CSTs shall establish the minimum safety levels to be reached by the system as a whole, and where feasible, by
different parts of the rail system in each Member State and in the Union.

Common safety targets ('CSTs') and CSMs have been gradually introduced to ensure that safety is maintained at a high level and, when and where necessary and reasonably practicable, improved. They should provide tools for the assessment of the safety and performance of operators at Union level as well as in the Member States. Common safety indicators ('CSIs') have been established in order to assess whether systems comply with the CSTs and to facilitate the monitoring of railway safety performance.

Practically CSIs are used to evaluate NVRs and CSTs. The NRV/CST 'thresholds' are defined in Commission Decision 2012/226/EU.

Q: Did you perform trend analyses like in the evaluations of Prof Andrew Evans?

A: CSI data have been provided by NSAs for more than 10 years. The historical CSI data covering the period 2006-2019 are available on the ERA website. Thanks to the availability of data, trends over past years are analysed and presented for various indicators, for instance in the biennial Report on Railway Safety and Interoperability in the EU 2020 (here).

Q: It seems logical that some indicators are stable if the Member States have to ensure the national level of safety is maintained when a change is performed to their network. Is it foreseen to review and adopt more ambitious CST in the near future to drive changes that improve safety of the railways? At least in countries where safety level is below the average European level, safety actions should be taken in order to promote homogenous safety performances across Europe. Why not take 2019 (the safety year) as basis target for improvement?

A: Indeed, in March 2021 ERA carried out an Ex-post evaluation of the Common Safety Method for Assessment of Achievement of Safety Targets (CSM CST), available on the ERA website (https://www.era.europa.eu/sites/default/files/library/docs/report_ex-post_csm_cst_final_public_en.pdf). Two recommendations of the Ex-post evaluation suggest to update NRVs/CSTs and to Revise the CST concept:

Rec 1: Update NRVs/CSTs
The NRVs/CSTs are outdated and lead to erroneous results, which undermines the validity and relevance of the Method. The second set was published in 2012 (2012/226/EU) with no subsequent sets published,

contrary to the requirement in the RSD (Art. 7(5)) and in the Mandate to the Agency. A swift update is recommended to mitigate this considerable weakness of the Method.

Rec 6: Revise the CST concept
A “target level of safety” can have two theoretical meanings: a level that must be achieved (a mandatory target) and a level that should be aimed for, but need not necessarily be achieved (an aspirational target). In the EU legislative context, the NRVs are seen as mandatory targets (helping to assure that safety does not start to deteriorate in any MS). Contrary to NRVs, there is a case to conceptualise the CSTs as aspirational targets (safety levels aimed for – policy targets) underpinned by a different enforcement regime. In this way, tangible aspirational policy targets could be defined and used (as in other modes of transport) to drive various improvement activities.
Such a reinterpretation could seek alignment with the perspective adopted in the CSM ASLP. This includes a more proactive approach towards safety improvement, collective learning, and emphasizing not only safety deteriorations, but also safety improvement.