

## Major milestone achieved by the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA): More than 50 000 rail vehicles authorised since 2019

Brussels, Belgium, 27 April 2023

**The 4th Railway Package has been a major step forward for creating the Single European Railway Area. With this legislative package, starting June 2019, ERA has received the competence to issue vehicle authorisations valid in all Member States of the EU, a process that has consistently proven its positive impact on cross-border rail traffic, and on ERTMS implementation.**

On 27 April 2023, ERA in collaboration with the National Railway Company of Belgium (NMBS/SNCB) organised a joint event Brussels, on Platform 5 of the Midi Railway Station, to mark an important milestone in the implementation of the 4th Railway Package: 50 000+ vehicles authorised by ERA at European Level.

*“The 50 000th vehicle authorised by ERA was for SNCB, that also operates it, thus our choice to celebrate this major milestone in Brussels, in one of the major railways stations in Europe, is a powerful metaphor, a symbol of our work and its positive impact, visible on the tracks, bringing added value to European businesses and citizens”* said Mr Josef Doppelbauer, ERA Executive Director, adding that *“the authorisation process, as it takes place today, is harmonized across Europe, accessible, transparent, and predictable, an institutional locomotive that takes us every day closer to fulfilling our vision: One Europe, One Railway.”*

With more than 50 000 vehicles authorised between June 2019 and April 2023, ERA has become the main rail vehicle authorizer in the EU, with a share close to 60% of all applications. Almost 83% of the authorizations were issued by the Agency for wagons, around 11% were for trainsets and coaches, close to 6% were for locomotives, and around 0.2% for special vehicles.

Relevant for its impact on enhancing cross-border rail transport are figures referring to the area of use, as almost 54% of the authorisations processed by ERA are for rail vehicles operating in the whole EU, around 27% are for more than one Member State, and almost 19% for one Member State.

Gerd De Vos, Executive Director Technics SNCB, stressed that: *“For SNCB, the 50.000th approval conducted of ERA has a strong symbolic value. By delivering vehicle approvals and safety certificates, ERA contributes to reinforce passengers’ trust in rail transport and it also helps improve the competitive position of rail transport as the backbone of sustainable mobility in Europe. To give this 50.000th approval in Brussels is also symbolic, since the latter is a hub for the European railway network. SNCB has the ambition of making Belgium, and especially Brussels, a true international railway hub with fast links to major European cities.”*

### **Background information:**

**About the EU Agency for Railways:** The European Union Agency for Railways was established in Valenciennes in 2004, and currently has 188 employees representing more than 22 European Member States.

ERA has been providing EU Member States and the European Commission with technical assistance in the development and implementation of the Single European Railway Area. This comprises enhancing technical interoperability and harmonising rules, promoting simplified access for customers, developing a common approach to safety and safety culture, advising on telematics applications and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System), monitoring National Safety Authorities and Notified Bodies and facilitating the exchange of information between the railway actors in Europe.

Since 16th June 2019 the EU Agency for Railways is mandated to issue single safety certificates and vehicle (type) authorisations valid in multiple European countries and to ensure an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System.

### **About the Vehicle Authorisation Process:**

The technical pillar of the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package is designed to boost the competitiveness of the European railway sector by significantly reducing the costs and the administrative burden for cross-border rail services. In particular, the technical pillar implementation does:

- save businesses from having to file costly multiple applications for vehicle authorisations and safety certificates in the case of operations beyond one single Member State;
- create a 'one-stop shop' IT tool which will act as a single-entry point for all such applications, using easy, transparent, and consistent procedures;
- ensure that European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) equipment is interoperable;
- reduce the large number of remaining national rules, which create a risk of insufficient transparency and disguised discrimination of new railway undertakings.

Before a new or modified railway vehicle is permitted to operate on the EU railway network it must be authorised. An authorisation is granted for a vehicle and/or vehicle type (vehicle type authorisation) or for individual vehicles that conform to an already authorised vehicle type (vehicle authorisation for placing on the market).

The authorisation process allows the authorising entity to achieve reasonable assurance that the applicant and the other entities involved in the design, manufacture, verification and validation of the vehicle and/or vehicle type have fulfilled their obligations and responsibilities, in order to ensure that the vehicle can be safely operated in the area of use.

When identifying relevant rules, the applicant should take into account the relevant [Technical Specifications for Interoperability \(TSIs\)](#), the applicable national rules and other applicable Union law (e.g. non-road mobile machinery emissions under Regulation (EU) 2016/1628).

A vehicle and/or vehicle type authorisation is valid for a defined area of use, i.e. a network or networks within one or more Member States where the vehicle may be used. A further authorisation is required if changes are made to the area of use (extension of the area of use).

The Agency issues decisions in regards to the need for an authorisation when changes to an already authorised vehicle (or a series of vehicles) are [notified to ERA](#), as authorising entity, by an entity not being the type authorisation holder under Art. 16(4) of Regulation (EU) 2018/545.

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