

MARKING A MAJOR STEP TOWARDS COMPLETING THE SINGLE EUROPEAN RAILWAY AREA – ERA BECOMES EUROPEAN AUTHORITY FOR CROSS-BORDER RAIL TRAFFIC IN EUROPE

VALENCIENNES, France, 16 June 2019

From 16 June 2019 onwards, the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) is entering a new era of single and simplified authorisation and certification processes in Europe. The European Union Agency for Railways takes responsibility for vehicle authorisation, safety certification, and ERTMS trackside approval.

Ushering a new era of simplified processes for the European rail market, companies operating across EU borders may now rely on one single, integrated process to obtain vehicle authorisations, single safety certificates or to request ERTMS* trackside approval. From 16 June 2019 onwards they must contact the European Union Agency for Railways in Valenciennes and file only one application through its One-Stop Shop IT tool (OSS). Upon receipt of an application, ERA assigns a project manager who is the personal contact for the applicant and who advises him/her throughout the process. Dedicated multilingual expert teams assess each application.

This is a substantial change for the European rail system. Bulgaria, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania and Slovenia have adopted the new regime in June 2019, while other countries chose to transpose the new legislation by June 2020. Switzerland will adopt the new regime on a case-by-case basis from June 2019.

Dr Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director of ERA stated: "For years, railway's progress in Europe has been hampered by technical barriers and excessive cost. The new, simplified certification processes help breaking down the barriers and increasing harmonisation, which will improve the competitive position of railways."

The Fourth Railway Package European legislation and the vision of SERA: a Single European Railway Area

Applied to railways, the European vision of free movement of people and goods between all European countries, the highest safety standards and universal access to services is called SERA: a Single European Railway Area (analogue with 'SEPA' for international payments). Harmonised processes and high safety standards should allow railways, currently the most sustainable mode of (international) transport,

producing less combustion emissions than road- and air transport, to become more attractive for passengers and freight. That is why in May 2016 the EU Parliament decided a number of new legislative texts, called the Fourth Railway Package. The Fourth Railway Package legislation gives ERA a leading role in ensuring the implementation of a harmonised European legislation in that the Agency becomes the single certification body for international railway traffic in Europe.

About the EU Agency for Railways

The European Union Agency for Railways was established in Valenciennes (offices) and Lille (meeting facilities) in 2004. Its 170 employees represent more than 22 European Member States and speak multiple languages. Since 2004, 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 Traffic Management System), monitoring National Safety Authorities and Notified Bodies and facilitating the exchange of information between the railway actors in Europe. This is expressed by the slogan "Making the railway system work better for society."

*ERTMS: European Traffic Management System

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[Photo Dr. Josef Doppelbauer](#)

[Photo ERA premises in Valenciennes](#)

[Photo entrance of ERA premises in Valenciennes](#)

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