EUROPEAN
UNION
AGENCY
FOR RAILWAYS

Making the railway system
work better for society.

Questions and Answers

ERA webinar: A Compelling Vision for the Target Railway System

16th September 2020

Q: What is ERA doing in its organisation and its tasks related to the 4th Railway Packages as response to COVID19 pandemic?

A: 1. ERA has established a COVID-19 information platform.
2. ERA ensured and continues to ensure business continuity while respecting health safety measures since the COVID19 outbreak up till now.
3. In coordination with the European Commission, ERA allowed a flexible transition period for the implementation of the 4th Railway Package for Member States that did not transpose it yet - 31/10/2020.

Q: Railways would like to compete with transport across countries in Europe. Competitors are mainly cars, buses, trucks and planes. They all have an advantage, from a business point of view: the providers can be located in one member State and their staff and "rolling stock" can move freely within the EU. The railway cannot do that. Is there a vision to make this easier, without being forced to set up companies in each country or join a partnership with other operators?

A: The Agency has developed and is continuing to develop common European requirements for:
› train drivers;
› safety certification of Railway Undertakings; and
› vehicle identification / registration.
In the Single European Railway Area, seamless operation across Europe should be possible, bringing rail at par with the other transport modes mentioned.

Q: Digitalization is key for the railways. In relation to this, and referring to the slide shown by Josef Doppelbauer referring to Data 'free exchange of data':
Will we see in the future ERA becoming the data authority (at least, for the data linked to interoperability and safety)? The sector will appreciate an action like this in order to avoid duplication of efforts and for having ERA (and not private companies) as the reference for the key data for the railways.

A: The Agency is currently managing European registers for:
› vehicles (ECVVR, ERATV, VKM);
› railway infrastructure (RINF); and
› rules (RDD).
To become the data authority, the Agency will need sound cost benefit analysis and a legal basis; such role, however, would strongly endorse pan-European capacity management.

Q: I really would like to know the vision from the ERA about EULYNX and Object controllers.

A: The Agency follows the EULYNX project.

In the context of an approach to standardize CCS beyond ERTMTS, the interface to the object controllers is an obvious candidate. The work of EULYNX can be considered here.

Within the envelope of available resources, ERA supports initiatives from the sector on achieving interchangeability also between trackside components. The possible role for a body to steer a common EU framework for modularity/interchangeability is under discussion, as well as the need/opportunity for ERA to enlarge its scope of ERTMS system authority.

Q: Are you in a process of developing a European Enterprise Architecture for this effort? It seems quite relevant to get down to some details soon, even if it is on just a small subsystem to start off.

A: The first important step was to specify where we want to go. You can find more technical details in Annex 1 of the Agency document 'A compelling vision for the target railway system'

The next step is to prioritise the actions required to reach the target railway system and disseminate upon. This webinar is part of that dissemination.

The delivery of the elements of the target railway system, will require close cooperation between all the actors. They will also take time to achieve.

If we consider harmonisation, the revision of the current set of Technical Specifications for Interoperability is undertaken in cooperation with the sector and the Joint Undertaking Shift2Rail. Where possible outputs of some S2R research projects will be incorporated in the revised TSIs in 2022.

Q: Could you please explain what mentioned "euro shuttle" is?

A: Euro shuttle is a service offered by Eurotunnel for travellers by private car (travel within a car embarked on a train).

Q: 1. How far does the vision extend into the future, especially with regard to CCS incl. ATO?

2. Related document "Compelling vision for a target rail system" "To reduce infrastructure costs by vehicle autonomy (Energy, Control Command and Signalling (CCS))": Please provide more information, as the total amount of the ticket costs is relevant for the passenger and not the distribution of the costs between individual cost contributions.

A: 1. The vision sets a target railway system that needs time and several steps to get there. Considering CCS including ATO, standardisation of operations is important as the current railway system is partly open (not a closed system as for metro).

2. Transferring functions from infrastructure to the vehicle may reduce significantly infrastructure related costs, as well as facilitating RU approaches to optimise their costs related to the services offered. This in turn may reduce the overall costs for rail.

Q: In addition to the technical aspects, would it not also be important to harmonize the training of the staff in the safety relevant area? For example to harmonize technical vehicle inspections before the trains departs.

A: Harmonisation is necessary to avoid fragmentation and barriers.

Training of staff in safety related area falls under the responsibility of each actor concerned. Where common criteria (SMS, TSIs) and common method (CSM) may help, harmonising all of the training related to safety area may become a barrier. The best approach would be to agree on a proper balance between all actors ensuring safety related tasks.

The current OPE TSI partly sets harmonised rules for technical inspection of vehicles before train entering service.

Q: We have a particular concern about national rules that are set in certain member states that limit the ability of vehicles to be circulate all over Europe.
What is the position of ERA regarding national rules that have received a negative analysis from ERA?
What is the position of FOT regarding their commitment to remove national rules?

A: 1. ERA position: A national rule that has been assessed as unjustified by the Agency should be either removed or replaced by an existing common rule such as the TSI. The Agency has to inform the Member State about the negatively assessed rules by means of a technical opinion. If the Member State adopts the national rule in question without paying sufficient heed to the ERA opinion, European Commission may adopt, by way of implementing acts, a decision addressed to the Member State, requesting it to modify or repeal the rule. ERA appreciates the open discussion and commitment from National Safety Authorities on the national technical rules (NTR) assessment.
2. FOT position: The transition from the former world of national rules to a more harmonized world with common TSIs takes time.
FOT has a focus to reduce the notified NTR-CH – however we have to check, that there is no negative impact on safety, on capacity and on economics.
Presently, we have 37 notified NTR-CH that are negatively assessed by the ERA. These are the activities FOT is actually taking:
Of this sum 4 notified NTR-CH can be deleted, 8 notified NTR-CH will be modified to eliminate the conflicts, for 16 notified NTR-CH we are looking for alternatives (focus on improving the TSIs), 9 notified NTR-CH are actually indispensable. For FOT the focus lays on transparency, we want to avoid hidden rules.

Q: Dear Mr. Bauer, why does competition between night strain operators not help in improving the product and service? In Aviation the number of flights in Europe has increased through competition of different airlines while the average price of a ticket went down. Why should this not apply to train or rather night train services?

A: It was "Pure competition" that was considered as counterproductive compared to cooperation but not competition as such.

Q: It seems to me that there are different opinions and estimations about the speed that is necessary to reach a good target railway systems. Today our speed of change and improvement is still slow in the sector. What speed do we need and what are the catalysts?

A: That is correct. We believe many actors are looking forward for a rapid change but this is not always possible for various reasons (mostly because of compatibility with the existing system and because of resources issue).
The catalysts could be:
1. A strong political will to place rail effectively at the heart of land transport.
2. New decision making process: wide background for multimodal and multinational projects placing common interests first: decarbonisation, resilience (on the potential effects of global warming such as flooding), inclusion.
3. Standardisation:
› for rail specific matters (e.g. infrastructure), and
› for cross-mode issues (e.g. sustainable energy solutions).
The approach will need to be different: rail specific in the 1st case and integrated in the 2nd case.

Q: Good morning from London. Thank you for a very interesting session. What opportunities do you envisage for the UK and the ERA to work together in the future?

A: ERA continues cooperation with UK while following EC recommendations. We will also continue to liaise with experts from the UK.