



Press Release
Brussels, 30 September 2013

Will the Council's approach to the Safety Directive stumble on the last mile?

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), the Association of the European Railway Industry (UNIFE), the European Rail Freight Association (ERFA), the International Union of Wagon Keepers (UIP), the European Passenger Train and Traction Operating Lessors Association (EPPTOLA), UIC (International Union of Railways), UITP (International Association of Public Transport) and UIRR (International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport) have been persistently highlighted the need for establishing the European Railway Agency (ERA) as the one-stop-shop for safety certification in Europe and encourage the Council of the European Union to build on what has been achieved so far. They ask the Council to apply the principles set out in the Interoperability Directive to the Safety Directive.

The European railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, rail manufacturers and suppliers call for a European Railway Agency (ERA) that will act in the future as the EU's single railway authority, and as the one-stop-shop for safety certification and vehicle authorisation. These tasks shall be performed in close cooperation with the National Safety Authorities (NSA), especially in order to assess all remaining national rules.

Nonetheless, an alternative idea has been developed by some Member States for the Safety Directive and is currently under discussion in the transport working group of the Council. According to this alternative, each National Safety Authority (NSA) would act as the one stop-shop in coordination with the other NSAs concerned. A given NSA - acting as the "lead NSA" - would be the coordinator and responsible for the correct application of processes and for issuing safety certification. This approach fully depends on mutual respect and is likely to fail due to diverging national approaches. In addition, in case of disagreement among the NSAs, there would be no independent appeal body to call upon, therefore decisions could endlessly be left pending because the "equal" parties fail to reach common solutions. The concept of the "lead NSA" will result in the continuity of today's inefficient and long lasting processes for receiving safety certification. The proposal must be rejected in order to overcome a challenging situation and not simply maintain today's problematic framework.

The European railway sector has been calling for the support of European Institutions to create a modern, flexible and efficient railway sector by enhancing the role of the European Railway Agency (ERA). The Agency issuing vehicle authorisations and safety certification, in close cooperation with the National Safety Authorities, would be a significant step forward. In order to perform these new tasks the Agency must be equipped with competent, highly skilled and sufficient staff. Following the "lead NSA" approach would cement the existing unacceptable situation and is moreover an irreversible step back in the wrong direction.



In a few days a decisive Council meeting on the Safety Directive proposed by the Lithuanian Presidency will take place. The rail sector expects that a general approach will be approved during this meeting by the Member States. This should continue in the direction of an enhanced role of ERA via the issuing of Safety Certification and further moving towards the Single European Railway Area.

CER Executive Director Libor Lochman highlighted: "If the concept of the 'lead NSA' will be further promoted, it would bring no real change and all expectations from the Fourth Railway Package's Technical Pillar would be vanished, the current lengthy and expensive procedures will remain conserved and their harmonisation will not be achieved."

UNIFE Director General Philippe Citroën stated: "The European railway sector has been calling for streamlined and transparent process for vehicle authorisation for years and the discussions about the Fourth Railway Package's Technical Pillar were on a good way so far. The enhanced role of ERA should not be put in question."

ERFA Secretary General Pierre Tonon reminded: "We are building together since already 20 years a new European Railway System in a fully open market. This system - to be finalised with the Fourth Railway Package - has to be European - and not Member States - driven. Why? Because we strongly need harmonised, simplified and far less costly operational cross-border processes to finally allow the railways to become more competitive. There is urgency to reinforce the ERA and give it the power to lead and control the processes!"

UIP Secretary General Gilles Peterhans stressed: "If we really want railways to support the development of a sustainable and environmentally friendly transport in Europe, we need to ensure that we can achieve greater efficiency and better quality of service at an affordable price. This implies transparent, uniform and non-discriminatory rules at European level. Only the strengthening of ERA can reduce decision-making costs and time and enhance the credibility of long-term policy commitments."

UIRR Director General Martin Burkhardt pointed out: "The adoption of Directive 91/440 signalled the intention to depart from national structures on rail 22 years ago, as well as the will to create a genuinely European framework for - among others - the safety certification and vehicle authorisations in Europe. Member States should not reverse this trend; rather reinforce it by empowering ERA to carry out uniform European certification."

UITP European Union Department Director Brigitte Ollier noted: "The prevailing cumbersome national certification regimes should be replaced by a truly European level safety certification, performed by the European Railway Agency, to minimise the costs of this administrative procedure, while removing at the same time a major obstacle from railway undertakings operating in several Member States. The Single European Railway Area needs single European certification!"



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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 70 European railway undertakings and infrastructure companies. CER represents the interests of its members towards the European institutions as well as other policy makers and transport actors. CER's main focus is promoting the strengthening of rail as essential to the creation of a sustainable transport system which is efficient, effective and environmentally sound. For more information, see www.cer.be

UNIFE represents the European Rail Industry in Brussels since 1992. The Association gathers more than 80 of Europe's leading large and medium sized rail supply companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. A further one thousand suppliers of railway equipment partake in UNIFE activities through 15 national rail industry associations. UNIFE members have an 80% market share in Europe and supply more than 50% of the worldwide production of rail equipment and services. www.unife.org

Founded in 1950, the UIP - International Union of Wagon Keepers, with its seat in Brussels, is the umbrella association of national associations from fourteen European countries, thus representing more than 250 keepers with approximately 180.000 freight wagons, performing 50 % of the rail freight tonne-kilometres throughout Europe. UIP represents the members' concerns at international level. By means of research, lobbying and focused cooperation with all stakeholders and organisations interested in rail freight transportation, the UIP wants to secure on the long term the future of rail freight transport. www.uiprail.org

The International Association of Public Transport (UITP) is the international network for public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, scientific institutes and the public transport supply and service industry. It is a platform for worldwide cooperation, business development and the sharing of know-how between its 3,400members from 92 countries. UITP is the global advocate of public transport and sustainable mobility, and the promoter of innovations in the sector. In the European Union, the UITP EU Committee (EUC) represents the views of the public transport undertakings of the 27 member countries. It is closely following and participating in the elaboration of the different European policies and initiatives that have an impact on urban, suburban and regional public passenger transport.

Visit our website www.uitp.org



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EPTTOLA

The European Rail Freight Association (ERFA) was founded in July 2002 by a handful of rail freight companies from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and the UK. Today, the association represents 17 countries in wider Europe. The mission of ERFA is to promote European rail freight transport and its stakeholders active in that area through the complete liberalisation of that market.

www.erfarail.eu

Created in 1970, initially in the form of a de facto association, the International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies, abbreviated as UIRR, took on the form of a co-operative limited company under Belgian law in 1991. It has 17 member companies and promotes the essentially road-rail Combined Transport.

www.uirr.com

For more information and contact details go to www.epttola.eu