

UNIFE - The European Rail Supply Industry Association

IRIS General Manager (IRIS Certification®)

Brussels, 28 July 2026

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Organisation: UNIFE aisbl – IRIS Management Centre (IMC)

About the Role

The IRIS General Manager (IRIS Certification®) is responsible for the strategic leadership, operational management, and continued global development of the IRIS Certification® scheme. Reporting to the UNIFE Director General and the IRIS Certification® Steering Committee and operating within the governance framework of UNIFE, the IRIS General Manager ensures the integrity, growth, and international recognition of the IRIS Certification® system.

The role requires an experienced international leader with extensive knowledge of the railway industry, management systems certification, and standardisation activities. The successful candidate will lead a multicultural team based in Brussels and work closely with certification bodies, railway operators (i.e. in IRQB), manufacturers, suppliers, standardisation organisations (i.e. ISO), and industry stakeholders worldwide.

About UNIFE®

UNIFE is the European association representing the rail supply industry. Based in Brussels, UNIFE brings together leading European rail suppliers and national rail industry associations to promote the development of a competitive, innovative, and sustainable railway sector. The association works closely with European institutions and international stakeholders to advance rail as the backbone of sustainable mobility, while also contributing to technical standardisation, research and innovation, and the management of industry initiatives such as IRIS Certification®, the globally recognised quality management certification system for the railway industry.

About IRIS Certification®

IRIS Certification® is the internationally recognised quality management certification scheme developed specifically for the railway industry. Managed by UNIFE through the

IRIS Management Centre (IMC), it provides a framework to assess and improve the quality, reliability, and operational performance of organisations involved in the global rail supply chain.

Based on internationally recognised management system principles and aligned with relevant ISO standards, IRIS Certification® supports railway manufacturers, operators, suppliers, and service providers in implementing robust processes, reducing risks, and achieving continuous improvement. By promoting a common approach to quality and performance across the railway sector, IRIS Certification® strengthens collaboration throughout the supply chain and contributes to safer, more efficient, and more sustainable rail systems worldwide.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement the long-term strategy for IRIS Certification® in accordance with the objectives defined by the IRIS Certification® Steering Committee.
- Identify market developments and opportunities to strengthen the global position of IRIS Certification®.
- Drive innovation and continuous improvement of the certification scheme and its supporting services.
- Represent IRIS Certification® within UNIFE and at international industry events.

Operational Management

- Lead and manage the IRIS Management Centre (IMC) in Brussels.
- Ensure efficient operational delivery of all certification-related activities.
- Manage budgets, resources, and organisational performance.
- Ensure compliance with UNIFE policies, and applicable governance requirements.

Stakeholder Management

- Build and maintain strong relationships with:
 - Rolling stock manufacturers
 - Suppliers

- Certification Bodies (CBs)
- Auditors
- Railway operators
- National and international railway associations
- Standardisation organisations and their respective partner organisations
- Regulatory authorities (i.e. the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA))
- Act as the primary ambassador for IRIS Certification® worldwide.

Standardisation and Technical Leadership

- Monitor developments within international management system standards, particularly ISO standards relevant to quality management and conformity assessment.
- Ensure that IRIS Certification® remains aligned with international best practices and evolving industry requirements.
- Contribute to strategic discussions regarding future standardisation activities at ISO level (ISO TC 269 incl. WG 5) affecting the railway sector.

Leadership and People Management

- Lead, motivate and develop an international and multicultural team.
- Foster a collaborative, inclusive and high-performance working culture.
- Promote cross-functional cooperation across UNIFE and with external partners.
- Support professional development and succession planning within the organisation.
- Ensure compliance with Belgian labour legislation

Candidate Profile

Professional Experience

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- Minimum **5–10 years of professional experience with IRIS Certification®**, including in-depth knowledge of the IRIS Certification® rules, governance, audit processes and implementation.

- Minimum **10 years of senior management experience**, including responsibility for international teams and organisational leadership.
- Proven experience in the railway industry, preferably with manufacturers, operators, certification bodies or related organisations.
- Experience working with executive boards, steering committees and international governance structures.

Technical Knowledge

Strong knowledge of:

- IRIS Certification® requirements and governance
- Railway industry quality management systems
- International conformity assessment principles
- ISO management system standards and international standardisation processes
- Relevant ISO committees and the interaction between industry-specific and international standards
- Regulatory developments affecting the global railway sector
- Experience with the ISO 22163 Railway Quality Management System (RQMS) standard, ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System standard, ISO management system standards and conformity assessment practices, ISO/IEC 17021-1 principles for the competence and impartiality of management system certification bodies and railway industry-specific requirements developed through the IRIS governance structure and aligned with international best practices.

Leadership Competencies

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- Strategic thinking and business vision
- Strong leadership and people management skills
- Ability to inspire and lead multicultural and international teams
- Excellent decision-making capability
- High level of integrity and professionalism

- Strong negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Change management and organisational development expertise
- Customer and stakeholder orientation
- Ability to build consensus among diverse international stakeholders

Communication Skills

- Excellent presentation and public speaking skills
- Outstanding interpersonal and networking abilities
- Strong diplomatic and intercultural communication skills
- Ability to represent IRIS Certification® at senior executive level internationally

Language Requirements

Mandatory:

- Excellent command of **English** (spoken and written)

Desirable:

- Proficiency in at least one additional European language

International Experience

The ideal candidate will have:

- Experience working in multicultural and international environments.
- Experience collaborating with international certification bodies and global industry partners.
- A strong understanding of different cultural and business environments.
- Willingness to travel extensively within Europe and internationally, including regular travel to Asia (e.g. India), the Middle East and other regions where IRIS Certification® is implemented.

Personal Attributes

- Visionary and entrepreneurial mindset

- Results-oriented with strong execution capability
- High degree of resilience and adaptability
- Collaborative leadership style
- Strong ethical standards
- Ability to work independently while building strong partnerships
- Commitment to continuous improvement and operational excellence

Employment Conditions

- Permanent full-time position
- Duty station: Brussels, Belgium
- International travel required
- Competitive executive remuneration package in accordance with UNIFE policies and Belgian employment legislation

Why Join UNIFE and IRIS Certification®?

This position offers a unique opportunity to shape the future of the globally recognised IRIS Certification® system and to contribute to the continuous improvement of quality and operational excellence throughout the international railway industry. The successful candidate will play a pivotal role in strengthening collaboration among manufacturers, operators, suppliers and certification bodies while leading an internationally respected organisation from its headquarters in Brussels.

Application deadline: 11 September 2026 (End of Day)

Applications should be submitted by email to **Franck Cipolla** at Franck.CIPOLLA@unife.org.

Please use the following subject line for your application:

Application IRIS General Manager | [“Your Name here”]

Applications received after the deadline or submitted to any other contact person will not be considered.