



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

ERTMS
The European Coordinator

Information note by Karel Vinck, European ERTMS Coordinator

First of all I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the European Commission for its work on the first CEF Call 2014, in particular for the efforts made in the context of horizontal priority ERTMS. The Commission has never experienced such a high oversubscription for this area, even if the budget allocated to ERTMS was a relatively low amount to be distributed between all Member States: € 200 million from the general envelope (more than five times oversubscription) and € 100 million from the Cohesion envelope (1,5 times oversubscription). This significant amount of requested co-funding can be interpreted as a political success of ERTMS, since all European railways have accepted this system. At the same time it has been a great challenge to take a decision which projects out of 49 eligible proposals should be retained for co-funding.

It has become evident very quickly that the usual criteria applied during the evaluation procedure are not sufficient to have a pragmatic strategy for prioritisation, since many mature proposals of very good quality or of high relevance had to be refused due to budgetary restriction. The text of the 2014 CEF Call refers to a ranking of importance giving precedence to track-side and on-board equipment. Further prioritisation of ERTMS implementation has been based on my Work Plan for ERTMS that provides a plan for acceleration of ERTMS deployment in Europe. Finally, projects with a total recommended financial support of € 254 million (45 million from the Cohesion envelope and € 209 million from the general envelope) were retained.

The Commission considered carefully the proposals involving track side or on-board equipment. One priority was that Member States can fulfil the TEN-T infrastructure requirements as smoothly as possible by 2030. Only those locomotives have been selected for co-funding that are supposed to run in more than one Member State and along Core Network Corridors. Therefore only five proposals related to on-board equipment have been selected and will receive around 20% of the € 254 million. Not more than 3% of the total amount has been attributed to two studies: the one will support ERTMS implementation over the current financial period and the other will provide proposals for simplification and facilitation of putting into operation.

We took also into account the geographical scope of track-side deployment. Specific focus was given to the Rhine-Alpine and North Sea – Mediterranean Corridors. The completion of these two Corridors is at an advanced stage and plays an eminent role in Europe's economy. Their equipment with ERTMS will have a great impact on interoperability, capacity and reliability which will directly enhance competitiveness of rail and increase growth in Europe. Furthermore, priority was given to Member States that have not received co-funding under TEN-T or only a limited amount over the last 7-8 years; therefore countries with significant support from earlier Calls were not prioritised. Additionally, projects with a completion date of 2018 or earlier were favoured towards longer projects, in order to give co-funding for mature projects that have results as soon as possible.

It is clear to me that not all project promoters will be satisfied with this result, many will be disappointed to find their proposals rejected. However, this is not the last ERTMS Call, since another one will be launched probably already in November 2015 with a significant amount of co-funding. I hope that the Member States and project promoters will embrace this opportunity and come with good mature projects. We have reached the point of no return in ERTMS deployment, now we shall make every effort to realise the commitments made by the Member States for the period of 2015-2020.