

# Signal

the European Rail Traffic Management System

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These are exciting times for ERTMS. The recent corrections to the ERTMS technical specifications received a positive opinion from EU Member States in February 2008 and were adopted by a Decision of the European Commission on 23 April 2008. 'The decision is a major milestone in the evolution of ETCS which paves the way for a legally stable and interoperable future for Europe's rail network' said European Commission Vice-President in charge of transport, Jacques Barrot. The version 2.3.0 specifications – reported on in the previous edition of *Signal* – become the legal version from 1 June 2008. The consolidation of version 2.3.0 opens the way for the development of a version 3 – and this is the focus of the latest issue of *Signal*, along with the results of a public consultation on a European ERTMS deployment plan...

*The Signal team*

## Full speed ahead for ERTMS: towards system specs version 3

The recent consolidation of version 2.3.0 of the ERTMS technical specifications means that ERTMS deployment can proceed full speed ahead. The consolidation was also crucial before moving on to a new version of the specifications: version 3. None of the errors and ambiguities corrected in 2.3.0 will exist in version 3, and this will also include several new functions and features. Without consolidation it would not have been possible to guarantee that version 3 trains could run on version 2.3.0 lines (backward compatibility).

The European Railway Agency (ERA) is indeed already working on version 3. In December 2007, the Agency drew up a first list of additional functions, known as 'functional change requests', which are 'candidates' for inclusion in version 3.

Moreover, the rail industry and other stakeholders have agreed to commit themselves to a timetable for finalising version 3. Knowing the timeline in advance will enable better project planning and the launch of calls for tender as soon as possible. The intention is to submit version 3 to a vote in the so-called 'Article 21 Committee'\* by the end of 2012.

Between now and the adoption of version 3 in 2012, a number of phases need to be completed:

- defining technical solutions for the final list of functional change requests;
- drafting System Requirement Specifications (SRS);
- defining test specifications and test sequences;
- running tests in reference laboratories.

*[article continues overleaf]*

\* The Committee on the Interoperability and Safety of the European Railway System, composed of Member States representatives, which gives its opinion before the Commission can take a decision.



The ERA would then recommend to the European Commission an amendment of the Technical Specification for Interoperability in order to introduce the new set of documents corresponding to SRS version 3.

### Version 3 functions

The list of functional change requests established in December 2007 contains some 30 changes. Some of the requests were made by almost all infrastructure managers who want to use version 3. These include: version management, train categories, braking curves, start of mission, and harmonising the interface with the driver. These functionalities should be included in version 3.

Other requests made by one or more infrastructure managers (such as level crossings, limited supervision, radio infill, and STMs) will be included in version 3 if appropriate technical solutions for these functions are submitted to ERA by stakeholders. Requests that appear to have fewer benefits and only minimal impact – which represent the largest proportion of change requests – will be re-examined by the ERA on the basis of the corresponding detailed technical specifications. In all cases, requests which are not accompanied by a solid, detailed technical solution will be eliminated to avoid creating a planning risk.

### Tendering with version 3

Until version 3 has been adopted by the Commission, version 2.3.0 will be the only legal specification in force. An infrastructure manager cannot require a train to be equipped with change requests from version 3 before it has been adopted by the Commission.

In order to accelerate the deployment of version 3, all the preparatory work – such as the launch of calls for tender, signing of contracts, and systems testing – can be carried out as of this year. Contracts should nonetheless take into account the fact that, until official adoption in 2012, there remains a risk that the technical solutions will be fine-tuned.

### New MoU

So as to chart the way from version 2.3.0 to 3, a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between stakeholders – including CER, EIM, UIC, UNIFE (“the industry”) and the Commission (also on behalf of the ERA) – will be signed in the next few months. This will complement the existing MoU. It will clearly define the agreed timetable and set out the respective obligations of each party.

### Product availability

The Commission will check the progress being made towards version 3 at the end of 2008. It will take steps if necessary to ensure that projects that depend on the availability of version 3 do not have their planning affected in the event of the late availability of version 3-compliant products.





## Consultation on ERTMS deployment shows support for binding plan

The majority of respondents to a recent public consultation on ERTMS deployment launched by the European Commission have come down in favour of introducing a legally binding deployment plan with a target rate for deployment. Many respondents also recognised the importance of reaching a ‘critical mass’ in ERTMS deployment as soon as possible.

The Commission is legally obliged to define a European Deployment Plan for ERTMS. Each EU Member State is to draw up a national plan for implementing ERTMS and, based on those plans, the Commission is to define an EU master plan. Member States had to notify their deployment plans to the Commission by 28 September 2007.

The public consultation on the ERTMS European Deployment Plan was then held between 26 November 2007 and 28 February 2008, producing 29 responses. A consultation paper prepared by the Commission had outlined three (not necessarily mutually exclusive) options for a European Deployment Plan: a voluntary plan centred on the development of ‘corridors’; a binding plan where signalling is renewed; and – as favoured by the majority of respondents – a binding plan based on a target deployment rate.

Many replies underlined the need to take into account the national deployment plans as well as the work done on ERTMS ‘corridors’. There was also said to be a need to take into account economic considerations, including a cost/benefit analysis. There was broad consensus about the value of maintaining and strengthening the corridor-based approach, notably in terms of addressing cross-border issues and of the benefits for rail freight.

Many respondents highlighted the need for adequate financial resources to realise a European Deployment Plan with ambitious targets, which, it was argued, could impose an undue burden on certain actors. A number of respondents encouraged the Commission to evaluate the potential impact of a European Deployment Plan on railway undertakings. Furthermore, some large countries emphasised that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution would not work.

The consultation also pointed to the need for specific provisions in the European Deployment Plan for lines which are part of separated networks, or for lines with non-standard track gauges (namely, lines in Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain).

### National plans reviewed

In parallel to the consultation, the Commission reviewed national deployment plans submitted by Member States and compiled a consolidated version showing the prospective extent of ERTMS deployment across the European rail network by 2015 (see map on page 4).

The analysis has revealed a number of gaps in the network – often at national borders. EU action will focus on removing potential missing links and ensuring a coordinated deployment along corridors as soon as possible.

### Next steps

Based on an evaluation of the responses received in the consultation on the ERTMS European Deployment Plan, the Commission will now enter into a further round of consultation.

*For more information, see:*  
[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/consultation/2007\\_ertms\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/consultation/2007_ertms_en.htm)



This map is based on information received from EU Member States to date.  
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## ERTMS diary

- **19 May, 2008: Brussels**  
ERTMS MoU Steering Committee
- **July 2008: Brussels**  
Signing ceremony – new MoU
- **3-4 June, 2008: Brussels**  
Committee on the Interoperability and Safety of the European Railway System
- **Autumn 2008: Brussels**  
Trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) Days

*Please send us your dates!*

For further information on ERTMS, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/interoperability/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/interoperability/index_en.htm)

To view previous editions of *Signal*, click: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/ertms/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/ertms/index_en.htm)

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