The newsletter of ERTMS

signal

the European Rail Traffic Management System

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Also included in this issue:

Common vision, common commitment: a new Memorandum of Understanding for ERTMS

In this latest issue of *Signal* a new Memorandum of Understanding marks a new stage for the European Rail Traffic Management System. The 'MoU' builds on past successes, following on from the signing in March 2005 by the European Commission and the rail sector of a first MoU to study the viability of ERTMS deployment on trans-European transport network priority axes. Now the aim is a faster deployment of ERTMS across Europe – with a more competitive rail freight sector and greater interoperability of European railways being among the expected benefits.

The Signal team

On 4 July 2008 in Rome the European Commission and six organisations from Europe's railway sector signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at speeding up deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS).

Vice President Antonio Tajani, European Commissioner responsible for Transport, said that the MoU would further strengthen cooperation between the Commission and the railway sector and that it confirmed a common ambition to accelerate ERTMS deployment across Europe. 'ERTMS is a major industrial project led by Europe. It is essential to improving the competitiveness and safety of rail transport in the EU', he stated.

The new MoU also marks an important milestone as it brings on board the GSM-R (Global System for Mobile communications – Railway) industry for the first time. GSM-R, based on GSM technology, is a major component of ERTMS and uses radio frequencies specific to the railways to exchange information – voice and data – between trackside and on-board.

The MoU aims for one thing to foster coordination and collaboration in order to ensure the compatibility of existing lines that use the European Train Control System (ETCS) – the control-command component of ERTMS – and GSM-R. It also looks to clarify which specification baseline is to be used in tenders and as conditions for track access.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/ertms/newsletter/doc/2008/2008_mou_en.pdf

Directorate-General for Energy and Transport

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Looking to the future

Another aim of the new MoU on ERTMS is to improve the efficiency and the cost-effectiveness of testing and certification procedures for both ETCS and GSM-R. Procedures should be streamlined so as to progressively reach a point where all procedures related to testing and approval of ETCS and GSM-R on-board units can be completed according to a single and efficient procedure. Improving and harmonising testing procedures in this way will make it easier to verify the compatibility and conformity of equipment.

Under the MoU stakeholders have agreed to use a single technical basis – version 2.3.0d of the system specs – for all railway lines equipped with ERTMS in the EU until 2012. They have also agreed to integrate software updates into new contracts at clients' request (with clients as it stands often complaining about the high costs charged by manufacturers for doing so).

The MoU also foresees that, by the end of 2012, a new tested and legalised version of the specifications – version 3 – will be available. Trains equipped with the new version will be able to run on lines equipped with the old version. Moreover, ERTMS deployment should be accelerated through the adoption of a binding European deployment plan as well as by equipping new models of freight locomotive with ERTMS.

The European Commission will table a proposal for a binding European ERTMS deployment plan in autumn 2008. It will also launch a new call for proposals in order to provide financial support for the deployment of the system with indicative funding of € 250 million.

MoU signatories

- CER – the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies: www.cer.be
- EIM – the European Rail Infrastructure Managers: www.eimrail.org
- ERFA – the European Rail Freight Association: send an email to monika.heiming@erfa.be
- GSM-R Industry Group: www.gsm-rail.com
- UIC – the International Union of Railways: www.uic.asso.fr
- UNIFE – the Union of the European Railway Industries: www.unife.org

Speeding up ERTMS deployment by Paolo Costa MEP

We are keen here at Signal *for the publication to be a place for dialogue and exchange of views, which is why we intend to publish occasional contributions from stakeholders on ERTMS-related matters (contributions that will not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission). It is therefore with great pleasure that we bring you the following article by* ***Paolo Costa MEP****, the chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism…*

The development of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) has paved the way for an integrated approach to the interoperability and safety of rail networks at European level. Now we need to accelerate the deployment of ERTMS equipment in order to overcome the inconsistencies arising from the existence of 23 different signalling systems in Europe.

Needless to say, 'backward compatibility' is a crucial tool for the future development of ERTMS. The European Commission decision of 23 April 2008 to consolidate the relevant technical specifications for interoperability constituted a significant step forward in this regard. But it did not solve all the existing technical incompatibilities, and the level of ERTMS implementation remains low. The consolidation of the ERTMS equipment should provide that the early implementers of version 2.3.0 shall not bear the undue burden and additional costs of the introduction of a new version.

There is consensus that the first companies and networks to equip themselves would be at a particular disadvantage since they would have to take the risk to invest and to bear the costs of dual equipment for longer. This issue can be addressed through the ERTMS deployment plan by setting a time-period before the introduction of any new ERTMS version or even a threshold for minimum deployment of the ERTMS version in force.

Likewise, we have to address the matter of the migration of the different existing versions of ERTMS towards the consolidated version 2.3.0 in order to ensure the interoperability of European rail networks. Here, there should be an analysis of all the additional costs to be borne by early implementers as a consequence of the introduction of the new version along with possible mechanisms, including financial ones, to support the migration of the earlier versions to version 2.3.0.

It goes without saying that the European Railway Agency should be called upon, as the system authority for ERTMS, to play its role at European level to ensure a coherent and faster deployment of ERTMS in EU Member States.

Karel Vinck interview: 'Let's keep up the pace!'

The past year has been a particularly busy one for ERTMS – Karel Vinck, the European coordinator for ERTMS, brings us up to speed…

Signal: How have we done in the last year?

KV: The last 12 months have been hugely important for ERTMS and show that it is a system which makes good business sense. We have established legal stability, built common commitment and delivered concrete results. In terms of legal specifications, we now have a single consolidated standard – version 2.3.0d – which will ensure interoperability across Europe. And I am encouraged by the signing of the new Memorandum of Understanding which demonstrates the willingness of all actors to move forward together.

Signal: How is ERTMS deployment progressing?

KV: Currently there are about 2 000km of lines equipped with ERTMS in service in Europe. In fact, almost 30 000km of track and 5 000 vehicles are operational or contracted to be equipped with ERTMS in 27 countries worldwide. These contracts clearly show that Europe's railway industry is a world leader.

Signal: What are the priorities now?

KV: To keep up the pace! By 2012 the key objective is to have demonstrated the potential of ERTMS on key international axes. By 2015 we will have deployed ERTMS on three major freight corridors and by 2020 on six corridors. These corridors represent only 6 % of the Trans-European Network (TEN) track length but carry 20 % of European freight traffic!

Signal: What will be the keys to success?

KV: We need to ensure that collaboration takes place along each corridor. ERTMS deployment needs to be well managed and corridors need to implement other measures such as harmonising operational rules and reducing infrastructure bottlenecks. I am committed to achieving results and will work together with all stakeholders to achieve the 2012 target.

ERTMS diary

- 5 September, 2008: Brussels
  ERTMS MoU Steering Committee
- 18-19 September, 2008: Brussels
  Committee on the Interoperability and Safety of the European Railway System
- 2-3 October, 2008: Brussels
  Trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) Days

Please send us your dates!

The European Commission has launched a call for tenders for the provision of Technical follow-up of ERTMS projects.
More information: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/tenders/index_en.htm

For further information on ERTMS, see: **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**

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