

ERTMS European Deployment Plan Overview of contributions to the public consultation

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Working Document – Commission services – DG TREN

This working document presents an overview of contributions to the public consultation on a European Deployment Plan for ERTMS launched in November 2007. The document also includes information regarding the intended next steps of the Commission's services in finalising the Plan.

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The Commission is under a legal obligation to define a European Deployment Plan for ERTMS. Acting on proposals from the Commission and in accordance with Article 155 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, Directives on the interoperability of high-speed railway lines (1996) and on the interoperability of conventional railway lines (2001) were adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in the area of rail transport. These Directives require technical specifications to be adopted in order to move progressively towards a situation in which interoperable rail systems are deployed all over Europe. In this context, addressing the obstacle of the more than 20 national speed control systems (so-called signalling and control-command systems) has been identified as a matter on which priority action by the Community is expected.

In addition to an agreement on the technical specifications¹ for a harmonised speed control system, the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), a Commission Decision entered into force on 28 September 2006 which requires the establishment of deployment plans for the system. That Decision² lays down that each Member State is to draw up a national plan for implementing ERTMS and that, based on those plans, the Commission is to draw up a Community master plan. The precise identification of lines to be equipped as a priority was left up to Member States, who had to notify their deployment plans to the Commission by 28 September 2007. Following that deadline, a public consultation on the ERTMS European Deployment Plan was launched by the Commission on 26 November 2007 on the basis of a consultation paper prepared by Commission services. This paper outlined three different options (not necessarily mutually exclusive) to be considered:

- Option A: voluntary ERTMS European Deployment Plan centred around the development of corridors – national plans are collated in a document which is not binding. Coordination takes place only at the level of corridors.

¹ Technical Specifications for Interoperability of the control-command and signalling subsystem.

² Commission Decision 2006/679/EC, OJ L 284, 16.10.2006, p. 1.

- Option B: binding ERTMS European Deployment Plan which includes lines with renewed signalling – ERTMS would be compulsory on all new trans-European network lines and conventional trans-European network lines on which signalling is renewed.
- Option C: binding ERTMS European Deployment Plan based on a target deployment rate – Member States must submit deployment plans with targets (e.g. 3% of the trans-European network per year and/or certain key corridors). On that basis, a binding Plan is drawn up.

The consultation paper was posted on the Europa website and disseminated to members of the Interoperability (Article 21) Committee, members of the ERTMS Memorandum of Understanding Steering Committee, and other rail sector stakeholders. The consultation was open until 28 February 2008 and 29 responses were received in total – 12 from Member States and 17 from stakeholders within, or involved with, the railway sector.

The European Parliament discussed in detail the subject of ERTMS at a meeting of its Committee on Transport and Tourism on 25 February 2008 at which the Director General of DG TREN was in attendance. The members of the Committee called for improved cooperation between Member States and were of the opinion that a binding deployment plan is needed.

The majority of respondents to the public consultation is in favour of Option C, which foresees the introduction of a legally binding deployment plan. The importance of reaching a critical mass of deployed ERTMS as soon as possible is recognised by many respondents. However a number of replies underline the need to move from the suggested "yearly objectives" expressed as a percentage of the network to "target dates" for stages of deployment.

The consultation also shows the need to foresee specific provisions in the European Deployment Plan for the lines which are part of separated networks (referred to in Article 7(c)³ of Directive 96/48/EC) or for the lines with non-standard track gauges (namely, lines in Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain).

Many replies underline the need to duly take into account the national deployment plans submitted by Member States as well as the work done in the context of the corridor organisations set up under the umbrella of the European ERTMS coordinator. There is a need to take into account economic considerations, including a cost benefit analysis. There is a broad consensus regarding the value of maintaining and strengthening the corridor-based approach, notably in terms of effectively addressing cross-border issues and in terms of the benefits for rail freight.

Many respondents highlight the need for adequate financial resources to realise the targets set out in an ambitious European Deployment Plan which, it is argued, could pose an undue burden on certain actors. A number of respondents specifically encourage the Commission to ensure to evaluate the potential impact of a proposed European Deployment Plan on railway

³ Article 7(c): A Member State need not apply certain TSIs in the case of lines "in the territory of the Member State concerned where its rail network is not linked to or is isolated by the sea from the high-speed rail network of the rest of the Community."

undertakings. Furthermore, some Member States with larger networks emphasise that a "one size fits all" solution will not work and that it may be necessary to make a distinction between large and small networks.

Several respondents point out that ERTMS deployment in their Member States is planned as a replacement for existing signalling systems reaching the end of their natural life cycle and that an accelerated ERTMS deployment scheme would result in an inefficient use of resources.

In parallel to the public consultation, the Commission has reviewed the national deployment plans submitted by Member States and compiled a consolidated version in order to see the extent of ERTMS deployment along the European network in 2012, 2015 and 2020 (see maps in annex). This analysis has revealed a number of gaps, or missing links, across the network which often occur at national borders. EU action will focus on this issue as the importance of removing potential missing links and ensuring a coordinated deployment along corridors as soon as possible is recognised by many respondents. Promoting further ERTMS deployment is also a key element within the broader objectives of the Community's transport policy which include prioritising the use of intelligent transport systems that contribute to optimising the capacity and efficiency of existing and new infrastructure and developing an interoperable railway network which ensures seamless cross-border connections.

Based on an evaluation of the responses received, the proposals made and the concerns raised, the European Commission will now enter into a second round of consultation. As a first step, the Commission services will engage in discussion more directly with the relevant economic actors in order to better identify the most important "missing links" in the network. In a second step, the Commission will enter into bilateral discussions with the Member States in order to define a European Deployment Plan. This plan would consist of a core network on which the implementation of ERTMS would be mandatory at specific target dates (2012, 2015, 2020 as well as a date by which the whole Trans-European network shall be equipped) in addition to a larger network including additional sections covered by the national plans submitted by Member States.

The Commission considers that ideally the European Deployment Plan should focus on the progressive equipment of corridors crossing several Member States. To that end, all lines notified in the national deployment plans shall not necessarily be included in the "mandatory part" of the Plan. Conversely, with a view to close identified missing links, the mandatory part of the Plan may contain a number of sections not included in the national plans submitted by the Member States.

The Commission will explore the possibility to concentrate EU funding possibilities existing within the framework of the second ERTMS call on lines belonging to the core network due to be equipped by 2015.