



PRESS RELEASE

The European Railway Agency and the International Union of Railways sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation in the field of GSM-R Specifications.

(Lille/Paris, 06.10.2010). As part of the ERA “GSM-R Conference” in Lille, Mr Marcel Verslype, Executive Director of the European Railway Agency (ERA) and Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, General Director of the International Union of Railways (UIC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation in the field of GSM-R Specifications.

It is clear that GSM-R, the dedicated rail radio system for voice and data communication, has become an essential part of the work to enhance railway interoperability, to maintain rail's high safety standards, to reduce maintenance and operation costs, to better inform operational employees and to provide information systems for clients in both passenger and freight traffic.

The development of the GSM-R system is a joint collaboration between the European Commission, manufacturers, railway administrations and the central support of UIC (that developed the initial version of the GSM-R system specifications in 1995) as the technical body recognised by the rail sector.

To date GSM-R has been rolled out over 65,000 km of track in Europe, and member states are well advanced in the migration from their old railway radio systems to GSM-R. It is expected that the roll-out will cover about 140,000 km by 2015. GSM-R is also being implemented outside Europe: in China, India, Australia, Saudi Arabia and Algeria.

With this Memorandum of Understanding, ERA and UIC have recognised that the future development of the GSM-R specifications is necessary: to close existing gaps and fix implementation issues on the one hand; and to take account of technological progress and the evolution of public standards for mobile telecommunication services on the other.

This development must not only be managed on a European level and in compliance with the requirements laid down by the EU Railway legislation (particularly by the Interoperability Directive¹), but also on a global level. This underpins the central role of UIC, its global status and the recognition of the rail sector for its technical expertise.

¹ Directive 2008/57 of the European Parliament and of the Council

The requirements defined in the current specifications will be revised with a view to classifying them into two mutually exclusive categories:

- requirements necessary as basic parameters to satisfy the essential requirements of the Interoperability Directive;
- requirements that are valuable for operators, customers and suppliers in terms of product and system standardisations, and requirements that are applicable for the worldwide system.

Before November 2010 ERA will issue documents detailing the categorisation of requirements as indicated above, and will discuss them with UIC and the railway sector. Before the end of December 2010 ERA and UIC will draw up a plan to work in cooperation on the specifications to “seal” most of the current GSM-R challenges and the features list, priorities and planning.

The work streams and responsibilities of UIC and ERA are separate and run in parallel. In order to ensure the consistency of European and global developments, periodic bilateral review meetings will be organised, at least twice per year, between UIC and ERA.

For more information on GSM-R please visit the following websites:

<http://gsmr.uic.org> or <http://www.era.europa.eu>

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