



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

ERA and UIC signed a new Annex on Safety Culture Peer Reviews, complementing the existing Coordination Framework between the two organisations.

(Paris, 27 May 2024), Following the development of a Railway Safety Culture Peer Review methodology by the European Union Agency for Railways' (ERA), which was also used by UIC in the European Commission-funded Twinning II project, a corresponding Safety Culture Peer Review procedure will be established under UIC's coordination. The intention is to promote safety culture peer reviews and to support the railway sector with coordination, methodologies and training. The main stakeholders from the sector will be infrastructure managers and railway undertakings, however, others such as wagon keepers, entities in charge of maintenance (ECMs), and manufacturers will not be excluded. Both ERA and UIC have agreed to openly share their views, knowledge, and experience to ensure that the peer reviews provide added value for safety within the sector.

Promoting railway safety culture through peer reviews and driving forward safety, thanks to the railway's Peer Review Champions Initiative

Therefore, the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) are delighted to announce the creation of a Railway Safety Culture Peer Review programme. This initiative aims to enhance safety culture within the railway sector and follows the success of a series of partnerships. Based on the results of these peer reviews, the EU railway sector and ERA are interested in UIC going further, anchoring peer review activities between railway stakeholders.

Objectives and scope

The primary objective of this initiative is to establish a Railway Safety Culture Peer Review procedure, with UIC playing a leading role in coordination, methodology, and training. This procedure aims to promote peer reviews within the railway sector, with

the main stakeholders being infrastructure managers and railway undertakings, although others such as wagon keepers, and manufacturers are also welcome to take part.

ERA will support UIC's efforts to set up this initiative and continuously develop the methodology based on the European Railway Safety Culture Model (ERA-SCM). ERA will also provide annual training for peer reviewers, team leaders, and hosts, subject to resource availability.

Collaboration and governance

Collaboration between ERA and UIC, as the driving force behind this initiative, is crucial for the development of a safety culture within the sector. Both parties will openly share their views, knowledge, and experiences to ensure that the peer reviews add value to safety within the sector. This initiative is part of a series of collaborative actions that the UIC and ERA have undertaken since the signing of a coordination agreement in 2021.

An ERA/UIC Steering Committee will be established to ensure the continued high quality of peer reviews and a shared vision for future developments. Additionally, ERA will participate in the Safety Culture Peer Review working group established by UIC to support the implementation of the peer review initiative and receive feedback on the methodology and use of the ERA-SCM.

The benefits of peer reviews

Peer reviews offer numerous benefits, including:

- Comprising one of the best way to integrate the HOF required by worldwide safety directives
- Identifying potential issues, oversights, or vulnerabilities through multiple approaches from different areas of expertise
- Bringing a fresh perspective to familiar processes or products
- Improving safety performance, sharing knowledge and skills, and enhancing problem-solving
- Reducing costs and risks by detecting errors and risks early and improving regulatory compliance
- Increasing employee retention and customer satisfaction

It is important to note that a peer review is not an audit but a specific methodological approach to better understand a company's internal safety culture.

About the International Union of Railways (UIC)

UIC is the worldwide organisation for the promotion of rail transport at a global level and for the collaborative development of the railway system. It brings together more than 200 members across all five continents, including railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, and railway service providers. UIC maintains close cooperative links with all stakeholders in the rail transport domain around the world, including manufacturers, railway associations, and public authorities, as well as in other domains and sectors whose experiences may be beneficial to rail development. UIC's main tasks include understanding the business needs of the rail community, developing innovation programmes to identify solutions to those needs, as well as preparing and publishing documents, such as reports, specifications, guidelines and IRSs that facilitate the implementation of these innovative solutions.

About the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA)

ERA was established in Valenciennes in 2004 and has 200 employees representing more than 22 European Member States. ERA provides the EU Member States and the European Commission with technical assistance in the development and implementation of the Single European Railway Area. This comprises enhancing technical interoperability and harmonising rules, promoting simplified access for customers, developing a common approach to safety and safety culture, advising on telematics applications and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System), monitoring National Safety Authorities and Notified Bodies and facilitating the exchange of information between the railway stakeholders in Europe.

Since 16 June 2019, the EU Agency for Railways is mandated to issue single safety certificates and vehicle (type) authorisations valid in multiple European countries and to ensure an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System.

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