

UNISIG

AN INDUSTRIAL CONSORTIUM TO DEVELOP ERTMS/ETCS TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



UNISIG is an industrial consortium which was created to develop the ERTMS/ETCS technical specifications. As an Associated Member of UNIFE, a recognised stakeholder, UNISIG actively contributes to the activities of the European Railway Agency in the field of ERTMS/ETCS technical specifications.

When was UNISIG created?

UNISIG was founded in 1998/99 at the specific request of the EU Commission with the task of drafting the technical specifications for ERTMS/ETCS. It has always been a technical body first working in close co-operation with the European Association for Railway Interoperability (AEIF) and, since its formation in 2005, with the European Railway Agency (ERA) as part of the ERTMS Change Control Management (CCM) process.



What does UNISIG do?



The role of UNISIG today is to develop, maintain and update the ERTMS specifications in close cooperation with the ERA, which has been made the "system authority" for ERTMS. To do so, UNISIG actively contributes, together with the railway representative bodies, to the various related working groups of the agency. Whilst the final version of the ERTMS specifications is published by the European Commission following the approval of the Member States, it is based on a recommendation from ERA. This recommendation is widely discussed with the railway sector, including UNISIG, and considerable work is undertaken by the consortium to define these specifications.

How is UNISIG organised?

The UNISIG Consortium is an Associated Member of UNIFE. It is located in Brussels, where it has offices in the UNIFE premises. Seven companies now known as Alstom, Ansaldo STS, Bombardier, Siemens, Thales, CAF and AŽD Praha are its Full Members. MERMEC became Associated Member in 2010.

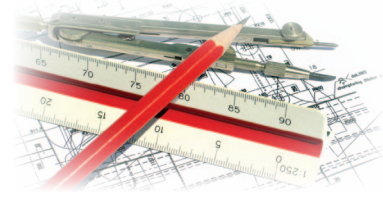
UNISIG is governed by a Steering Committee (SC) comprising senior technical management personnel from the full members, from whom a Chairman is selected to serve for a 2 year term. The SC meets monthly for two days. The day to day management of UNISIG is in the hands of the General Manager who reports to the Chairman and the SC.

The SC is supported by the UNISIG Technical Authority, known as the Supergroup (SG), which comprises two highly qualified ERTMS experts from each of the full members. The SG meets monthly for three days. The SG works closely with the UNISIG General Manager and with counterparts in the ERA; the SG reports to the SC.

The detailed technical work of UNISIG is carried out in Work Packages (WPs) responsible for specific technical specifications (eg Eurobalise, Euroloop and Euroradio) or in Mirror Groups corresponding to ERA Working Groups where UNISIG is represented by appointed nominees. All UNISIG WGs, WPs and MGs have clear reporting lines either through the SG to the SC or, depending on the nature of the activity, direct to the SC.

Is UNISIG a “commercial” body?

No – UNISIG is a purely technical consortium, with very strict rules of procedure and a dedicated code of conduct. A key principle of its activities is not to interact with its members’ contractual issues. It does not handle any political and communication activities related to ERTMS. The latter are managed by UNIFE, the association of the European Rail Industry (see below).



What are the benefits of UNISIG membership?

By joining UNISIG, eligible suppliers may directly contribute to the development of the ERTMS/ETCS technical specifications as they are part of a body which is an integral part of the ERA ERTMS CCM process.

Is it necessary to be a member of UNISIG to develop ERTMS products?

No – the ERTMS specifications are made public and freely available by the ERA, and are accessible to any company.

Who can be a member of UNISIG?

Any company involved in the development of ERTMS can apply for UNISIG membership. However, to preserve the efficiency of the consortium, applicants are required to have already played an active role and developed sufficient technical competence in the ERTMS field, and to contribute to the work of UNISIG both by providing the necessary workforce and funding for the consortium. Different levels of membership – Full or Associated – have been created to suit various needs.



AŽD Praha and CAF became in January 2014 the first companies in obtaining Full Membership after the foundation of UNISIG in 1998/1999.



How can a company become a member of UNISIG?

An application must be submitted directly to the Chairman of UNISIG. The application is then reviewed through a transparent process defined in the consortium’s rules of procedure.

How does UNISIG interact with UNIFE?

As mentioned above UNISIG is an Associated Member of UNIFE. Whilst UNISIG’s role is strictly limited to the development and writing of the ERTMS/ETCS technical specifications, its General Manager closely collaborates with UNIFE on ERTMS-related matters. However, all political and communications activities are directly handled by UNIFE, which represent the ERTMS suppliers in “political” forums such as the ERTMS Memorandum of Understanding Steering Committee.

SUPPLIERS

ALSTOM



BOMBARDIER

CAF



SIEMENS

THALES