



INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT CORRIDORS EQUIPPED WITH ERTMS

A COORDINATED EUROPEAN MIGRATION TO ERTMS TO IMPROVE RAILWAYS' COMPETITIVENESS

Still today, the co-existence of more than twenty signalling systems in Europe is a major obstacle to railways' competitiveness. Trains need to be equipped with several on-board systems to cross borders; drivers need to be trained to use these systems; sometimes trains have even to be changed at the border. The emergence of ERTMS as a unique European signalling standard therefore offers the potential to considerably increase railways competitiveness along international freight Corridors. However, the business case brought by ERTMS will greatly depend on the speed of its deployment on the trackside, and of the will of the EU Member States to make the necessary investments as soon as possible.

What is the "Corridor approach"?

In many countries (see factsheets #4,5,6,12,14...), ERTMS investments have brought considerable benefits, in terms of increased capacity, maintenance costs savings, multi-supplier opportunities, reliability or speed. As demonstrated by its worldwide success, ERTMS has emerged as "the" global signalling standard.

On an international basis however, ERTMS investments must be coordinated to ensure that cross-border interoperability is achieved. For instance, it is essential that a group of neighbouring countries equip their lines in a similar timeframe and in a coordinated manner, so that locomotives running on the lines crossing these countries have to be equipped only with ERTMS – and not with national signalling systems in addition to ERTMS.

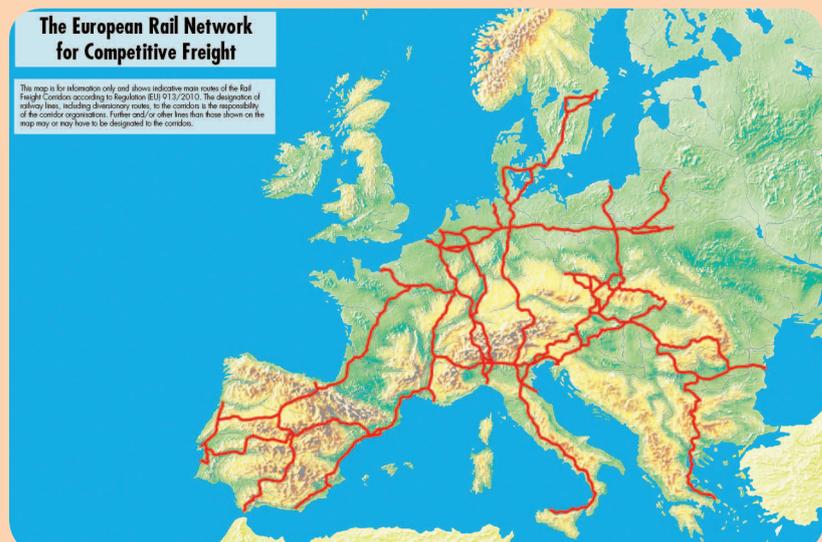
A "Corridor approach" – whereby investments are coordinated amongst different countries – is therefore needed to collect the full benefits of ERTMS, i.e. cross-border interoperability.

What are the ERTMS Corridors?

Together with railway stakeholders, the European Commission has established a list of six priority Corridors for the deployment of ERTMS. These are major European rail freight axis, where the deployment of ERTMS will bring considerable benefits:

- Corridor A runs from Rotterdam to Genoa;
- Corridor B: Stockholm-Napoli;
- Corridor C: Antwerp-Basel;
- Corridor D: Budapest-Valencia;
- Corridor E: Dresden-Constanta;
- Corridor F: Aachen-Terespol.

With the adoption of the European ERTMS Deployment Plan (see overleaf), a number of key European freight lines were also added.



Will ERTMS be installed only on these Corridors?

No – all EU countries are free to install ERTMS on the rest of their network if they so wish, and a large number of them have already done so. However, the Corridors are of specific importance when it comes to international freight traffic. This therefore requires a degree of cooperation between the different EU Member States part of these Corridors.



European ERTMS Deployment Plan, detailed map (source: European Commission)

Are ERTMS investments mandatory along these Corridors?

Yes – whilst originally, ERTMS deployment was made on a “voluntary” basis, equipping the ERTMS Corridors became a legal obligation in July 2009, with the adoption of the European ERTMS Deployment Plan.

When will the ERTMS Corridors be equipped?

This depends on each section of the Corridors. An estimated 10,000km of lines will have to be equipped by 2015, whilst the rest of the network will be completed by 2020, raising the number of kilometres to be equipped to 25,000km. Many Member States have already gone beyond these obligations and announced their intention to equip their entire railway network – it is therefore expected that the total number of lines equipped with ERTMS will grow dramatically in the coming years.

Does this mean that railway operators have the guarantee that the network will be equipped according to schedule?



The European ERTMS Deployment Plan makes investments along these Corridors a clear legal obligation according to European law. In principle, a country which would refuse to make the necessary investments could face a European infringement procedure.

Aside from trackside investments, are countries cooperating on technical aspects related to ERTMS ?



Yes – typically, the Infrastructure Managers of the Corridors have set up an EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping) to improve the coordination of investments, also from a technical point of view. Memorandum of Understanding between the countries part of the Corridors also reinforce this technical and political cooperation. Finally, technical topics and cross-border aspects are also raised with the European Railway Agency or by the specific European Commission working group handling Corridor issues.

SUPPLIERS

