

factsheet # 16



# INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT CORRIDORS EQUIPPED WITH ERTMS

#### A coordinated European migration to ERTMS to improve railways' competitiveness

The co-existence of more than twenty signalling systems in Europe is a major obstacle to railways' competitiveness. To cross borders, trains need to be equipped with several on-board systems; drivers need to be trained to use these systems; sometimes locomotives have 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 the will of the EU Member States to make the necessary investments as soon as possible.

#### What is the "Corridor approach"?

In many countries, ERTMS investments have brought considerable benefits in terms of increased capacity, maintenance costs reductions, more open market supplier opportunities, greater reliability and increased operational speeds. As clearly 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 and operational benefits are achieved. For instance, it is essential that 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 and highly recommendable to secure 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 nine priority freight corridors for the deployment of ERTMS. These are major European rail freight axis routes, where the deployment of ERTMS will bring the earliest realizable benefits.

Number	Corridor	Length in km	Traversing EU countries
1	Rhine-Alpine	3900	Italy, Netherland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany
2	North Sea-Mediterranean	5300	United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Luxemburg, France
3	Scandinavian-Mediterranean	7000	Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria and Italy
4	Atlantic	6200	Portugal, Spain, France, Germany
5	Baltic-Adriatic	4825	Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and Italy
6	Mediterranean	7000	Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia and Hungary, Croatia
7	Orient-East Med	7700	Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Slovakia
8	North Sea-Baltic	6000	Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia
9	Rhine-Danube	970	Czech Republic, Slovakia



The nine Rail Freight Corridors running through Europe under the Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 are shown above.

The Regulation concerning a European Rail Network for Competitive Freight (Regulation EU 913/2010) entered into force on 9th November 2010. The Regulation requests Member State to establish international market-oriented Rail Freight Corridors to meet three specific challenges:

- Strengthening co-operation between Infrastructure Managers on key aspects
  Balancing the mix of freight and passenger traffic along the Rail Freight Corridors
- Intermodality between rail and other transport modes

## 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.

### Are ERTMS investments mandatory along these Corridors?



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

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. It is expected that the total number of lines equipped with ERTMS will grow dramatically in the coming years with a target of at least 25,000km completed by 2020. Many member states have already gone beyond their obligations and announced their intention to equip their entire railway network.



### 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. Memorandae of Understanding (MoUs) 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 Agency for Railways or by the specific European Commission working group handling corridor issues.

