



UNISIG



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As part of UNIFE (the European Rail Industry Association), UNISIG is the committee responsible for the development, maintenance and updating of the ERTMS and CCS/TMS technical specifications. For ERTMS in particular, this process is carried out in close cooperation with the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA).

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 and CCS/TMS technical specifications in close cooperation with ERA, 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. Although the final version of the ERTMS specifications is officially issued by the European Commission after approval by the Member States, it is fundamentally shaped by a recommendation from ERA. This recommendation is discussed extensively with the railway sector, including UNISIG, and requires considerable effort from the committee to define these specifications.

UNISIG is working jointly with railways in the European Rail JU System Pillar on operational and technical standards for the entire railway signaling system, which will have a major business impact on the entire rail industry.

How is UNISIG organized?

UNISIG is a Committee of UNIFE. It is located in Brussels, where it has offices at the UNIFE premises. Nine companies now known as Alstom, AŽD, CAF, Hitachi, MerMEc, Progress Rail, Scheidt&Bachmann, Siemens Mobility and Thales are part of UNISIG.

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 one year term. 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 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 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 committee, with 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 activities related to ERTMS.

What are the benefits of UNISIG membership?

By joining UNISIG, eligible suppliers obtain early insight into the dynamics and evolution of ERTMS technical standards, enabling them to actively shape these standards and participate in the standardisation of traffic management and signaling systems. This involvement also ensures they are aware of the business impact from the outset.

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 associated to UNIFE and 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 committee. Different levels of membership – Full, Associated or Partner– have been created to suit various needs.

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 a committee of UNIFE. Whilst UNISIG's role is strictly limited to the development and writing of 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.

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