

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002730/25
to the Commission
Ondřej Krutílek (ECR)
(3 July 2025)

Subject: A much-needed push for results in the European Rail Traffic Management System project

It has been nearly 10 years since the ambitious European Rail Traffic Management System project was introduced and, in particular, its integral component the European Train Control System (ETCS). From the outset, the project has had the praiseworthy vision of creating a single train signalling and control system in Europe. The expected benefits include smoother operation, fewer local specifics, a reduction in the number of signalling systems needed per unit (or locomotive) and increased track capacity. However, the implementation is facing significant challenges, including significantly higher than anticipated costs and a current lack of demonstrable benefits.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer these questions:

1. What specific steps are being taken to ensure that the original vision materialises and delivers benefits to the railway sector, including both railway undertakings and infrastructure managers?
2. What measures are being taken to ensure that burdensome local specifics, such as an abundance of ETCS system compatibility tests per track, are avoided?
3. By which year will there be a sufficient set of complete and equipped international corridors that allow railway undertakings to reduce the national signalling systems on their units (or locomotives) and their associated cost?

Submitted: 3.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(26 August 2025)

The Commission continues its efforts to ensure the full implementation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS). In 2024, the EU adopted the revised trans-European transport network (TEN-T) Regulation ⁽¹⁾, reinforcing the ERTMS roll-out targets.

Member States have to deploy ERTMS on the TEN-T core network by 2030, on the extended core network by 2040 and on the comprehensive network by 2050. The TEN-T Regulation gives Member States the possibility to ask for exemptions if justified and well-founded.

As regards local or national specificities, the Commission, together with the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), continues to promote the harmonisation of operational rules underlying ERTMS through revisions of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability relating to Command, Control and Signalling systems.

By reducing the variety of these operational rules, the root cause for the multitude of the European Train Control System compatibility tests is tackled and their number can be reduced. As a result, the costs for railway undertakings to put in service rolling stock on lines equipped with ERTMS will be reduced.

Finally, the Commission is in constant exchange with stakeholders to promote the further roll-out of ERTMS. For example, it convenes national ERTMS representatives in the consultative ERTMS Forum, it engages in discussions with sector representatives within Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, it confers on a variety of regulatory issues with ERA, which acts as ERTMS systems authorities, and it financially supports specific ERTMS projects through the Connecting Europe Facility managed by the Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1679/oj>.