

POSITION PAPER

**A vision for Rail Standardisation in Europe - a position
paper by CER and UIC**

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Rail Standardisation in Europe today

This paper is a reflection on the current framework within which rail standardisation is undertaken today, highlights a number of points of concern and sets out some possible remedies. The paper is addressed to the relevant directorates of the European Commission, but also designed to be an influence on the content of the proposed “CEN/CENELEC EUROPEAN STANDARDIZATION STRATEGY 2020”.

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the International Union of Railways (UIC) believe that there is scope to make a number of improvements to the efficiency and reliability of rail standardisation in Europe.

Standardisation plays a decisive role and contributes to the maintenance and improvement of cost effective rail system performance and efficiency. There are several players involved in rail standardisation in Europe, all of whom have a stake in facilitating the quality of the service provided to the customer.

On the one hand, there is the creation of EuroNorms (ENs) by the European Standardisation Organisations ESOs (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI). These are voluntary in nature, but become mandatory if referred to in a TSI or if integrated into the regulatory framework of a Member State.

On the other hand, there is the considerable and absolutely necessary catalogue of voluntary rail standardisation elaborated and maintained by the UIC, standards which are used on a daily basis by the rail operating community (ROC) as part of the operational railway system. A number of the issues in this catalogue are developed in conjunction with industrial partners represented by UNIFE and especially those issues that lead to the creation of Technical Recommendations (TecRec).

An efficient rail standardisation programme must be built on the basis of business priorities and development and the speeding up of time to market for products and processes important to the operational rail system.

It is especially as a result of the time to market issues that the UIC/UNIFE Technical Recommendations (TecRecs) originated. They are structured following precisely the same model as ENs so as to be a precursor to an EN and to ensure that the time to publication of a standard is

accelerated. It was not (as is regrettably the current situation) the intention for the content of TecRecs made by the sector to be systematically revised again by CEN/CENELEC working groups.

The rail operating community feels that it needs to take the initiative to fill the gaps existing or created in the system in the recent past and is keen to ensure that the business it undertakes is improved by an enhanced and improved rail standardisation framework.

The CER/UIC vision for the future of rail standardisation

It is clear that on a company basis (and at a national level) the work will continue to draft and maintain internal processes and procedures that are important to the generation of a safe and efficient corporate management system. These processes are of course built upon the publication of Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) and standards and for which the most harmonised approach would significantly reduce overall cost. Where, however, there are unique interfaces between specific stakeholders, it is possible that these are produced on a bi-lateral basis.

Basic functional requirements, the foundational components of the railway system, and operational performance are major inputs for calls for tender to procure goods and services. These requirements are best identified by the railway operating community on a systemic basis so that there is a common set of requirements for the broader rail sector. Such a common set of functional requirements are best described through a set of standards that are produced and maintained for the sector by the providers of rail transport services in conjunction with a body such as the European Railway Agency (ERA).

We would perceive an organisation such as the UIC working with a wide range of stakeholders as well as its members and in conjunction with the ERA on behalf of the EU and leading a strategic rail standardisation programme.

The development of cross-border traffic and the need to ensure reductions in system maintenance costs would be greatly facilitated by standardisation of components leading to a “plug and play” capability. CER and UIC support the proposal included in the draft ERA regulation (new Article 41) included in the 4th Railway Package, which enhances the role of the ERA on this topic. The ROC stands ready to support the ESOs in leading the development of such standardisation based upon the interfaces set out in the TSIs. , and are ready to facilitate on one

hand such standardisation work by the ESOs and on the other hand the identification by the ERA of spare parts the interfaces of which are to be standardised and the survey by it of the production of such standards.

Shaping the ambitions towards 2020 and including the CEN/CENELEC role

In respect to the referred CEN/CENELEC document, we feel that, whilst this is a useful but generic vision for European standardisation, it fails to take into account the specific dynamics of the railway sector.

Of principle concern is the time that it typically takes an EN to be produced by CEN and CENELEC. It is a significant factor in why research project deliverables and developed products take longer than necessary to reach the market place. It is also for the same reason that the UIC and UNIFE agreed to develop the concept of TecRecs.

It is widely acknowledged that many ENs produced by CEN/CENELEC are referenced in the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI). It is also the case that standards produced by the UIC are used as source material for these Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) that are drafted by the European Railway Agency and adopted by the European Commission through the Railway Interoperability and Safety Committee (RISC) so as to ensure and fully harmonise the interoperability of the trans-European rail system.

The rail sector is fully involved in the drafting and revising of these European TSIs. A more level playing field whereby, as a minimum, ENs that are referred to in TSIs are made freely available to rail stakeholders, would also help with the on-going document maintenance process.

Innovation and growth

Exploiting research projects in terms of standardisation potentials is highly supported by the railway community. We strongly recommend that there is a strong role for the sector in defining and developing the standards from research and practical experience and also emanating from the on-going maintenance and development of TSIs. The rail sector is already very deeply involved in the working framework for TSIs at the ERA and the actors involved are there for their technical knowhow on the issues in question.

It is therefore a logical next step that, suitably guided from within the sector, a strategic understanding of standardisation needs can be developed.

There will of course be areas where there will be a need for the sector to call upon the ESOs to develop standards in areas where the sector identifies specific needs.

These areas need to be properly defined and coordinated, so we insist that the Sector Forum for Rail - known as JPCR - be the unique portal into the ESOs for rail standardisation subjects for which the ESOs will be responsible. This body, led by the sector, will determine in what areas it wishes the ESOs to develop standards within the EC mandate and the Requests for Standard (RfS) received from the ERA.

Objectives for rail system standardisation

CER and UIC fully endorse a strong and competitive European railway sector comprising the rail operating community and the manufacturers. Standardisation is a tool to increase system efficiency, maintain or increase safety, achieve cost-effectiveness and to reduce system life cycle costs (LCC) and therefore should lead to an increase of rail system competitiveness.

The drafting and implementation of standards must be transparent, effective and time-efficient.

The topics for standardisation have to be clearly identified and derived from the needs of the sector and allocated to the most appropriate actor.

Summary

Railway Standardisation in Europe needs to take into account that the railway system is interplay of technology and operations.

With their considerable experience, the ESOs can cover the technical issues appropriately, but for the interplay between technology and operations, these can only be covered by a dedicated railway standardisation body - the UIC.

As the railway sector is challenged by various factors constantly and unexpectedly, standardisation has to be drafted, adapted and implemented efficiently and quickly and should directly answer the business needs of the European Rail Sector.

Disclaimer

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