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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council on 8 June 2026
Simplification and acceleration of EU-Level railway systems certification and authorisation procedures to speed up ERTMS deployment
- Information from Greece, supported by Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Romania

Greece wishes to draw the attention of Ministers to a set of practical and structural challenges affecting the timely deployment of ERTMS across the Union, as a core interoperable railway technology essential for safety, capacity, cross-border traffic and the completion of the TEN-T network.

Despite the important progress achieved under the Fourth Railway Package, the practical implementation of railway systems certification, authorisation, testing and system-integration procedures remains complex, fragmented and difficult to predict. These challenges directly affect the pace of ERTMS deployment, the implementation of the TEN-T network, the Union's competitiveness and sustainability objectives, the development of high-speed rail, and the resilience and military mobility of the European transport network.

In several Member States, major railway projects require significant public investment, complex procurement procedures and extensive technical coordination before systems can be physically installed. However, once infrastructure, equipment or onboard systems are in place, the path to operational deployment may still require lengthy testing, compatibility assessment, safety validation and authorisation processes. In some cases, the time required for system commissioning and formal authorisation may equal or exceed the time needed for physical installation.

This is particularly relevant for ERTMS, where infrastructure, rolling stock, signalling, telecommunications, software, operational rules, human factors and legacy systems must interact safely and reliably. Frequent updates of the CCS TSI and related technical specifications, as well as the lack of operational and engineering harmonisation for the specifications of both onboard and trackside projects, may further increase uncertainty, especially where large-scale projects are designed under one technical baseline but need to be tested, assessed or authorised under another.

Greece considers that these challenges are systemic and shared across the Union. They risk slowing down the collective capacity of Member States to deploy interoperable railway technologies at the scale and speed required to meet European objectives.

At the same time, Greece underlines that any future approach should fully respect the responsibilities and competences of Member States and National Safety Authorities. The objective should not be to replace national responsibilities, but to facilitate the work of all actors through more standardised, simpler and more predictable European processes.

In this context, Greece considers that further work is needed in four areas:

First, greater practical consistency in the application of mutual recognition, so that systems, technical solutions, documents or assessments that have already been accepted in one Member State are not unnecessarily subject to repetitive checks in another comparable context.

Second, greater standardisation of technical requirements, documentation and procedures, including for ERTMS trackside and onboard systems, related components and rolling stock. This would support more efficient procurement, reduce unnecessary localisation and “nice-to-have” requirements, improve spare parts availability and maintenance, and strengthen the European industrial and manufacturing base.

Third, clearer management of technical specification changes, including stable baselines, predictable transition arrangements and early guidance when CCS TSI or related specifications evolve during the life cycle of major projects.

Fourth, a strengthened facilitation and support role for the European Union Agency for Railways, while enhancing ERA’s resources and technical capacity to fulfil this role effectively, in close cooperation with Member States, National Safety Authorities, infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, manufacturers, NoBos, AsBos and other relevant actors. This could include technical guidance, templates for standardised procurements for onboard and trackside, fast-track approvals for such standardised solutions, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, support for harmonised practices, and assistance in avoiding duplication, unclear roles and unnecessary delays.

Against this background, Greece invites the Commission to give due consideration to these issues when preparing any future evaluations or adjustments to the EU railway safety and interoperability framework, including the mandate, capacity and resources of the European Union Agency for Railways.

Greece also invites other Member States to engage in a joint discussion on how to make railway certification and authorisation procedures simpler, more predictable and more effective, while fully preserving safety and national responsibilities.
