

2012/04/16 – Signature in Copenhagen of the new ERTMS MoU under the Danish Presidency

Message of President of ERFA F. Coart

Dear Presidents,
Dear EU representatives,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank you very much for inviting us to today's event and we are very grateful to the European Commission for having allowed us to sign this MOU.

In fact ERFA is the actor needing ERTMS probably the most. With some 30 new entrants, wagon keepers, logistic integrators and national federations in over 16 countries, the business model of our members is clearly cross-border oriented and pan-European. . It is for us one of the key tools to set up a single European railway market and even more.

The advantages of ERTMS are obvious: a clear interoperability of the signalling systems, cheaper rolling stock lease, shorter certification and homologation processes (supposed to be). In short: more and quicker rail freight at lower costs.

However, the fact that we sign the MoU does not mean that everything is perfect, yet. Our message today is also a warning:

- There is a high fragmentation of ERTMS versions on national level with virtually each and every member state having its own customised versions. It generates compatibility problems between some countries.
- There is a severe lack of interoperability between the products of the different suppliers, interfaces with locomotives vary from country to country and from locomotive to locomotive.
- There is no upward and backward compatibility between baseline 2 and 3 which will lead to our locos coming to a full standstill on baseline 3 infrastructure.

So, what do we request?

- ERA to become the "system house" to cross check and allow new version in each and every market
- The EC to set up a dedicated European fund to co-subsidise the substantial investments needed for our members to switch to ERTMS and to upgrade software of already equipped locos. I must restate that new entrants are financially vulnerable .

Budgets are available for R&D of the supply industry. Budgets must be available for ERTMS implementation.

We will write in that sense also to Vice-President Kallas.

Thank you