

European Railway Agency: new tasks

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted a report drafted by Paolo COSTA (ALDE IT), recommending some amendments to the Council's common position for adopting a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 establishing a European Railway Agency (Agency Regulation).. It reinserted some amendments that had not been taken up by the Council in its common position, particularly those relating to the competences of the Agency.

The main amendments are as follows :

Authorisations for placing in service TSI-conform vehicle: as from 2015, and in cooperation with the competent national safety authorities, the Agency shall be entrusted with the task of granting authorisations for placing in service vehicles conforming to TSIs.

Certification of entities in charge of maintenance: within a period of: one year for wagons, and two years for other vehicles, from the date on which the Regulation enters into force, the Agency shall assess the relationship between vehicle keeper, railway undertakings and infrastructure managers with regard to the maintenance certification system, in accordance with Article 14 of the Railway Safety Directive. The system of mandatory certification of maintenance must be mandatory rather than voluntary. The Committee extended the list of factors that the Agency must consider in its assessment and recommendations.

Within a period of three years from the adoption by the Commission of the mandatory system of certification of maintenance referred to in the Railway Safety Directive, the Agency shall send to the Commission a report evaluating the implementation of such a system taking into account these aspects.

ERTMS: as from 1st January 2010, the Agency shall supervise the application of the procedures for "EC" verification and putting into service of the ERTMS in the context of specific projects, and shall authorise the placing into service and apply the procedures for "EC" verification, particularly with a view to assessing technical compatibility between infrastructure and rolling stock fitted by different constructors. The Agency shall, if necessary, recommend appropriate measures to the Commission.

Acting as "central authority" for ERTMS, the Agency shall ensure the interoperability and the compatibility of all versions of ERTMS. On the basis of the Agency report, the Commission shall assess the costs and benefits of using a single type of laboratory equipment, a single reference track and/or a single certification body at Community level. The Commission may present conclusions to the Parliament and the Council and, if appropriate, bring forward not earlier than 10 years after the entry into force of the Regulation a legislative proposal to improve the ERTMS certification system.