

Rail transport: interoperability of the trans-European conventional rail system

1999/0252(COD) - 06/11/2006 - Follow-up document

This is the second Commission report on progress towards greater inter-operability within the European rail network. It has been prepared in accordance with Article 24 of Directive 96/48/EC.

The report analyses the rate at which the inter-operability Directives have been implemented. These Directives have sought to open-up the rail transport market and to make the rail network capable of providing a seamless cross-border passenger and freight service. The Report also reviews the measures taken at both a national and a European level to fulfil the provisions of the Directives and their progress towards inter-operability. A further feature of this Report is its assessment of the Directive's relationship with the "European Railway Agency", which became operational in 2005.

The Report finds that the high speed inter-operability directive is now well established and fully implemented (with the exception of Slovakia). Extensive experience has been gained in the implementation of the TSIs, their conformity assessment and the progression of the high speed rail network. With regards to Slovakia, the Commission has now referred the case to the Court of Justice. The conventional rail interoperability directive expands the scope of the interoperable rail network and the first group of TSIs are expected to come into force by mid 2006. The cost benefit analysis of supporting the TSIs is a crucial activity which will lead to a better understanding of the TSIs full impact on the rail transport market. Member States should be encouraged to participate early in the development process of the TSI with the Agency. The report considers the benefits of merging certain TSIs for high speed and conventional railways in order to reduce the regulatory burden on operators and to allow the rail transport system to be viewed as a 'total system' thus potentially reducing overall costs. A merger of both interoperability directives is also being considered in the context of simplification and better regulation. The monitoring of the derogations granted against TSI is an important activity of the Committee, as the scope and quantity of derogations has a direct impact on the progress of interoperability.

The following progress interoperability progress report will be undertaken by the European Rail Agency. The first of their reports will be made available in 2007.