

CER/ETF Joint recommendation for the revision of the Train Drivers Directive

CER and ETF believe that the sectoral social dialogue is a cornerstone of the European social model, where social partners – both workers and employers - are essential stakeholders to explain the realities of work across many sectors. In this respect, the Sectoral Social Dialogue for Railways has been highly active and constructive. CER and ETF contribute their profound expertise from daily railway work, operations and business. CER and ETF are fully committed to continue this journey and consider it an important tool for social exchange on EU policies, promoting open and transparent discussions.

With this joint recommendation, adopted as part of the social dialogue, CER and ETF outline their suggestions on the Revision of the Train Drivers Directive (TDD), following the joint statement of 5 December 2022. CER and ETF believe that social partners must be consulted according to the procedure laid out in Article 154 (2) and (3) TFEU as the Proposal for a revision concerns social policy. It is in this spirit that we issue a joint recommendation for the revision of the TDD that ensures railway safety and operational aspects as well as workers' health and safety.

CER and ETF believe that a sound **certification scheme** and a comprehensive approach to **communication** in and around the railway system is of the utmost importance for the revision of the TDD. In order to facilitate the revision of the TDD, CER and ETF make the following constructive joint recommendation and call the European institutions to take into account this proposal based on the sector stakeholders' expertise:

Any proposal must lead to safe, feasible and proportionate requirements.

Certification scheme

We fully support the harmonisation at European level, where feasible and appropriate, but nonetheless emphasise the need for acknowledgement of the existing different approaches at national level and between railway companies.

We recommend developing a digitalised train drivers certification system with a modular approach, building on the concept of licences and certificates, that recognises the following three levels:

- a European part,
- a national part and
- a company specific part.

The roles and responsibilities and content need to be further defined.

Communication

Safe train operation on a country's network can only work if communication between drivers and traffic controllers, emergency services as well as other railway staff, works flawlessly, particularly in disrupted/emergency situations. The railway communication arrangements in place already ensure this essential requirement. The majority of passenger and freight transport, as well as maintenance and other activities, are undertaken at national level. Under these conditions, introducing a single or an additional common European language (i.e. English) would not bring any added value, but would instead constitute a massive disadvantage for the railway sector competing with other modes of transport. The switch to a single or an additional common language would affect train drivers, as well as all professional job profiles in railway undertakings and infrastructure managers, particularly those responsible for safety-related activities.

The introduction of such an additional hurdle requires a massive (re-)training of staff as well as a significant increase of training for service providers in the railway sector, and further hindering a shift from road to rail.

Additionally, it cannot be ensured that the existing safety level can be maintained. We remind that a multiple language regime at border stations has been working successfully for decades.

For the reasons outlined above, we refer back to our joint statement of December 2022, where the social partners agreed on a European language regime where we support a general requirement of language level "B1" for all traffic. When it comes to exemptions, ETF states that the minimum of a B1 level shall be required on the entire European railway network whereas CER favours exemptions for countries with more than one official EU language as well as for border sections.

In order to define a future target system for railway communication, which takes into account all communications aspects and relations comprehensively, we recommend that a scientific study which looks into the communication needs of the railway sector incl. field tests/ pilots is carried out.