

Measure 10: European Railway Agency

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<p><i>Policy package:</i> 2D: Rail Safety, Quality and Environment</p>
<p><i>Measure 10:</i> European Railway Agency: step up rail safety by setting up a Community structure for railway interoperability and safety</p>
<p><i>What is the problem being addressed ?</i> In order to support the progressive establishment of a European railway area without frontiers the Community take action in the field of technical regulations applicable to railways with regard to both the technical aspects and the safety aspects. Development and implementation of railway interoperability, together with harmonisation of safety rules and certifications among the European countries will support the revitalisation of the rail freight sector and contribute to the achievement of a sustainable freight transport system in Europe. In order to address these issues at the European level, the European Parliament and the Council have decided to set up the European Railway Agency, as specified in the Regulation (EC) No 881/2004. The main task of the new Agency is to provide technical support for the work on interoperability and safety. Its activity would involve, on the one hand, producing common safety standards and developing and managing a system to monitor safety performance and, on the other, long-term management of the system for establishing, registering and monitoring technical specifications for interoperability.</p>
<p><i>Measure's costs and/or benefits:</i> According to an estimate provided in COM (2002) 18 final, the Community spends approximately € 2600 million a year on financing railway projects (TEN, Cohesion Fund, Structural Funds, ISPA, Research Programme, etc.). The Agency's estimated annual budget is equivalent to less than 0,6% of this total and will allow far more efficient use of the Community resources ensuring the interoperability of the projects funded and allowing a common approach to safety. The revenue of the Agency shall consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a contribution from the Community;- any contribution from third countries participating in the work of the Agency (as provided for by Article 36 of the Regulation (EC) No 881/2004;- charges for publications, training and any other services provided by the Agency.
<p><i>Legislative implementation at the EU level:</i> Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 29 April 2004, establishing a European Railway Agency (Agency Regulation). The Agency shall be operational within 24 months of the entry into force of this Regulation.</p>
<p><i>What are the objectives ?</i> The Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 has been published on 29 April 2004. Five years after the Agency takes up its duties, the Commission will carry out an evaluation of implementation of this Regulation, the results obtained by the Agency and its working methods. The Agency will have no autonomous decision-making powers. It will provide technical support for decision-making and act as an advisory body. The agency will be responsible for steering and coordinating technical tasks related to the implementation of safety and interoperability standards and for maintaining contacts on technical matters with the relevant professional bodies and stakeholders.</p>
<p><i>Interactions with other WP measures :</i> The main responsibility of the new Agency is in practice to support the implementation of Measure 8 – Ensuring a high level safety and Measure 9 – Updating the interoperability directives.</p>

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Output indicators:

The output of the Measure No 10 *European Railway Agency: step up rail safety by setting up a Community structure for railway interoperability and safety* can be assessed in 24 months after the entry into force of this Regulation. Monitoring of the progress could be also done in this period of time, by assessing the activities carried out by the Agency.

Outcome indicators: intermediate impacts on transport markets

Considering that the Agency shall contribute, on technical matters, to the implementation of the Community legislation aimed at improving the competitive position of the railway sector by enhancing the level of interoperability of railway systems and at developing a common approach to safety on the European railway system, indicators to be considered are those related to the removal of barriers to interoperability.

A first step towards a more efficient European rail network will be to render it gradually interoperable. This means that with each new investment or upgrading project on the trans-European rail network the technical specifications for interoperability (TSI) provided for by Directives 96/48 (high speed rail systems) and 200/16 (conventional rail systems) should be applied. In many cases Member States receive Community financial support for such projects out of the TEN budget or other financial instruments. Pas experience has shown, however, that in some case Member States do not apply the TSI when they commission new or upgraded rail infrastructure, energy systems or command and control systems. Therefore, an indicator of Agency's effectiveness in this respect could be the "number of projects on which the Agency has given an advice and TSI have been properly ensured".

Outcome indicators: final impacts on transport users and non users

The implementation of this Directive will obviously contribute to improve rail safety, and in particular the Agency will be one of the main actors interested to adopt the Common Safety Indicators described under Measure 8 – Ensuring a high level safety for the railway network.