



Multi-annual work programme 2014-2017

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Foreword by the Executive Director

The Agency's over-arching objective - to concretely contribute to improving the competitive position of the railway sector by enhancing the interoperability level and developing a common approach to safety on the European railway system – requires sustained and coherent work to be carried out over many years.

To give this full picture of the building blocks for the achievement of an integrated EU railway system, it is necessary to put the envisaged Agency's key outputs in the next years, their effect on the railway system (railway system outcomes), the related resource needs and explanations about the "how to" into a multi-annual perspective. This must be supported by a description of the developments inside the European Railway Agency necessary for these achievements, including the demanding economic perspective with resource and budget constraints.

This document is therefore intended to support the implementation of the work underway and to point out how the different developments fit together to "make the legal framework work in practice". It shall serve furthermore as a common planning perspective for all actors.

As a last step of this evolution, ERA might see further evolutions from 2017/18 onwards, depending on the negotiations on the Fourth Railway Package (proposed by the European Commission early 2013). We explain in this document how this option would complement the ongoing work.

We are convinced that this first edition of the ERA multi-annual work programme will provide a strong support to enable better co-operation of all the stakeholders in the European Institutions and in the railway sector to achieve the final goal: *to make the railway system work better for society*.

Marcel Verslype
Executive Director

1. Why we are doing what we do - the European policy context

ERA works in a wider framework of the European Commission White Paper on transport and its policy goals for railways:

- Improving competitiveness of rail with other modes in order to increase the market share of the most environment-friendly mode of transport
- Spending public money more efficiently on public rail transport services
- Encouraging market entry by reducing administrative and technical barriers
- Opening domestic rail passenger transport to competition
- Encouraging market entry and ensure non – discrimination through a better governance of the infrastructure

A subset of these goals is the creation of a “**Single European railway area**” through improved **technical interoperability** and a **common approach to safety** on the EU railway system (as laid down in the ERA founding regulation). In the mid-term, this goal translates mainly into **4 EU strategic priorities** for an improved functioning of the railway system to which ERA’s work is contributing:

- (1) a **harmonised Safety Regulatory Framework**
- (2) a **simplified vehicle authorisation**
- (3) a **single European train communication and control system (ERTMS)**
- (4) a **simplified access for customers.**

The Agency summarises this contribution in its **vision** “*to make the railway system work better for society*”.

Railway actors benefit first place from the Agency’s work on harmonized conditions in an integrated Single European railway area: through easier operation, simplified rolling stock placing into service, opening of the market for railway products and services, harmonised control/command systems and through easier access to and exchange of information. The harmonisation of environmental management – such as noise – contributes, both in a positive effect for the EU Citizens, and in the removal of unequal operating boundary conditions in EU Member States. All these harmonised conditions aim as well to drive down the costs for the Sector, as outlined in the underlying cost-benefit analyses.

These **harmonised boundary conditions** strongly support an easier market entry for (new) railway undertakings and **enhanced competition** between them. Additionally, through the competition between manufacturers, an easier access to rolling stock for (new) railway undertakings is possible and the market for the supply of railway products and services is opened to the benefit of all actors. Such enhanced competition leads finally, as demonstrated by the positive examples in the different EU Member States, to the benefits of an open, shared system **for the end EU Railway customers**: more transport choices, better quality of services, easier cross-border services, enhanced travel information, simplified system access, reduced prices.

As a logical next step complementing the Agency’s current and future work, the European Commission has proposed in its “4th Railway Package” to entrust the Agency with the tasks of issuing – European-wide - Safety Certificates for Railway Undertakings and vehicle and ERTMS authorisations. This would further lower the remaining administrative barriers.

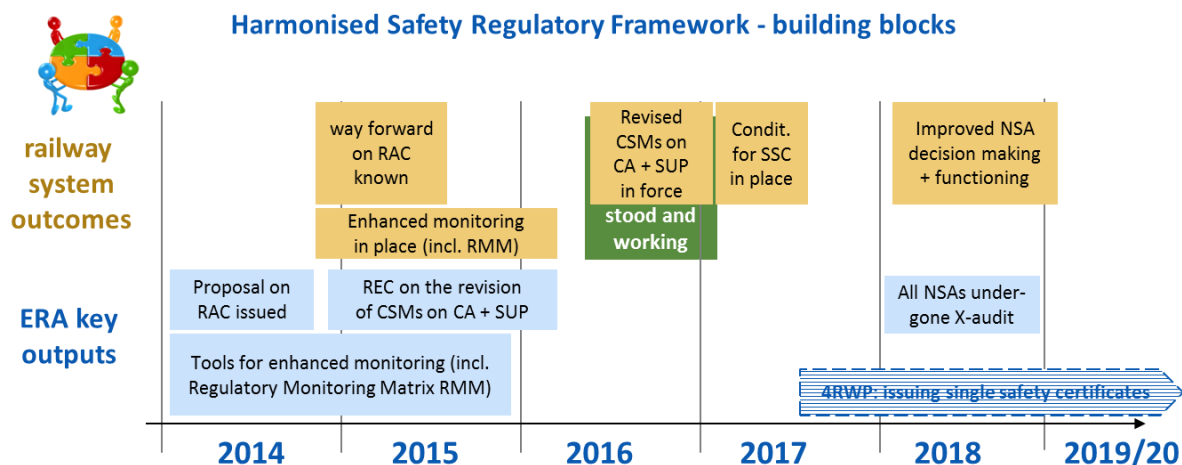
2. What we aim to achieve 2014-2017 and how we will do it

2.1 What we aim to achieve 2014-2017 in the 4 strategic priorities

Strategic priority 1 'Harmonised Safety Regulatory Framework'

Vision

ERA facilitates the development of EU railway safety specifications and drives the change to a proactive EU railway safety culture with common safety criteria, targets, monitoring and methods. It provides support for the understanding and efficient application of the framework and the content, provides optimised tools and uses monitoring outputs to target areas for improvement. With a 4th Railway package in force, it would act as the One Stop Shop for issuing EU Single Safety Certificates.



The Safety Regulatory Framework has been established in previous years but early feedback on how the processes were working highlighted the need for change. The European Commission's proposals in the Fourth Railway Package represent an evolution of the Safety Regulatory Framework. The Agency has therefore developed a programme plan setting out milestones **to deliver a single safety certificate**. The safety programme not only reflects the preparatory phase but also calls for the development of a strong focus on **enhanced safety performance monitoring** and on the development of a shared understanding of how the framework should be applied, including the pilot's results on a new Regulatory Monitoring Matrix (2014).

An important part of establishing a Single European Railway Area is defining an acceptable level of risk for technical systems and the Agency will work with stakeholders in 2014 to establish those **risk acceptance criteria (RAC)**. This supports the technical harmonisation process delivered through TSIs.

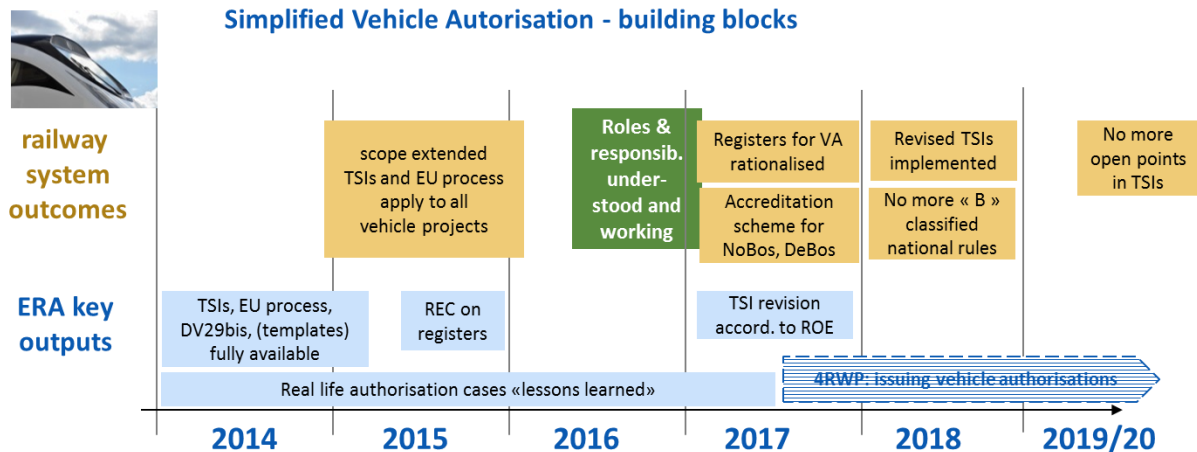
The foundation of the single safety certificate and the close cooperation of the Agency with the NSAs is a common, shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities before and after certification. The Agency will 2015 review the current framework on assessment and supervision by NSAs and issue a **recommendation on the revision on the Common Safety Method (CSM) on Conformity Assessment (CA) and Supervision (SUP)**.

The aim is to have the **framework, roles and responsibilities understood and working among the actors** in 2016, requiring also enhanced dissemination and training activities, and to build a strong working relationship with NSAs based on shared processes, shared understanding and trust. This collaborative working relationship is essential to support the increased competitiveness of Rail. The current projection shows the Agency could enter the new phase of delivering Single Safety Certificates from 2017 onwards.

Strategic priority 2 'Simplified Vehicle Authorisation'

Vision

ERA acts as the authority for all EU railway technical specifications & processes for vehicles & infrastructure. It develops and disseminates the understanding and efficient application of the framework and the content, provides optimised tools and drives improvement based on the progress monitoring and return of experience. With a 4th Railway package in force, it would act as the One Stop Shop for issuing EU vehicle authorisations.



Although the European Railway system has been a system shared by many actors ever since the responsibilities for managing the system were separated out to Railway Undertakings, Infrastructure Managers and Government authorities, in many cases the tools necessary to manage the shared system, as prescribed in the directives, are not fully in place and old tools appropriate only for vertically integrated single actor systems (e.g. homologation) continue to be used for a purpose they were not intended for.

To finally overcome this, the Agency will issue in 2014 its recommendations **for the scope extended TSIs, the EU vehicle authorisation process and supporting templates** and start to **disseminate the further guidance to complete the common understanding** on “how it’s all supposed to work” (**DV 29bis**). Those elements **will apply to all new vehicle projects from 2015 onwards**. From then on National Rules will only apply to new vehicles in respect of open points and compatibility with legacy systems and non-TSI conforming networks. The Agency will endeavour to **close the remaining open points in TSIs within the next big revision of the TSIs starting in 2017**. In parallel, it will take a **greater involvement in real authorisation projects** in order to understand the problems, facilitating trial “one-stop-shop” authorisations and the migration to the 4th RWP. The cleaning up of the national rules will continue. We expect to see **no more “B” classified rules in 2018**.

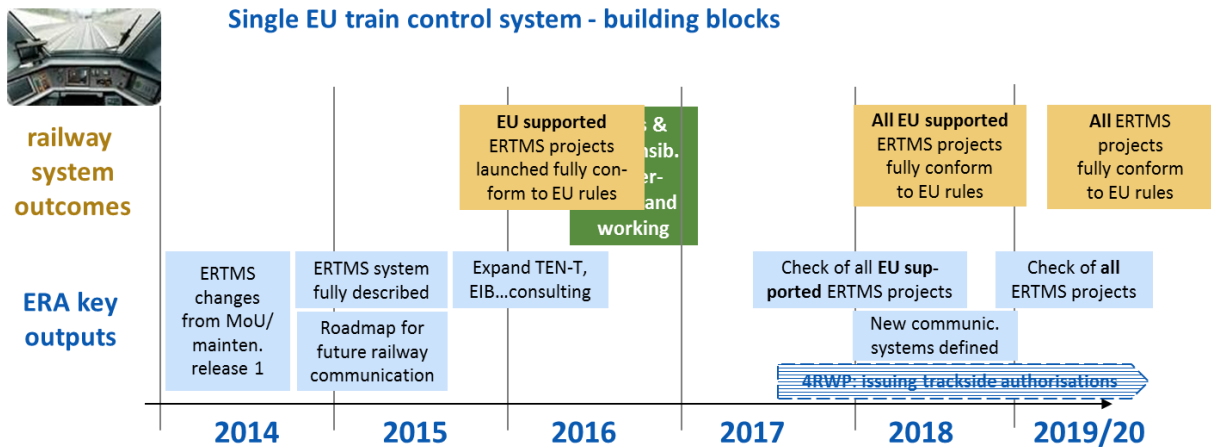
Notwithstanding the above, diversity of the networks both between Member States and, in some cases, within Member States, is a key element in the cost and complexity of vehicles and their authorisation. The Agency will assist Member States to meet their obligation to avoid further diversity of networks and wherever possible to converge as far as possible through the network related TSIs, the OPE TSI and a **clarification and simplification of registers** which will lead to a **recommendation on the rationalisation of the registers in 2015**.

From 2014 onwards the Agency will be carrying out **training and dissemination with an enhanced focus** so that the **framework, roles and responsibilities are understood, implemented and working among the actors in 2016** before the new phase of delivering EU vehicle authorisations from 2017 onwards. As a further vital element for the harmonisation of the actors in the field of conformity assessment, **2017 will see in place an accreditation scheme for the (third party) assessment bodies** such as NoBos, DeBos etc., developed by ERA.

Strategic priority 3 ‘Single European Train Communication and Control System’

Vision

ERA acts as the de facto system authority for the harmonized ERTMS specifications and for their coherent implementation in the railway system. It guides the understanding and efficient application of the framework and of the standards and drives improvement on the basis of progress monitoring. With a 4th Railway package in force, it would then assume a role in the authorisation of ERTMS implementation projects.



After the successful delivery of the European Train Control System (ETCS) baseline 3, of the Global System for Mobile communications — Railways (GSM-R) specifications and of the harmonized Operational Rules, the focus in the ERTMS field is progressively moving to the **follow-up of the development, testing and implementation**, with **targeted dissemination and monitoring activities** to encourage the harmonised application of the standard system, with dedicated attention to early implementation to ensure timely examination of the return on experience.

2014-2016 will see an increased cooperation with the European Commission and the **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Executive Agency** in **evaluating specific ERTMS projects**, with the aim to **help ensuring that ERTMS projects receiving EU money are in conformity with the essential requirements** and, indeed, **contribute to the progressive deployment of a single European train control system**.

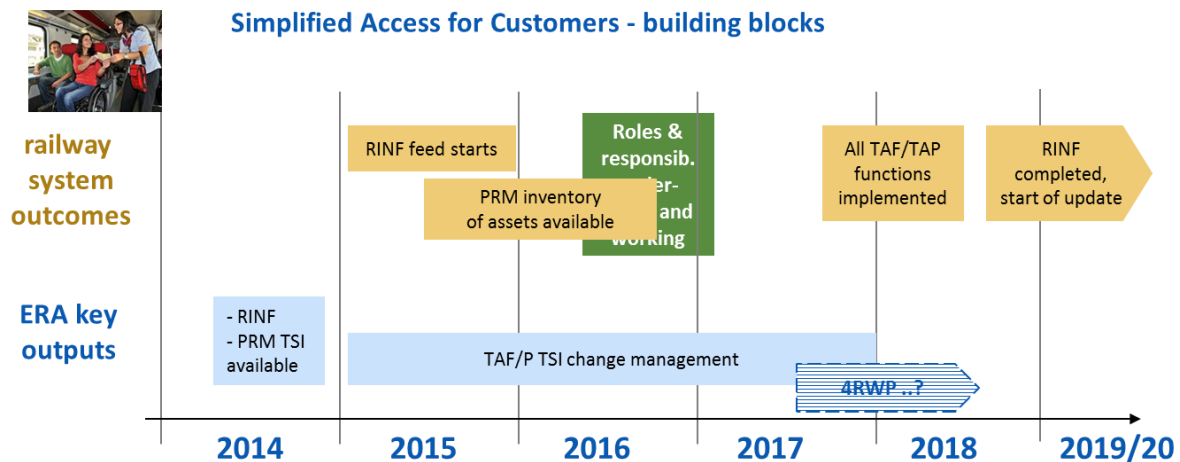
In the field of **railway communications**, the Agency will define and work in **2015 on the roadmap enabling ETCS communications on IP based radio technologies**, and on the consolidation of the requirements for the evolution of voice radio in view of the planned GSM-R life expectancy, aiming at a **definition of the new radio communication systems in 2018**.

The increasing focus on follow-up and TEN-T funded projects is instrumental in ensuring the readiness of the Agency to potentially take up **responsibilities in authorization for ERTMS from 2017 onwards**.

Strategic priority 4 'Simplified access for customers'

Vision

ERA acts as the specifier for other rail regulation - in particular for simplified access to the railway system and ticketing protocols - in partnership with other organisations and provides optimised tools for customer access. It is the lead trainer for the understanding and efficient application of the framework and the content and drives improvement on the basis of progress monitoring.



In the field of **simplified system access**, the TSIs on telematics applications for passenger services (TAP TSI) and for freight (TAF TSI) are addressing issues related to railway customers, aiming to harmonise the exchange of information between actors. The ERA **change management** conducted as 'Telematics applications system authority' in the next years will see the work to **close the open points on e. g. electronic ticketing, on a transmodal of timetables and tariffs etc. and to guide, support and monitor the rail sector and Member States when implementing the telematics TSIs**, including the small and medium-sized companies. The work of the Agency shall lead to an **implementation of all the TAF/TAP functions among all actors in 2017/18**.

From another perspective, RUs need an efficient tool to plan their access to the different networks where they intend to operate. The **Register of Infrastructures (RINF)** is meant to meet this requirement, **available from 2014 onwards, making its feeding by the actors possible** (expected to be completed until 2019).

In the framework of taking appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access to transportation, the **revision of the TSI on persons with reduced mobility (PRM TSI) will be issued in 2014**. Collecting information on the detailed level of accessibility offered by stations and rolling stock has been identified as a preliminary step before their progressive elimination through implementation plans by Member States. Such information is to be collected by stakeholders through **inventories of assets, available in an ERA inventory from mid-2015 onwards**.

2.2 How we promote and disseminate the existing EU legal framework

In 2013, in order to facilitate the implementation of the EU legal framework and its application in practice, ERA evaluated the state of play of its dissemination activities.

To optimize the effectiveness of these measures in the future, **two workstreams** are necessary:

- To increase the **effectiveness of the channels and tools used up to now** (the way that seminars, trainings etc. are held, website support,), e. g. based on user's feedback and an analysis how to reach a maximum target audience (e. g. holding ERTMS workshops at TEN-T days) and via the enhancement of the training skills of ERA's staff.
- To **improve going forward the monitoring and mapping of** which problems in implementation and application occur in which EU Member States, in which strategic priority and on which level (taking into account results and lessons learned from pilots such as the "Regulatory Monitoring Matrix").

Such a monitoring and overview allows dissemination to be targeted at the right stakeholders, with the right measures, via the right channels (which also determines the right "place") and to see what progress has been made. It will also identify the most effective dissemination activities and be used therefore to increase the efficiency of dissemination.

This will enable it to focus the use of ERA resources in proportion to the scale of the problem by subject and/or geographical area and to the persistence of problems. To cope with the required volume of correct and targeted dissemination, ERA will also organize dissemination via partners intended to act as "multipliers", whose competence will be ensured by "train the trainer" programmes and/or licensing. In this context, the need may arise to motivate ERA's stakeholders to contribute more by their own dissemination (e. g. via the representative bodies).

2.3 How we cooperate with our stakeholders

Although the railway system is primarily a system shared by RUs and IM's, it relies on many other entities such as e. g. keepers ECMs, manufacturers, NSAs, NoBos, NIBs, the Commission, the Agency and staff representatives for its safe and efficient functioning. The basis for the successful functioning of this system must be that all entities involved find their space in the system and avoid duplicating each other's efforts. We recognise that success in ERA's mission will only be achieved with the help of our stakeholders and active networks of National Safety Authorities (NSA), National Investigation Bodies (NIB) and Representative Bodies, all of whom play a key role in the field of safety and/or vehicle authorisation.

In our approach we seek to build a shared understanding and trust. In practice this means listening, testing new approaches through pilot projects and the increasing use of real life examples in our work. An early example of this approach is the publication of the National Legal frameworks for vehicle authorisation and now the beginning of the work on real authorisation cases.

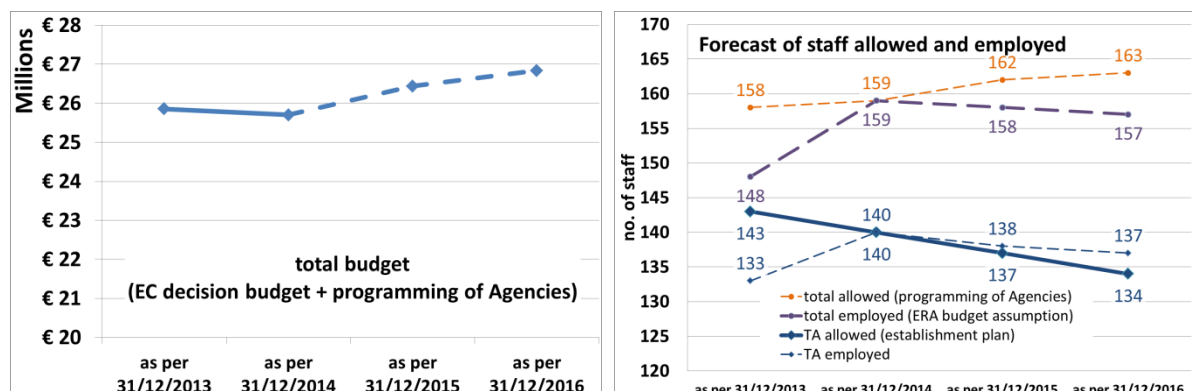
Much of the Agency's work is supported by Networks and it is important that we understand what is working well and what could work better in the Networks. To do this we will establish a baseline of the current situation and begin an active engagement with the Networks to identify how we can improve the functioning of the Networks.

Seconded National Experts are an established way for staff from other organisations to spend time in the Agency but this is, at the moment, a one-way system. The Agency would like to go further and seek to develop the possibility to second or exchange Agency staff to or with external organisations. Through this exchange we believe we would ensure our teams have a better understanding of the issues our stakeholders face and how our work impacts on the wider railway system.

3. Our resources, boundary conditions and competencies

3.1 Our resources and boundary conditions 2014-2017

Budget perspectives for ERA up to 26,8 MEUR in 2016 (see figure) have been laid down in the 2013 Commission’s programming document for the EU Agencies. Announced (or even adopted by the Administrative Board) budgets nevertheless are cut and may be cut in the future depending on the EU’s budgetary situation. ERA is therefore assuming a **future budget level of around 25,7-26,0 MEUR**.



The degree to which the Agency will be able to realise the aims set out under point 2 will first and foremost depend on the amount and competency of human resources available.

Following the programming of the Commission, ERA’s establishment plan will see a decrease from **140 Temporary Agents (TA) in 2014** down to **134 TA in 2016**. This programming is, however, subject to agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission and so far the EP has rejected the staff cuts proposed by the Commission. In any case, the Agency would be able (based on the extrapolation of the contract situation, the number of TA on board in 2014 and some adjustments in the future) to stay within the programming of the Commission without having to terminate any employment contracts before their expiration.

The foreseen staffing target figures (around constantly **158 staff under the said conditions**) can only be achieved by hiring Contractual Agents (CA) and Seconded National Experts (SNE). As finding sufficient staff with required competencies in these categories is difficult, we will see in the next two years whether it will be possible to recruit the planned staff.

3.2 How we prioritize and shift resources where it matters

It is a permanent and underlying risk that the overall task requirements stemming from the different sources (planned or 'on-demand') exceed the quantity of resources available in total or in a particular subject area (total resource situation see 3.1.; resources per strategic priority are considered at the moment as stable on 2014 level). When necessary, ERA must shift resources internally.

For this, a "fast and flexible" approach in working methods and staff competencies remains indispensable as the main tool to cope with varying demands which certainly will also change again over time.

To determine the priorities across all tasks of the Agency, up to now the approach of weighing the

- "importance/economic impact" and the
- "urgency" (political/stakeholder)

of a task has been used. The Agency is further working on a scheme supporting prioritisation based on the cost-benefit analysis of a task and its contribution to the outcomes across all strategic priorities.

This prioritisation scheme will be proposed in 2014 and then tested, serving especially for bringing more facts into the discussions during the decision making process, as importance and urgency are often seen completely different by the different stakeholders. The Agency will complete the assessments with proposals for re-prioritisation and rescheduling of tasks, which, after exchange with the European Commission and stakeholders, become part of the ongoing change management process of the work programme. Experience must be gathered during the application of this scheme especially on the parameters and criteria applied.

3.3 How we maintain competences and build the necessary ones

ERA will overcome its biggest problem regarding business continuity with the implementation and application of its new contract policy (end 2013), removing the necessity for exchanging 40% of its operational staff in 2013-2015 caused by the expiration of the staff contracts with definite duration.

The new contract policy creates the base for a long-term perspective where staff are encouraged to rotate across different positions in the Agency to widen their original knowledge and so to adopt a "railway system approach" from different angles instead of different professional cultures, backed by a transparent internal mobility process and putting the Agency into the position to have a mix of experts and general project managers. This will increase ERA's overall competence in the long term. The best way to reflect this requirement in the strategy for new recruitments is still under discussion. Finally, such broad staff competency will allow ERA also a fast and flexible resource (re)allocation.

Such strategy will be supported by suitable tools (such as broader job descriptions) and competency development in strengthening managerial and consensus building abilities (especially for candidates for managerial positions), communication and training skills, legal basic (for operational staff) knowledge, IT etc..

This system approach will be beneficial also for the staff competencies required under a potential 4th railway package. Individual further knowledge would be acquired by working together in pilot projects with NSA's staff on concrete real cases, supported by a (part time) exchange of staff where possible.