



UNISIG



As part of UNIFE (the European Rail Industry Association), UNISIG is the technical body responsible for developing, maintaining and updating the ERTMS and CCS/TMS technical specifications.

When was UNISIG created?

UNISIG was founded in 1998/99 at the specific request of the EU Commission with the task of drafting the technical specifications for ERTMS/ETCS. It has always been a technical body first working in close cooperation with the European Association for Railway Interoperability (AEIF) and, since its formation in 2005, with the European Railway Agency (ERA) as part of the ERTMS Change Control Management (CCM) process.

What does UNISIG do?

The role of UNISIG today is to develop, maintain and update the ERTMS and CCS/TMS technical specifications in close cooperation with ERA, the “system authority” for ERTMS. To do so, UNISIG actively contributes, together with the railway representative bodies, to the various related working groups of the agency. Although the European Commission officially issues the final version of the ERTMS specifications after approval by the Member States, it is fundamentally shaped by a recommendation from ERA. This recommendation is discussed extensively with the railway sector, including UNISIG, and considerable effort is required to work with these specifications.

UNISIG is also working jointly with railways in the European Rail JU System Pillar on operational and technical standards for the entire railway signalling system, which will have a major business impact on the entire rail sector.

How is UNISIG organized?

UNISIG is a technical body within UNIFE, which is located in Brussels. Nine companies, now known as Alstom, AŽD, CAF, Hitachi, MerMec, Progress Rail and Siemens Mobility are members of UNISIG, and as UNISIG partners, Scheidt&Bachmann and Mipro.

UNISIG is governed by a Steering Committee (SC) comprising senior technical managers from the full members, among whom a Chairman is selected to serve for a one-year term. The day-to-day management of UNISIG is in the hands of the General Manager, who reports to the Chairman and the SC.

The SC is supported by a technical authority known as the Supergroup (SG), which comprises highly qualified ERTMS experts from each of the full members. The SG works closely with the UNISIG General Manager and with counterparts in ERA; the SG reports to the SC.

The detailed technical work of UNISIG is carried out in Work Groups (WGs) responsible for specific technical specifications (e.g. Eurobalise and Euroradio) or in Mirror Groups corresponding to ERA Working Groups where appointed experts represent UNISIG. All UNISIG groups have clear reporting lines to the SC.



Is UNISIG a "commercial body"?

No – UNISIG is a purely technical committee, with rules of procedure and a dedicated code of conduct. A key principle of its activities is not to interact with its members' contractual issues. It does not handle any political activities related to ERTMS.

What are the benefits of UNISIG membership?

By joining UNISIG, eligible suppliers obtain early insight into the evolution of ERTMS technical standards, enabling them to actively shape these standards and participate in the standardisation of traffic management and signalling systems. This involvement also ensures that they are aware of the business impact of these activities.

Is it necessary to be a member of UNISIG to develop ERTMS products?

No – the ERTMS specifications are made public by the ERA and are freely available to any interested party.

Who can be a member of UNISIG?

Any company associated with UNIFE and involved in the development of ERTMS and CCS/TMS can apply for UNISIG membership. However, to preserve the efficiency of UNISIG, applicants are required to have already played an active role and developed sufficient technical competence in the ERTMS and CCS/TMS fields and to contribute to the work of UNISIG both by providing the necessary workforce and funding for the committee. Different levels of membership – Full, Associated or Partner– have been created to suit various needs.

How can a company become a member of UNISIG?

An application must be submitted directly to the Chairman of UNISIG and the General Director of UNIFE.

How does UNISIG interact with UNIFE?

As mentioned above, UNISIG is a technical body of UNIFE. Whilst UNISIG's role is strictly limited to the development and writing of technical specifications, its General Manager closely collaborates with UNIFE on ERTMS and CCS/TMS-related matters. However, all political and communications activities are directly handled by UNIFE, which represents the ERTMS and CCS/TMS suppliers in political forums.

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