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Council reaches political agreement on railway interoperability and safety and the European Railway Agency

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council today arrived at **political agreement** on the draft directives on the **interoperability and safety of European railways** and the draft regulation on the **European Railway Agency** ([9768/1/14 REV 1](#), [9766/1/14 REV 1](#) and [9767/14](#)).

Together, the three legislative acts make up the **technical pillar of the fourth railway package**, published by the Commission in January 2013. The completion of this technical pillar is expected to **increase economies of scale** for railway undertakings across the EU, **reduce administrative costs** and **speed up procedures**. It should also help to **avoid any covert discrimination** in the issuing of safety certificates and vehicle authorisations.

The **texts of the political agreement** include the general approach texts agreed by the Council in June 2013 (press release [10457/1/13 REV 1](#), p. 20), October 2013 (press release [14602/13](#)) and March this year ([7665/14](#)), together with some relevant European Parliament amendments, which were voted at first reading in February. A new article on revocation of authorisations (article 22b) has been added to the interoperability directive in order to align the text with the other two pieces of legislation.

P R E S S

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According to this Council position on the technical pillar, a **dual system of vehicle authorisations and safety certifications** will be set up, with the ERA acting as a one-stop-shop for authorising vehicles intended for cross-border operations and issuing safety certificates to railway undertakings involved in cross-border traffic. National safety authorities will still have an important role in carrying out the necessary assessments. The texts agreed by the ministers also stipulate that, for vehicles and railway undertakings involved in national transport only, there will be a choice between submitting a request for authorisation or certification to the Agency or to the national safety authority.

The **other measures of the railway package**, forming the political pillar, aim to ensure further opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail and lay down new rules on governance structure in relation to infrastructure management and transport operations. These proposals have not yet been discussed in the Council.

The **adoption** of the various legislative acts that make up the package requires the approval of both the Council and the European Parliament.

– [Fourth railway package](#)
