



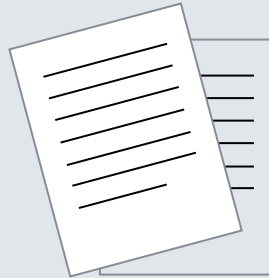
Cross-border communication on RFC 8

Developments, trends and challenges

DB Cargo AG | Dirk Oelschläger | V.CDB 12 | RFC 8 “North Sea – Baltic” RAG Meeting • Berlin | 30.03.2017

Train operation requires verbal communication between locomotive driver and staff authorising train movements

TSI OPE, section 4.2.1.5 Appendix C



- Currently: “operating language” (definition according to Appendix J to TSI OPE) is set by the infrastructure manager and published in its Network Statement
- In Belgium: two languages (Dutch and French), depending on the geographical part of the network
- The infrastructure manager may determine the geographical boundaries for the use of a second language where local practice would require to do so

Locally staffed border stations allow flexible language arrangements for cross-border traffic

Historically, practical arrangements for communication between the two “traditional” border stations on either side of the border exist in many cases.

General examples (not necessarily applied on RFC 8):

- Locomotive driver and signal box staff may communicate in one of the languages spoken on either side of the border
- Where several border crossings with one country exist, for one part of them the language of country A, and for the other part the language of country B was agreed to be the operating language (in the sense of Appendix J to TSI OPE)
- Bilingual forms for written standard processes were agreed upon between the involved parties
- Vocabulary lists adapted to railway-specific communication needs were made available to involved staff

Opportunity for RFC 8:

The Agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland on the cooperation in the area of railway traffic across the German-Polish border of 14 November 2012 sets a framework in which solutions as listed above may be applied or continue to exist respectively.

- Joint German-Polish working group led by the Ministries on either side (cf. Article 13)
- Possibility for IMs and RUs to become involved

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Trend towards centralisation of infrastructure management is reducing the availability of local staff

Staff in network operating centres may be far away from the national border.

- No local staff → no personal/cultural relationship with the neighbouring country → no knowledge of the neighbour's language
- How can flexible language arrangements of the past be maintained in the future?
- How will central traffic operators communicate with locomotive drivers in the future?
 - In their national language(s) only?
 - In their national language(s) and in the language(s) of the neighbour(s)?
 - In their national language(s) and in English?
 - Will there be a need for spoken communication at all?
- How will neighbouring infrastructure managers communicate with each other?



Photo: Piotr Rynio (Wikimedia Commons)

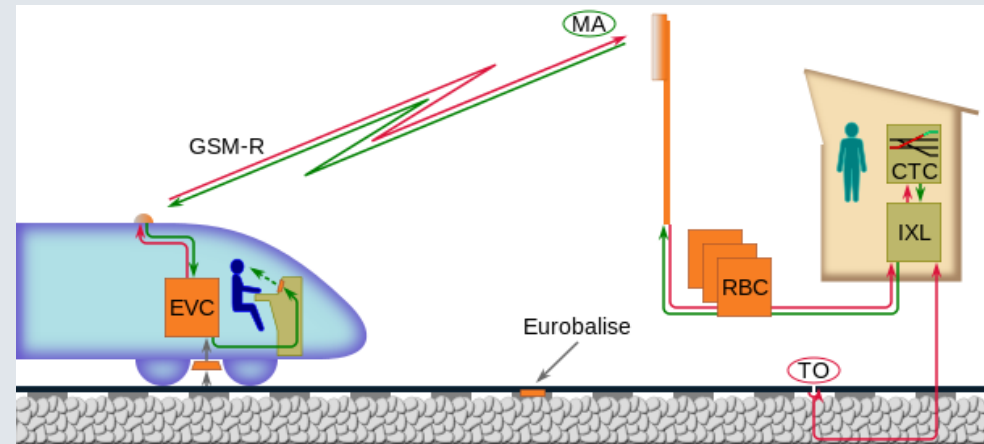
What are the options for facilitating future cross-border communication?

ERTMS: radio function codes?

- May considerably reduce or even fully replace verbal communication

English as a language base for standardised communication (TSI OPE Appendix C) and operational harmonisation?

- Basis for remaining need of verbal communication



Short-term solutions are a good way to start but cannot replace a longer-term strategy.



We should start thinking now about a longer-term cross-border language strategy in order lay the basis for training future generations of staff.

We should avoid creating suboptimal solutions for either RUs or IMs, but look for cost-effective solutions for the railway system as a whole.

The question “Who shall pay for what?” is certainly to be asked at a later stage but is not the question to begin with.