

Notes from joint RALP-ELETA workshop and ELETA External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)

Frankfurt, 22 February 2018

The ELETA EEAB has been divided in two separate sessions: a workshop organised jointly with RALP with various key stakeholders (more than 30 participants) and the official EEAB meeting with all official members (in total 20 people).

1. Workshop on ETA best practices (11:00 – 14:00)

During this session, several key players reported on their current experiences with ETA. All presentations are available on the following link:

<http://www.uirr.com/en/projects/ongoing/item/21-electronic-exchange-of-eta-information/34-ongoing.html>.

The main conclusion drawn from the best-practices workshop was that there is already a wide variety of initiatives and experiences as regards the tracking & tracing of freight trains and their ETA's.

2. ELETA official EEAB (14:00 – 16:00)

As regards the different best-practices, which were presented in the preceding workshop, made an appeal in particular to the RU's to proceed on these initiatives. The Board also noticed the wide variety of approaches.

It was proposed to have a discussion on the following aspects: (1) the ETA definition, (2) the legal context, (3) the role of terminals, (4) the required interfaces and (5) the unique train identification. The discussions focused on points 1, 3 and 5.

Definition of ETA and methodologies

The (lack of) definition for the ETA's was widely discussed. It was recommended that as soon as possible a more precise description is made of the terminology used i.e. type of ETA as well as the accuracy of such ETA. The ETA's must match the practical needs of the other partners in the logistic chain and the RU's customer/ intermodal operator. The end-user wants possibly a rather simple ETA (known as MAD – mise à disposition – loading units available under the crane).

Distinction should be made between ETA's calculated on the basis of historical data and past events and those calculated on the basis of projected operations (prognosis). In any case an ETA should be calculated through a computerised algorithm with the final objective to create an automatically generated ETA accompanied with business intelligence. Such algorithm for a projected planning is as such not yet available, but various ETA's methodologies exist, which are based on prognoses of operations and which are already used by some RU's. The Board recommends taking a pragmatic approach on choosing the best ETA methodology for the purpose of the 12 intermodal trains in the ELETA project.

An important aspect of the ETA is the transparency of its accuracy. The Board found that in some form a classification of ETA's is needed. In the course of the next months (Q2 2018) RNE will provide a set of qualifiers for ETA's at handover points (border points could be excluded as not accurate

enough). Moreover, parties should ideally be able to see and understand the cause for inaccuracies in the planned train runs. As regard the specifications of the level of accuracy, it was also suggested to consider working with a 'time-frame' range (minimum delay – maximum delay).

A discussion also evolved on the functionality of TIS. It was found that evidently a platform is needed to bring operational information from RU's and IM's together and to aggregate such information in a sort of new 'overlay'. TIS has the capacity to handle more data in the foreseeable future and could at least for the time being be considered as platform for such a purpose. The choice of the best system to be used as overlay should be based on clear defined business cases (as reported by ERA during the best practice workshops). It is however clear for all that all infrastructure related data should be managed by TIS.

Linking up the terminals

The Board noticed that the terminals are not really connected to tracking and tracing information exchange processes, which are currently executed by the RU's and IM's in the framework of the TAF TSI Regulation. The terminal integration has been recognised as a key element to improve the ETA exchange and accuracy. The connection between RU's/IM's and terminals needs to be defined in more detail in the TAF-TSI. To this effect, use-cases must be elaborated, whereby information flow to/from the terminals must be taking place in two directions.

Special attention must be given to the (common) interfaces with terminals. These must firstly be defined in functionality. Also it was stressed that the actual customer interface, which connects the various systems for managing the terminal operations and which are used by the 20 terminals involved in ELETA, must be built and that ELETA must allocate some financial resources to this effect.

Unique train numbering

The absence of a unique train numbering system was acknowledged as being a burden for the realisation of the objectives of the ELETA project. Efforts to provide a system of unique train numbering are in progress but will still require several additional years (cf. TAF TSI Master Plan). However, for the limited number of trains in the ELETA project, the train numbers used for the 12 trains could – according to RNE – be manually matched/coupled.

The Board considered that at short term a provisional unique train numbering system could be envisaged but that the acceptance of such short term solution is unlikely. However, the Board also concluded that the use of national train numbers for international trains (i.e. trains leading to the border) should be made forbidden as soon as possible (Such obligation is already practiced by Infrabel).

As practical point of attention it was advised that ELETA verifies that all involved RU's are registered at the TIS Advisory Board in order to ensure that all required TIS events are sent to the correct involved partner in transport chain. Additionally it must be checked that the RUs are known under one single identifier in TIS. At this moment it is possible that a RU is known under different codes/names in different IM systems. This can cause gaps when a train starts to run on another infrastructure network.