Introductory note to the "Guideline for the Psychological Assessment" of train drivers and other safety related personnel involved in rail transport.

In Europe an important aim of the Parliament is the development of the railway sector arising the possibilities of the railways transport companies to access to the national rail network in each State of the Community overcoming the local barrier. For achieve this objective it has been necessary a stronger integration process of technical and regulatory aspects that have to acquire the characteristic of interoperability between Member States. This great work of sharing tools and procedures is implemented between different transport companies (people and goods) and the companies that manage the infrastructure (tracks, stations, etc.). This interoperable work has its roots in the first European Directive of harmonisation issued already in 1991 and has been strengthened with those later. In this process the requirements of health, medical and psychological, relating to personnel involved in activities directly related with the railway safety operation, for example train drivers, on board train crew, rolling stocks inspectors, have a great relevance. Since 1999 the Community of European Railways and Infrastructures Companies (CER) has officially cooperated with the European institutions, Parliament and Commission, for the definition of many aspects including that of common criteria for health staff. Then since 2001 under the auspices of the CER has been enabled, between the others, two working groups: one consisting of medical doctors, for physical requirements, and the other one formed by psychologists for the definition of those psychological. The participants are professionals sent from the respective national railways participating in the work. The proposal were elaborated by the European Association for Railway Interoperability (AEIF) and issued in the Decision of the Commission European n. 920 on 11 August 2006. The Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) defines in section 4.7 (Health and safety conditions) the criteria for the approval of psychologists who will carry out examinations, and the provided requirements, substantially reported to psychomotor, cognitive and personality aspects. The following directive of the Council of the Union European, no. 59 of 23 October 2007 concerning the rules for the release of the European licence for trains, to the art. 11 provides that the psychological examination must be conducted or supervised by a psychologist, or a medical doctor, depending on the decision of the State; to the 2.1 and 2.2 of annex II °, even if more generically than in TSI , the examination content itself always are related to psychomotor, cognitive and personality areas. It is important to note as to the section 4.7.4.1.2 of the TSI and better in the 2.2 annex II of the Directive have indicated that the level of psychological capability requested must be able to exclude the presence of "deficit" that may interfere with the safe performance of duties. Pending the further reviews of official documents, now of relevance of the ERA (European Railway Agency) and its national agencies, the Group of psychologists of the CER drew this Guideline that arise as a shared point of reference to the approach to the evaluation in this field.

CER aisbl Avenue des Arts, 53 B-1000 Bruxelles Tel: +32 2 213 08 70 Fax: +32 2 512 52 31 contact@cer.be www.cer.be

Before we leave you to the original text it seems useful to clarify certain aspects. The Guidelines are targeted to the evaluation of drivers but are well usable as a reference for all the rail personnel attached to safety tasks. In the first paragraph there are introduction and purpose to this type of examination. The second shows its role in the staff selection process. The third paragraph indicates the need skills to manage the examination. The fourth defines process, psychological variables tested and the performance levels required. In the fifth the tasks of test givers, rights and responsibilities of test takers are detailed. At the end in the sixth paragraph scientific rules shall be accompanied by observe and briefly described the types of instruments. Normative and literature references conclude the work. Reading the contents you can notice that some points could be more detailed; but we must consider that work initially started from national situations, about profession and tools, different between them and then a common summary comes in various paragraphs right where it was possible to arrive at convergences shared by psychologists representing companies of transport and infrastructure taking part .We must also remember that the introduction of the medical doctor in the psychological assessment has been accepted, during the previous debate in the European Parliament, because not all the countries of the Community have fully recognised our profession; while some countries as France, Italy, Switzerland, for example, have rules that protect the activities of the psychologist in others the permission to carry out these activities is less specified. Then it follows the awareness that without strong interventions in the appropriate European institutions our profession is likely to be penalized in the time. Besides we like emphasize that the assessment is aimed to exclude only subjects whose psychological deficits can limit the correct execution of their duties involved with the rail safety; so it presents many similarities with the goals dealt with Traffic Psychology and is therefore desirable here find a convergence of interests and the sharing of objectives.
We conclude with the hope that these own Guidelines, for their supranational characterization, can help the colleagues to implement practices that are broad reflected in Europe.

01/12/2009

The CER Psychologists Group

CER aisbl Avenue des Arts, 53 B-1000 Bruxelles Tel: +32 2 213 08 70 Fax: +32 2 512 52 31 contact@cer.be www.cer.be