Interoperability of trans-European high-speed rail system

A Directive on the interoperability of the trans-European high-speed rail system (Directive 96/48/EC) was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 23 July 1996. The full text of this Directive, one of the measures for the development of the trans-European transport networks, has now been published in the Official Journal (OJ No L235 of 17.9.1996 p.6).

The Directive aims to establish the conditions to be met in order to achieve interoperability, within the Union, of the trans-European high-speed rail system. The high-speed rail system includes specially constructed lines for travel at speeds greater than 250 kilometres per hour, and upgraded lines for travel at speeds greater than 200 kilometres per hour. Certain additional lines on which, for reasons of topographical or town-planning constraints, these speeds may not be attained are also included in the high-speed rail system. Outline maps of the system are contained in Decision 16292/96/EC on the guidelines for the trans-European networks.

The conditions for interoperability concern projects for the construction, upgrading and operation of infrastructure, including energy supply and command and control systems, and rolling stock for the functioning of the system. Further specifications will
be laid down covering requirements in areas such as safety, reliability and availability, health, environmental protection and technical compatibility.

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