

19 December 2024

## **ETCS will further increase railway safety, lines are ready for ETCS-only operation**

From January 2025, the European Train Control System (ETCS) will be in exclusive operation on almost six hundred kilometres of lines. After years of intensive work involving thousands of test runs, training hundreds of employees and coordination with carriers, Správa železnic's infrastructure is now fully prepared for this moment. ETCS will not only make traffic safer but also allow future increases in train speed.

In the implementation of ETCS, Správa železnic followed the National Implementation Plan set by the government. The Czech Republic committed itself to the deployment of ETCS based on a previous decision of the European Commission.

The planned deployment of ETCS-only operation under the supervision of the single European Train Control System will take place gradually over four weeks in January. In total, 622 kilometres of lines in the Czech Republic will be operated in this mode.

*"The deployment of ETCS is an extremely complex project that places high demands on the coordination of all stakeholders – from Správa železnic to the technology manufacturers to the carriers and their staff. As with any such significant technological change, there is a phase of fine-tuning the details so that all the components fit together like a well-adjusted machine,"* says Minister of Transport Martin Kupka. *"The Czech Republic is thus among the first European countries to introduce ETCS-only operation on such a large network."*

European Train Control System will now supervise around 50,000 trains per month. As they regard mainly key sections of the main corridors, this represents more than 42 percent of the train operation performance on Správa železnic. On the busy regional section from Olomouc to Uničov, ETCS-only operation has been in place for almost two years.

*"ETCS is one of the most ambitious projects in the history of the Czech railway system, not only in terms of technical complexity and costs. The deployment of ETCS-only operation is comparable to such moments as the transition from steam to electric locomotives,"* says Jiří Svoboda, Director General of Správa železnic. *"I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the thousands of people from different professions who have been involved in the preparations over the past decades,"* he adds.

### **One hundred thousand runs have tested the system**

As of 1 August, carriers are obliged to run under ETCS supervision on lines already equipped with the system, if they use a vehicle with the appropriate on-board unit and is driven by a properly trained driver. In the second half of the year, more than one hundred thousand trains were running in this test mode. The supervision of the European Train Control System has thus significantly increased the safety of travel on the main corridors even before

the introduction of ETCS-only operation. The availability of the system was also gradually increased. In November, only 1.3 % of train runs were affected by disconnections.

Hundreds of vehicles will be operated under ETCS supervision every day from the new year, and more than a thousand drivers had to be trained. Five hundred traffic controllers are also able to work with the system, not only from the two central traffic control workplaces in Prague and Přeřov, but also emergency dispatchers who will control traffic directly in the stations.

Správa řeleznic did not underestimate the information about the project. In the autumn, it launched the [etcsinfo.cz](http://etcsinfo.cz) website, which explains the principles of the system from the point of view of passengers and railway staff and provides details on the further expansion of ETCS. Those interested will also find answers to the most frequently asked questions that Správa řeleznic has noticed in connection with the project.

### **Introduction of ETCS-only operation in January 2025:**

- Āeská Třebová – Olomouc – Dluhonice – Prosenice/Přeřov (from 1 January 2025)
- Břeclav – Bohumín (from 8 January 2025)
- Āeská Třebová – Adamov, Modřice – Břeclav (from 15 January 2025)
- Praha-Běchovice – Pardubice – Āeská Třebová (from 22 January 2025)



### **The system will stop the train in time and increase the capacity of the lines**

ETCS is the European Train Control System. In the situation of a safety risk, it takes over the controls and slows or stops the train, for example when the driver misses a red signal. ETCS will in the future enable an increase in the capacity of the lines and allow also higher speeds on selected sections. Thanks to the single system, it will not be necessary to change locomotives at state borders, which will enable smoother international transport service.