

Structure and Organisation of the Harmonised System for Education, Qualification and Certification of Railway Track Welders

RAILSAFE 2 Arc Welding

Background

On 1 October 2008 the RAILS SAFE 2 project has started, with the purpose to develop a non-mandatory harmonised system for education, qualification and certification of railway track welders, using arc welding for joining (enclosed arc welding) and/or restoration of rails (resurfacing rails). RAILS SAFE 2 is the second phase of the RAILS SAFE project. RAILS SAFE 2 builds on the success of the first RAILS SAFE project, which covered the joining of rails by the aluminothermic welding process.

The structure and organisation of phase 2 is similar to the first one. Eventually the two structures will be merged into one.

The present report gives a description of the structure and organisation of the RAILS SAFE 2 education, qualification and certification system, which shows how the system will be operated.

The content of the education, training, examination, qualification and certification is described in the Guideline "Minimum requirements for the education, training, examination, qualification and certification of a European Arc Welder for Railway Tracks (EAWRT)", RAILS SAFE/GUIDE/RE/TWI/TJ/090218/1.

Structure and organisation

On behalf of the European Rail Organisation (to be assigned or established by the European rail welding community), the European Welding Federation (EWF) will apply special rules for RAILS SAFE Authorised National Bodies (RANBs) in each country that wish to implement the rail welder education, training, qualification and certification scheme. The railway authority would normally be expected to take the role of the RANB, but may assign another party, like the national welding institute, to act on its behalf.

The rules will require the RANB to establish a National Rail Welding Specialist Committee for this activity with representatives of the national rail industry sector. The representation on this committee would include:

- railway authorities
- rail welding contractors
- the rail welding equipment and consumable manufacturers that are active in the country concerned
- rail welder training organisations.

The National Rail Welding Specialist Committee advises the RANB on the conduct of its affairs in relation to the implementation of the RAILS SAFE education, training, qualification and certification scheme.

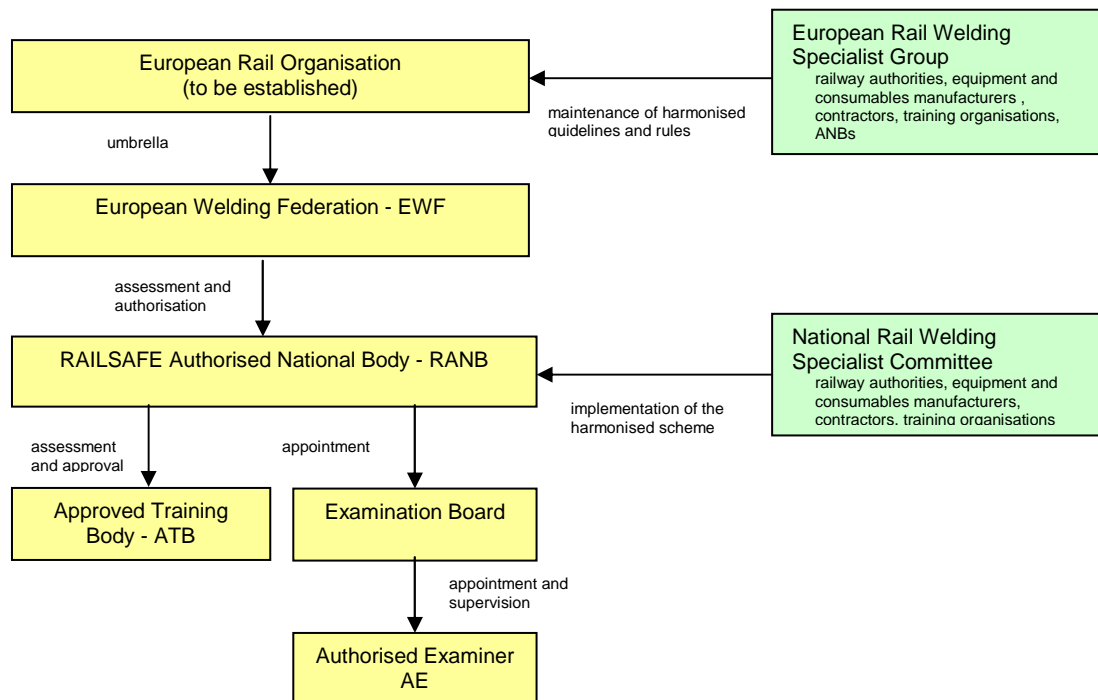


Figure 1 Overall structure and organisation of the system

A RANB assesses and approves Approved Training Bodies (ATBs) and appoints an Examination Board. The Examination Board appoints and supervises Authorised Examiners (AE).
The National Rail Welding Specialist Committee may act as the Examination Board.

A European Rail Welding Specialist Group is established on a European level to maintain the harmonised guidelines and rules. The representation on this group includes:

- railway authorities
- rail welding contractors
- rail welding equipment and consumable manufacturers
- rail welding training organisations
- RANBs.

Observations

- 1 The current standard "EN 15594 Railway applications – Track – Restoration of rails by electric arc welding" does not specify in detail the level of training or competence of welders, they mainly indicate who is responsible for doing what. The outcomes of RAILS SAFE include unified performance objectives for welders, and a guideline on education and training to achieve those objectives, thus providing a European benchmark for effective implementation of the new standards.
- 2 The general description of the Structure and organisation of the harmonised system could be part of a future standard or could be referenced in a future revision of the present standard. The curriculum Guideline for education, training, qualification and certification should be a separate document to keep it flexible.
- 3 As long as the European Rail Organisation has not been assigned or established by the European rail welding community as the "umbrella organisation", the European Welding Federation (EWF) will act as such an organisation. EWF runs the current European education, qualification and certification system for conventional welding personnel. Once the European Rail Organisation has been established, EWF will perform the organisational and administrative work on its behalf.
- 4 Although the project outcome will interfere with the complex existing systems for certification and permits to weld, which vary from country to country and contractor to contractor, the system should contain certification, because certification is a mechanism to confirm current competence of welders and is a possible basis for issuing a permit to weld. Certification is an effective way to implement the EU drive for continuing education.
- 5 Many countries in Europe do not have a nationally harmonised system for rail welder training. Therefore it is likely that differences will exist in the competence of welders within, as well as across, national boundaries. The RAILS SAFE 2 system simultaneously brings about national and European harmonisation.

European Welding Federation

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