

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 5. How can Regulations help Technical Harmonisation?

The means by which the Regulations help deliver technical harmonisation can be summarised as follows:

- A series of mandatory "Essential Requirements" to which the rail system must comply and laid down in general terms by the INTEROPERABILITY DIRECTIVES
- The trans-European rail system is divided into "subsystems" each of which has to comply with the Essential Requirements, specified for that particular subsystem.
- Common characteristics of subsystems (including interfaces) for which the Essential Requirements must be met are set out in detail in Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI's). Compliance with the TSI's is mandatory and where the TSI's specifically mandate European standards, compliance with those standards also becomes mandatory.
- However there is scope to derogate from compliance with the TSI's, or part of them, under certain circumstances.
- In certain cases an existing national technical rule may be applied instead of a TSI to give effect to the Essential Requirements, so long as it has first been notified to the European Commission and to other Member States. This arises where a TSI has yet to be published, where there are gaps in a TSI or where a derogation from a TSI has been made.
- The TSI also define "Interoperability Constituents" related to each subsystem. The Interoperability Constituents are identifiable parts which must meet the Essential Requirements when placed on the market for use within the trans-European rail network.
- Details of how constituents can meet the Essential Requirements in practice are described in European standards.