



The aim of this project is to build on the success of the first RAILS SAFE project which may be found at [www.ewf.be/railsafe](http://www.ewf.be/railsafe)

Whereas the first project covered the joining of rails by the aluminothermic welding process, this second phase will cover the use of arc welding for joining, repairing and refurbishing rails. Arc welding requires completely different skills, but the competence requirements are just as critical to the reliability of rail tracks thus a similar approach will be adopted.

As was the case for the first project the main outcomes of this work are: a European harmonised approach to training and qualification which brings the advantage of mobility and employability of welders throughout Europe, a recognisable competence benchmark through certification, structured lifelong learning, underpinning for an emerging European Standard and a support mechanism for the interoperability between national railway systems and to railway safety. This time, however, the system of certification will also be configured so that it complies with the national VET systems in Europe thereby facilitating transferability throughout Europe and, in some cases, access to public funding.

Five of the partners were also partners in the first RAILS SAFE project: the international research and technology organisation in the UK - TWI, the coordinator of the first RAILS SAFE project - Ir.J.B. van den Brug Raadgevend Ingenieur, the Netherlands railway contractor and employer of welders - VolkerRail, the Swedish Welding Commission (SWC) and the European Welding Federation (EWF). A new partner is the National R&D Institute for Welding and Material Testing in Timisoara, Romania.

Together the partners have the necessary expertise and networks to deliver the project objectives. The project will unify a variety of different national approaches to training of railway track welders thereby allowing mobility of welders throughout Europe. A further benefit of the project will be to enable skilled welders from sectors which are in decline to undergo supplementary training in order to transfer into the growing rail sector.

The tangible outcome will be a Guideline for training, qualification and certification, and rules for its implementation, following the same approach as in the first project. The system and its implementation will be tested by pilot courses. The outputs will be disseminated for use by the rail industry in Europe through the partners and the contacts they established during the first project.

The project began in October 2008 and will run for two years.

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