















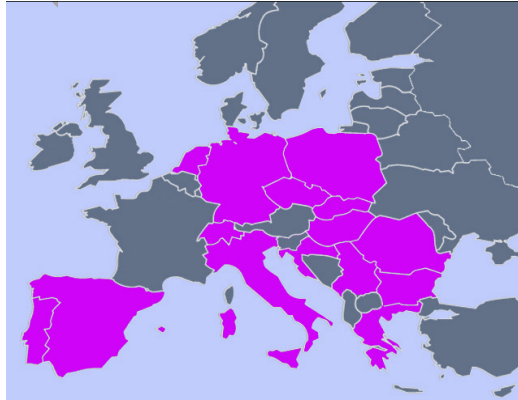




Autonomous Train Drivers' Unions of Europe

The Autonomous Train Drivers' Unions of Europe, (*Autonome Lokomotivführer-Gewerkschaften Europas - ALE*) is a confederation of 16 European train drivers' unions.

	Italy	FAST Ferrovie	Federazione Autonoma die Sindacati die Trasporti
	Romania	FML	Federatia Mecanicilor de Locomotiva din România
	Czech Republic	FS CR	Federace Strojvudcu Ceske Republiky
	Slovakia	FS SR	Federacia Strojvodcov Slovenskej Republiky
	Germany	GDL	Gewerkschaft Deutscher Lokomotivführer
	Hungary	MOSZ	Mozdonyvezetök Szakszervezete
	Serbia	NSSMS	Nezavisni Strukovni Sindikat Mašinovođa Srbije
	Greece	P.E.P.E.	Panelinia. Enossi. Prosopikou. Elxis
	Belgium	SACT	Syndicat Autonome des Conducteurs de Train
	Spain	SEMAF	Sindicato Español de Maquinistas y Ayudantes Ferrovianos
	Portugal	SMAQ	Sindicato Nacional dos Maquinistas dos Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses
	Croatia	SSH	Sindikrat Strojovoda Hrvatske Railroad Engineer Trade Union of Croatia
	Bulgaria	ULDB	Union of Locomotive Drivers in Bulgaria
	Switzerland	VSLF	Verband Schweizer Lokomotivführer und Anwarter
	The Nether- lands	VVMC	Vakbond Voor Rijgend Personeel
	Poland	ZZM	Zwiazek Zawodowy Maszynistow Kolejowych W Polsce



The Executive Officers of the Board of Management of ALE are:

Manfred Schell	President	(GDL - Germany)
Juan Jesús Garcia Fraile	Vice President	(SEMAF - Spain)
Leszek Mietek	Vice President	(ZZM - Poland)

The Board of Management of ALE is composed of the Executive Officers, the other Presidents of all constituent member unions of ALE that are not already represented among the executive officers, and the Treasurer.

The chief organ of ALE is the ALE Congress which is generally held every four years.

ALE's Central Office is located at the offices of whichever individual union currently provides its President.

ALE's constituent member unions are responsible for organising some 108,000 train drivers and others employed as on-board railway staff in Europe. ALE is a professional organisation which represents their specific interests throughout European railways.

Rail traffic has been in upheaval for 15 years. The European Commission is pressing for co-ordinated development of the railways in order to create a common, integrated European rail market. It lays down the following conditions for the step-by-step introduction of competitive structures in the European rail system:

- Railways are to be managed like business concerns.
- Legal, technical, bureaucratic obstacles are to be removed so that uniform standards can be created, such as:
 - setting up of a European Railways Agency in 2004
 - standardisation of the licensing procedures for railway companies and rolling stock so as to limit the number of changes of locomotive at border stations.
 - introduction of uniform signalling and safety systems.
- Access to the networks will be made available to all providers without discrimination and from 2007 onwards will be completely open for freight traffic;

- it is expected that networks will be open for passenger traffic as from 2010.
- Billions are to be put into the creation of a Trans-European Traffic Network (TEN)
- A standardised European "Driver's Licence" for engine drivers is on its way.

Reform and deregulation are being pursued at different rates and in different ways by different European railway networks. But even countries that do not yet belong to the EU are bringing their railways into line with the standards established in Brussels. The phases of internal re-structuring of the railways all bring with them economic and social tensions. The increase in cross-border traffic also presents new challenges. ALE, like all other trades unions, sees itself as having a duty to help shape the re-structuring and privatisation of the railways in ways that are socially acceptable as far as the railway employees are concerned. The main aim, which should not be lost sight of in the process, is to get more traffic onto the railways, and thus create more jobs on the European railways in the medium and long term. With the employment of staff across national boundaries, ALE hopes to protect European rail employees from being squeezed out by the competition, to protect their salaries in the competitive market and protect against social dumping, all of which could occur, for example, as a result of the exploitation of wage differentials, a failure to adhere to training guidelines or a desire for profits above all else.

Aims of ALE

Why ALE exists

ALE's aim is to bring together all autonomous and democratically organised trade unions for train-drivers in Europe. Their profession unites them across borders and across language barriers. International meetings of drivers are therefore of tremendous value as is the exchange of information on rail traffic and on professional and socio-political issues.

Policies on professional issues

For employers and their agents throughout Europe, as well as for the policy makers, ALE sets out to be a source of expert information and a reliable partner in shaping policy at EU level on professional, work-related and socio-political issues. In order to be able to represent the professional and socio-political interests of European train drivers effectively, ALE made formal application, in 2005, to join the sectoral social dialogue committee for the railways, under the aegis of the EU Commission - Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In this, ALE has the support of the umbrella organisation for independent trades unions (CESI). Initial contacts have been established with the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF). Work is currently in progress on a co-operation agreement on the employees' side, a process which requires time to build up trust.

ALE is concerned to ensure that the people driving trains across Europe are highly qualified. This will maintain the high standards of safety on the railways and is in the interests of both passengers and goods. Art.17 of the Regulation (EC) No. 881/2004 which established the European Railway Agency, provides for the Railway Agency to

make recommendations for the specification of common, uniform criteria for the professional competences and assessment of operating and maintenance staff on the railway system. In doing so they should concern themselves first and foremost with train drivers and instructors. In order to establish these recommendations, the Agency proposes to create an additional working group in the near future and to include ALE. Currently there are four colleagues working on behalf of ALE in three working groups of the European Railway Agency (ERA). The groups are concerned with specifications for the interoperability of traction units and locomotives, for working out safety targets as well as the harmonisation of standards for improvement works.

ALE is pushing for the harmonisation of standards for social, working and legal conditions throughout Europe. Train drivers must earn an adequate living in their home country and not be squeezed out of their national work places by colleagues from other countries which have lower levels of pay. This leads to urgent demands on the part of ALE for a medium to long-term standardisation of salary and wage levels throughout Europe. With regard to the process of integration within the EU, the constituent member trades unions of ALE consider the harmonisation of social, economic and legal conditions of employees throughout Europe to be a matter of urgent necessity.

ALE has taken a step towards the prevention of wage and social dumping in cross-border traffic, by concluding a 'Memorandum of Understanding' in November 2006 with the rail4chem company and other partners in the European Bulls Alliance. The participants will, together, seek to ensure that on-board staff employed on international routes are equitably and appropriately rewarded, that their responsibilities will be commensurate with their initial and further training, that they will be afforded adequate protection against inability to work and incapacity and that support will be given to enable people to combine a career and a family life. A new provision is that train drivers who are employed on international routes will be paid for stretches in a foreign country at the same rate as their colleagues in that country. If the level of their own pay is higher than that of the country in which they are driving, they will keep their own level of pay.

Rail and traffic policy

Of prime importance for ALE is ensuring that the step-by-step extension and deregulation of the railway networks does not occur to the detriment of the train drivers and other on-board railway staff. The EU sees deregulation as a panacea for the railways. They extrapolate to the railways from experiences in air and road travel. ALE is not saying no, in principle, to deregulation and competition, but both must be instituted in a controlled fashion. ALE has always and consistently requested a reduction in the rate of deregulation or its temporary suspension, in favour of taking the first steps towards standardisation and harmonisation of the conditions of competition between various carriers. The decision in favour of the railway system and an increase in the volume of European traffic to be carried by rail is a political one. If one wants to achieve that goal, then the conditions for it will, however, have to be created.

In principle, ALE sees the opening up of the European network for freight and passenger traffic as the right path to take in order to breathe new life into the railways and to encourage rail traffic throughout Europe.

At the same time ALE is working hard towards a resolution of the concomitant problems. Their concerns are as follows:

- Harmonisation of the conditions of competition between carriers
- Standardisation of the different regulations on working hours, particularly in respect of shift and night work.
- Ensuring and monitoring adherence to rules for working hours in cross-border traffic.
- Professional requirements for becoming a train driver.
- Securing comparable standards for initial and further training.

Strategy

ALE's aim is to exert an influence, both directly and via our European and national trades-union structures, on the nature and standardisation of the economic and working conditions of our members.

Membership

All autonomous and democratically organised European trades unions and professional organisations whose task it is to represent individual or specific professions of railway staff are eligible to become members of ALE.

Formation

ALE was founded in 1989 in Rome by representatives of four train drivers' unions from

- Germany (represented by Karl Klein, Manfred Schell)
- Italy (represented by Giuseppe Minutoli)
- The Netherlands (represented by Jan Altena) and
- Switzerland (represented by Fritz Schneider)

Pay bargaining

As an umbrella organisation, ALE has no negotiation rights on salaries and wages. Individual ALE members, on the other hand, do have such rights at national levels. They negotiate with the railways, conclude pay deals and exercise all permissible legal rights within the statutory framework applicable to their own situation, including the right to strike action.