

A Eurorunner Certificated For The Czech Republic!

On 15 June 2007 the Czech rail authority, DÚ, announced that ER20 type/ÖBB's Class 2016 Eurorunners now have permission to operate anywhere on the national network, subject to a couple of conditions. One is that although it is permitted for the locomotives to run at up to 100 km/h without being fitted with the Czech driver's vigilance system, for main line operation they must be equipped with GSM-R. The other ruling concerns the 1,000 V 50 Hz train heating system. This can only be used when the locomotives are running on lines electrified at 25 kV 50 Hz. On all other electrified lines its use is prohibited on account of the electromagnetic current disturbance problem.

Siemens was keen to see the certification process completed in time for Czech Raildays 2007, and in the final stages the involvement of Czech open access operator Railtrans proved extremely useful. The latter managed to

secure a one-off approval for use of a *Eurorunner on an IGE Bahntouristik charter excursion on 7 June 2007 from Nürnberg to Praha and back, for which ER20-013, on hire to IGE from Mitsui Dispolok, was chosen. The train, which operated under Railtrans's licence within the Czech Republic, is seen here only minutes from its destination, crossing the Vltava with Praha castle dominating the view in the background.* The locomotive made history not only by being the first Eurorunner to haul a train further into the Czech Republic than a border station, but also by being the first locomotive of the latest generation of designs to do so. The weather was warm, so there was no need for the train heating.

Although dragging a „dead“ locomotive is not comparable with hauling a train full of fare-paying passengers, it ought to be recalled that in August 2006 ÖBB's 2016 007 became the first Eurorunner to venture beyond a Czech border station under its own power, when it hauled 1216 226 to the Cerhenice test circuits (see R 5/06, p. 30). In connection with Czech Raildays 2007 ER20-013 enjoyed its new rights when on the night and morning of 18 June it hauled ÖBB's 1216 050 from Děčín to Ostrava, the original plan having been for the locomotives to be moved „dead“ in scheduled freights through the Czech Republic.

