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Laser monitoring to be integral to new EU rail monitoring project

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Doug Cashman

A new project is set to be carried out on Europe's railway network, that will co-ordinate the use of modern technology – including laser monitoring equipment – in a modern maintenance framework.

The Optirail project was presented at the Malaga Rail Technology Centre in Spain at the end of last month, and is being co-financed by the European Union's VII Framework Programme.

The aim of the project is to create an advanced management programme for railway maintenance that will rely heavily on advanced computational intelligence techniques. The result will allow for better cross-border coordination for decision making of railway infrastructure maintenance.

The project is being led by Spanish rail companies, Adif and Vias y Construcciones S.A., which have already collaborated on several research projects concerning siding repairs by laser, computational intelligence and image analysis techniques for tunnel excavation and track monitoring and examination through laser sensors.

It also involved input from researchers and technologists from a range of leading institutions and private organisations in Western Europe, including the University of Granada and Cartif in Spain, Mer Mec Spa in Italy, Evoleo Technologies in Portugal, Ostfalia University in Germany, Luleå University of Technology in Sweden and Stifesen and Sintef in Norway.

The project has a budget of nearly €4 million, some €2.7 million of which is coming from the European Union.



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