

# **Boosting International Rail Freight**

**Sector Statement on Rail Freight Corridors**

Brussels, 20 May 2016

# **Sector Statement on Rail Freight Corridors: “Boosting International Rail Freight”**

20 May 2016 - final

## **General**

The Rail Freight Corridors commit to act as service providers for the European economy, and to offer solutions for efficient and environmentally-friendly logistics across Europe. In accordance with Regulation 913/2010 establishing the corridors, the first six rail freight corridors were established in November 2013, followed by the remaining three in November 2015. All nine rail freight corridors are now operational<sup>1</sup>. The focus of the work on corridors today has evolved from the initial phase of setting-up the corridors to identifying and executing important measures needed to improve the operational performance of its customers.

The Rail Freight Corridors commit to fulfil their intended role of increasing international rail freight’s competitiveness, unlocking the huge growth potential for longer distance freight and promoting rail’s key role in a sustainable transport system. The improved marketability of the corridors is key to maintaining and winning over end-customers to the rail solution. The Rail Freight Corridors seek to improve the coordination between the 1435 mm network and the wider gauge networks for seamless European rail freight transport.

In the statement below, the rail sector associations<sup>2</sup> and their members (representing the interests of the shippers, freight forwarders, rail freight operators (RUs), intermodal operators, intermodal terminals, infrastructure managers (IMs), allocation bodies, rail freight corridors (RFCs), and rail equipment suppliers commit themselves to the aim of enhancing the competitiveness of the Rail Freight Corridors, and to improving the quality, reliability and efficiency of transporting goods across Europe.

## **Specific**

### **A. Making rail freight a more attractive option**

In order to become an attractive option for shippers, all actors in the rail freight logistics chain commit to increase cooperation with the aims of reducing the response time to planning requests, providing the necessary flexibility needed by shippers in a volatile and fluctuating market, reducing transit times and disruptions, improving reliability by keeping delays at a minimum, and providing tracking ability for shippers to enable up-to-date access and reliable information on the status of their goods. The corridors aim to provide solid confidence to customers through the availability of a market-orientated rail infrastructure, reliability, and cost-effectiveness along the whole corridor. Adequate performance indicators communicate the progress of the corridors and help to steer the needed improvement. In this regard the corridors commit to promoting the compatibility of performance schemes along the corridors.

1. The corridors will continue providing and improving an adequate, generic and comparable set of key performance indicators (KPIs) on the quality of service at regular intervals, and in consultation with the stakeholders<sup>3</sup>. The corridors commit to communicating these performance indicators transparently along the corridors to the customers and the public, as they are essential for marketing the performance of rail

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<sup>1</sup> Although all nine rail freight corridors have been established and are operational, they will continue to evolve.

<sup>2</sup> CER, CLECAT, EIM, ERFA, ERTMS Users Group, ESC, RFCs, RNE, UIP, UIRR, and UNIFE

<sup>3</sup> Taking into consideration existing work on KPIs in the rail sector, such as the PRIME KPI Subgroup and the RU Dialogue Subgroup on International Freight Transport.

freight to the customers.

2. In order to improve operational efficiency of the logistics chain, the sector representatives commit themselves to implementing the TAF TSI functions according to the Masterplan and working toward a common ICT architecture wherever possible. IMs will integrate international traffic management information (e.g. via TIS) with national systems. Under the protection of confidentiality clauses, IMs and RUs agree to make information on estimated time of arrival available (for handover points and final destination) to their contract partners, including terminals and intermodal operators for optimizing the use of resources such as rolling stock and terminal capacity, and to provide freight forwarders and shippers with up-to-date information about the status of their freight and an estimated time of arrival.
3. IMs, terminals and RUs, authorised applicants, and shippers fully commit to strengthening the dialogue and cooperation within the advisory groups, of Railway Undertakings (RAGs) and Terminal Owners/Managers (TAGs), in the governance structure of the rail freight corridors and to ensure that their opinions are taken into account in decisions of the Management Board<sup>4</sup>. To support this development, the following measures are proposed:
  - The Management Boards and customers would welcome for the Executive Boards to provide a slot for RAG/TAG Speakers at the Executive Board meetings, as is already common practice in some RFCs.
  - Coordination of targets and performance expectations of the different stakeholders should take place at an annual RFC strategy meeting of the individual corridors, involving the Executive Board, the Management Board, the RAG and TAG, the railway customers and the European Commission. The annual strategy meeting will help improving the dialogue and cooperation between the different actors part of the Corridor's process.
  - An annual meeting of all RAGs, TAGs and other railway customers (shippers, freight forwarders, and intermodal operators) together with all RFCs is proposed in order to enhance the operational efficiency of the logistic chain and concentrate on strategic developments and performance expectations related to the rail freight corridors. These meetings will, *inter alia*, focus on new products, on performance of the corridors, potential solutions to help increase this performance, and on areas where new facilities and/or more capacity would be needed. Combining this meeting with the Rail Freight Days could be convenient.
  - The support of the Executive Boards, NSAs and RBs is essential for removing technical and regulatory barriers and to achieve harmonisation.
4. Given that the routes of RFCs and Core Network Corridors (CNCs) do not overlap entirely, and considering the multimodal scope of TEN-T Corridors, the railway sector welcomes the cooperation model between the TEN-T corridors and the RFCs as proposed by the European Commission. IMs are committed to support making the cooperation model operational. The sector proposes that TEN-T corridors should publish the KPIs of RFCs as defined by RNE and identify projects related to RFCs in their workplans. These KPIs will also be presented at the annual RFC strategy meeting involving all stakeholders from all nine corridors and at the respective RFC stakeholders meetings for each corridor.
5. The railway sector acknowledges that transport noise is an important issue, and is committed to effectively reducing rail noise in the coming years. In line with Member States' decisions and corresponding compensations, some IMs apply NDTAC systems with the aim of increasing the share of "silent" wagons. The objective of noise reduction must, however, be reconciled with maintaining the competitiveness of the railways.

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<sup>4</sup> Provided that the role and responsibilities of the Management Boards are carefully safeguarded

Different national approaches threaten to lead to the imposition of traffic restrictions or vehicle bans. Considering that transport noise has an impact which varies considerably among the Member States, the railway sector appeals to national and EU policy makers to urgently develop a European solution to transport noise reduction, comprising all modes of transport and taking into account national specificities. Wagon owners and keepers commit themselves to annual fleet surveys to report on progress for retrofitting for noise.

## **B. Enhancing operational efficiency**

6. RAGs will compile and annually update a single list of important operational issues to be resolved for improving international rail freight. The list for 2016/2017 includes the most urgent operational issues to be addressed in the short-term (1-year):
  - ETCS: serious funding scheme for retrofitting, trackside - onboard pan-European compatibility, specification freeze, strong centralized EC and ERA steering for a coordinated European deployment
  - Short distance cross-border interoperability: safety certification, locomotive authorisation, drivers certification, rules for languages
  - Coordination of path and infrastructure works and planned temporary capacity restrictions: systematic consultation of RUs from the beginning
  - Guaranteeing that the funding by Ministries of Transport to IMs for infrastructure maintenance and construction works impacting international rail freight traffic is coordinated with the corridors 24 months before the timetable change, not only for multi-annual planning but also for short-term measures of operational significance<sup>5</sup>.

This list will be proposed to the RFCs in order to support their action plan. In response, the sector, and in particular IMs in Management Boards, Ministries in Executive Boards and National Safety Agencies, are asked to define appropriate actions to be coordinated by the network of Executive Boards of the RFCs for assuring a harmonised approach across all RFCs with the aim of creating an integrated European network for competitive freight. Likewise, the European Commission and ERA are expected to support these actions as appropriate. The annual RFC strategy meeting of the single corridors will support the coordination of these priority issues. To realise these actions, financial support from national governments and the European Commission may be needed. This could include TEN-T programme support from the Connecting Europe Facility.

7. The sector commits to identifying, regular updating and publishing the main infrastructure bottlenecks on their respective corridors in order to propose solutions for resolving them and to share this information with the TEN-T co-ordinator. Furthermore, the Management Boards agree to include the TEN-T technical requirements in their implementation plans. These commitments are conditional on the financial commitment of Member States, and should be accompanied by enhanced CEF funding.
8. Each RFC will publish a transparent and coherent overview of ERTMS deployment at corridor level based on the new European Deployment Plan and on the respective National Deployment Plans, and will follow and advise on the implementation. This overview of ERTMS deployment should be complementary to and coordinated with the work carried out by the ERTMS' Coordinator. Likewise, a study will be proposed to be carried out at corridor level, with the proactive involvement of the RAGs, assessing the impact of ERTMS deployment on RUs. IMs, together with the transport ministries and NSAs who are responsible for the ERTMS deployment on their infrastructure network,

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<sup>5</sup> Maintenance and construction works on a corridor may also be a national matter, as part of the normal business of maintaining and updating the domestic network.

are asked to commit themselves to fully accepting vehicles compliant with the TSI CCS (ERTMS baseline 3R2) on the RFCs and according to the notified National Technical Rules. In order to reduce the cost of ERTMS deployment, a common procurement specification should be developed, while RUs shall explore solutions involving economies of scale, such as jointly placing orders for on board units.

9. In order to improve the harmonisation of operational procedures on RFCs, IMs and Management Boards of RFCs commit themselves to fully implement the adopted RNE Guidelines. Among others, this will include coordination of works, performance management, and KPIs. RNE will monitor the implementation progress of the RNE Guidelines through the relevant KPIs. A proposed network of Executive Boards of the RFCs will support the Management Boards in overcoming barriers to implementation, in particular in case of regulatory aspects (including possible legal incompatibilities).

### **C. Ensuring adequate capacity for all users**

10. IMs will continue optimising the C-OSS and the offer made by the RFCs via the C-OSS, taking into account their customers' needs. They commit to strengthening the role of the C-OSS in international freight. In the medium term, the aim is to allocate, coordinate or support the majority of the entire international rail freight market along the corridors and connecting lines via the C-OSS. This entails continued improvement in procedures and IT tools at IM and RU level. In close cooperation with their customers, IMs will continue innovating their product offer and explore the possibility of extending the C-OSS to include pre- and after-allocation services.
11. The railway sector will present a proposal for a time-table redesign to the European Commission foreseen by mid-2016, with the aim to have it implemented within 5-10 years, depending on regulatory measures. The main aim is to enable more flexible planning of rail freight capacities and increase its quality.
12. IMs and the Management Boards of RFCs are committed to further harmonisation over time, respecting the principle of unanimity among its members. This should lead to a simplification of the day to day operations of clients. This harmonisation should focus, *inter alia*, on the transport market study, capacity products and the allocation process, the coordination of planned temporary capacity restrictions, all RNE guidelines, and the all-encompassing Corridor Information Document, serving as the instructions of use for the RFCs, and a geographical information system (GIS).

The rail sector associations wish to report on the results of the actions agreed in this statement regularly (for example annually at the Rail Freight Days, and at the margin of the TEN-T Days).

Signatories by

Sector associations / supported by the RFC's chairs of the Management Boards