



Rail Freight Corridor  
North Sea – Baltic



## ANNUAL **REPORT** 2016



**Co-financed by the European Union**  
Connecting Europe Facility

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## List of Abbreviations

AB – Allocation Body  
AG – Advisory Group  
CEF – Connecting Europe Facility  
CER – Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies  
CID – Corridor Information Document  
CIP – Customer Information Platform  
CNC – Core Network Corridor  
C-OSS – Corridor One-Stop-Shop  
EC – European Commission  
ECCO – Efficient Cross Corridor Organization  
EEIG – European Economic Interest Grouping  
EIM – European Rail Infrastructure Managers  
EU – European Union  
ExBo – Executive Board  
GA – General Assembly  
IM – Infrastructure Manager  
INEA – Innovation and Networks Executive Agency  
IP – Implementation Plan  
KPI – Key Performance Indicator  
MB – Management Board  
OSJD – Organization for Cooperation between Railways  
PaP – Pre-arranged Path  
PCS – Path Coordination System  
PIM – Project Implementation Manager  
PMO – Project Management Office  
RAG – Railway undertaking Advisory Group  
RC – Reserve Capacity  
RFC – Rail Freight Corridor  
RNE – Rail Net Europe  
RU – Railway Undertaking  
SERAC – Single European Railway Area Committee  
TAG – Terminal Advisory Group  
TCCCom –Traffic Control Centres Communication  
TEN-T – Trans-European Networks – Transport  
TIS – Train Information System  
TMS – Transport Market Study  
TT – Time Table  
UIC – International Union of Railways  
UIRR – International Union for Road- Rail Combined Transport  
WG – Working Group

## Foreword

*Dear Reader,*

*2016 was an important year for North Sea - Baltic Rail Freight Corridor, as it was the first complete year of its operations, following its launching on 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 along with two other RFCs in compliance with European requirements. A launching event was organized in Vienna on 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2016, where more than two hundred delegates from European Commission, ministries, corridor organizations and customers could learn about importance of the international rail freight to the European economy.*

*RFC NS-B belongs to the European rail network for competitive freight composed of nine rail freight corridors working together to achieve the targets of RFC concept and to contribute to the long term vision of the creation of a Single European Rail Area. 2016 was the year which proved to be important in continuous effort of reaching harmonization in procedures and processes governing capacity allocation and operations for the entire network of RFCs.*

*During the TEN-T Days in Rotterdam two important documents for rail freight sector were officially published: Sector Statement on Rail Freight Corridors: “Boosting International Rail Freight” and Ministerial Declaration on “Rail Freight Corridors to boost international rail freight”. In response the Sector Action List was composed with an extensive description of actions structured in distinct activities conveying the project approach envisaged by the Sector.*

*In 2015 the Management Board representing Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body decided to take the form of an European Economic Interest Grouping. On 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 a legal entity of EEIG was successfully registered in the Polish National Court Register with the seat in Warsaw. We hope that the new legal entity will ease the facilitation of the obligations resulting from implementation of the RFC NS-B.*

*We would like to thank all Rail Freight Corridors’ stakeholders for their continued support in the course of the project implementation and change efforts that have been made to establish a new legal body of EEIG during the past year. We would like to seize this opportunity to express our gratitude to Executive Board Members for their efforts taken for the corridor development which are described by Executive Board in chapter 1.1 of the report. We are also grateful for the contributions of our Board members towards effective governance of the Corridor and all project management office staff for their continued commitment and hard work.*



Oliver Sellnick  
Chairman of the Management Board



Weronika Karbowski  
Managing Director of the Office



## Introduction

This document presents an annual report of the first year of operation of the RFC North Sea - Baltic for calendar year of 2016. The report provides Corridor stakeholders with general information on activities relevant to the Corridor in the past year.



Photo: Archive SŽDC.

The Corridor includes more than 6000 km of railway lines and connects the most important North Sea ports with Central Europe and the Baltic States providing a rail bridge between eastern and western Europe. RFC North Sea – Baltic currently runs through 6 EU Member States: starting in the North Sea ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven and Hamburg spreading in central Germany through Aachen, Hannover, Berlin to Warsaw, Terespol and Kaunas with a branch from Falkenberg to Prague and Katowice. It is intended to gradually extend Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic by 2020 to Estonia, Latvia and towards Polish – Ukrainian border. In 2016 Ministries of Transport decided to modify the Corridor routing to reflect demand from freight shippers. This implied changes in the RFC NS-B infrastructure characteristics and current description of RFC NS-B in numbers is as follows:

- 3573 km of principal lines,
- 1893 km of diversionary lines,
- 580 km of connecting lines,
- 171 terminals,
- 6 sea ports: (Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Hamburg).

For more detailed information on the Corridor's routing and its development please consult our website (<http://www.rfc-northsea-baltic.eu>).

## 1. Governance

The governance structure of RFC NS-B is divided into following levels: the Executive Board, the Management Board and the Advisory Groups.

Executive Board consists of representatives of Ministries of Transport of the cooperating Countries and is responsible for defining the general objectives of the freight Corridor.

Management Board consists of representatives of cooperating Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body and serves as the decision-making body of the Corridor. In 2016 the Management Board (MB) took the legal form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG).

Advisory Groups consist of Railway Undertakings and Terminal owners/operators and issue opinions on any proposal by the Management Board which has direct consequences to them or issue own-initiative opinions, which shall be taken into account by Management Board.

The governance structure of the Corridor is illustrated by below organigram.



### 1.1 Executive Board

The Executive Board of RFC North Sea-Baltic, as referred to in Article 8 of the Regulation, has been established on 20th of March 2012 by the Mission Statement. Its existence has been recognized by the signatory Ministers of the Agreement concerning the Executive Board of RFC North Sea-Baltic of 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2014, signed on the margin of the European Transport Council held in Luxembourg.

The Executive Board makes its decisions based on mutual consent of the representatives of the authorities of the Member States. The Executive Board makes decisions which are provided for by the Regulation. These decisions are legally binding and directly applicable. They are signed by all members of the Executive Board and shall be published.

The Executive Board is composed of the following representatives of authorities of the Member States concerned:

- Valérie VERZELE, for the Minister for Mobility of the Kingdom of Belgium;
- Jindřich KUŠNÍR, for the Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic;
- Wolfgang KÜPPER, for the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- Saulius GIRDAUSKAS, for the Ministry of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Lithuania;

- Hellen VAN DONGEN, for the State Secretary of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- Mateusz URASIŃSKI for the Minister of Infrastructure and Construction of the Republic of Poland.

The abovementioned members can be represented by their alternates or by proxies.

In 2016, the Executive Board was chaired by the Czech Republic.

Meetings in 2016:

- January, Brussels (BE);
- March, Bremen (DE), RAG/TAG;
- July, Vilnius (LT);
- September, Prague (CZ), RAG/TAG;
- December, Rotterdam (NL).

The general responsibility of the Executive Board is to monitor the implementation of the Regulation.

The key activities in 2016 were as follows:

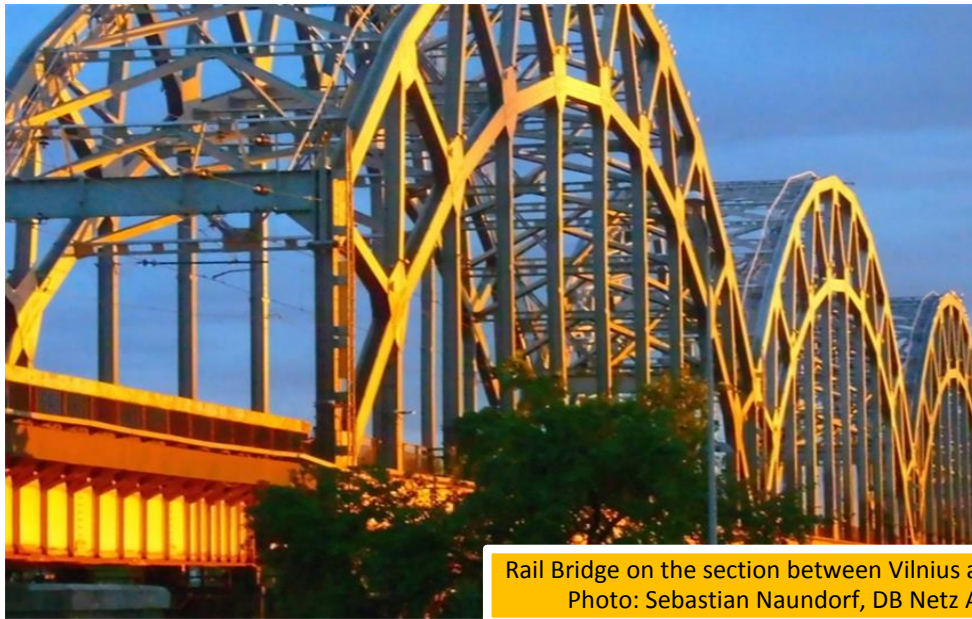
- Approval of the final version of the single harmonized FCA text for all RFCs;
- Adoption of a Ministerial Declaration and a Sector Statement as an output of TEN-T Days 2016 in Rotterdam;
- Preparing extension to the Medyka on Polish/Ukrainian border;
- Discussion of a possible revision of Directive 913/2010;
- Adoption of the Decision of the Executive Board approving modifications in the Implementation Plan for TT 2018;
- Adoption of a Framework for Capacity Allocation for TT 2018;
- New cooperation model with RAG/TAG;
- Attempts to involve representatives of Estonia and Latvia.

### **1.1.1 Extension and change of routing of RFC North Sea - Baltic**

Decision of the Executive Board approving modifications in the Implementation Plan for TT 2018 includes two partial route changes. On German network, a revised routing comprises the Magdeburg area. Another change covers several stretches between BE/NL border in Roosendaal to NL/DE border in Bad Bentheim. Main motivation for both changes is the demand from RUs (customers frequently suggested these border crossings should be a part of the Corridor) and observation of a significant growth of volumes transported on these border-crossings.

Regarding extension to Latvia and Estonia, the necessary steps were approved and invitation letter prepared. Nevertheless, no final decision on concrete schedule of corridor extension northwards from Lithuania, has been taken. In any case, the process mostly depends on next steps undertaken by the both countries. This extension is part of the Regulation, and this should be taken into account.





Rail Bridge on the section between Vilnius and Riga.  
Photo: Sebastian Naundorf, DB Netz AG.

Concerning the intended extension to Medyka on the Polish/Ukrainian border, it was agreed to prepare a new letter to the EC describing the issue and schedule of modernization works on the line section between Katowice and the border. Also the potential extension to Kiev was discussed, but this is rather a long term matter.

### **1.1.2 Ministerial decisions**

The Ministerial Declaration Rail Freight Corridors to boost international rail freight and Sector Statement Boosting International Rail Freight agreed during TEN-T Days in Rotterdam is a good base for defining specific priorities for every single RFC, so called action programmes/plans (AP). They express the political will to boost the RFC role and thus can be used for further work, especially by finding the most critical issues.

One of the issues discussed in 2016 was the new legislation regarding rules in cross-border operation. The new legislation includes Annex point 8 of Annex VI to the directive 2007/59/EC “Train Driver Directive”. This will give a right to RUs to request IMs for a derogation from language level B1 for a specific cross border operation. For these reasons, the summary of the national implementation of this legislation for all involved countries was prepared. Relevant findings will be discussed within next RAG/TAG meetings.

The Executive Board also discussed potential features for a revised Regulation (EU) 913/2010, as envisaged by the European Commission and the upgrade of the route map for the Regulation (EU) 913/2010 is part of these considerations.

The effort to ease the cross-border traffic through the Małaszewicze border station was made. This is important from a point of view of Euro-Asian Landbridge development. In this context establishing the contacts with OSJD representative seems to be important.

During 2016 the Executive Board also considered involvement in ETA project (Estimated Time of Arrival) which considers the aspects of inter alia the exchange of real time train movement data between infrastructure managers, railway undertakings and terminals and harbors. An overall aim of the project is to improve marketability of rail freight and productivity of involved resources through by sharing of train tracking information with partners involved in a train run via Train Information System. Pilot project is supported by MoTs, EC, RFCs, IMs, RUs, RNE, terminal operators and other contractors.

### 1.1.3 Framework for capacity allocation

Based on previous agreement, a single harmonised FCA text for all RFCs has been prepared within a working group with members from ExBo of all corridors (network of ExBo's). The FCA according to this harmonised text will be valid for the first time for TT 2018. The FCA respects existing experiences from capacity allocation and aims to make capacity offer allocated through C-OSS more attractive. Two main changes were included in the new FCA. First, reduction of the period for a first response of C-OSS to reserve capacity request according to article 10 column 4 of the FCA thanks to changing of the respective period in working days into calendar days. Second, in a description of the priority rule in Annex 1, the term “in one dossier” was changed to “in one request” in order not to penalise these requests with two or more dossiers by applying the priority rule. Other changes for next TT will be discussed within the working group mentioned above.



Betuweline, dedicated freight line.  
Photo: Stefan Verkerk, ProRail.

## 1.2 Management Board

In 2016 the Management Board chaired by Mr. Oliver Sellnick from DB Netz AG met 11 times. The activities of the Management Board performed in 2016 are further described in chapters 2-5.

The following persons as the Members of the Management Board of RFC NS-B are representing the Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body on the Corridor:

GUUS  
DE MOL



**ProRail**

MICHEL  
GEUBELLE



**INFRABEL**  
*Right On Track*

OLIVER  
SELLNICK



**DB NETZE**

RADEK  
ČECH



**SZDC**  
*Spółdzielnia Żelazniczeli*

MAARTEN  
GUTT



**PKP POLSKIE LINIE KOLEJOWE S.A.**

DONATAS  
KALVAITIS



**LIETUVOS GELEŽINKELIAI**

GIEDRĖ  
IVINSKIENĖ



**VALSTYBINĖ GELEŽINKELIO INSPEKCIJA  
PRIE SUSISIEKIMO MINISTERIJOS**

The Management Board is supported by Project Implementation Managers, the RFC Office with its permanent staff and Managing Director. In November 2016 Weronika Karbowski replaced Jakub Kapturzak at the position of Managing Director.

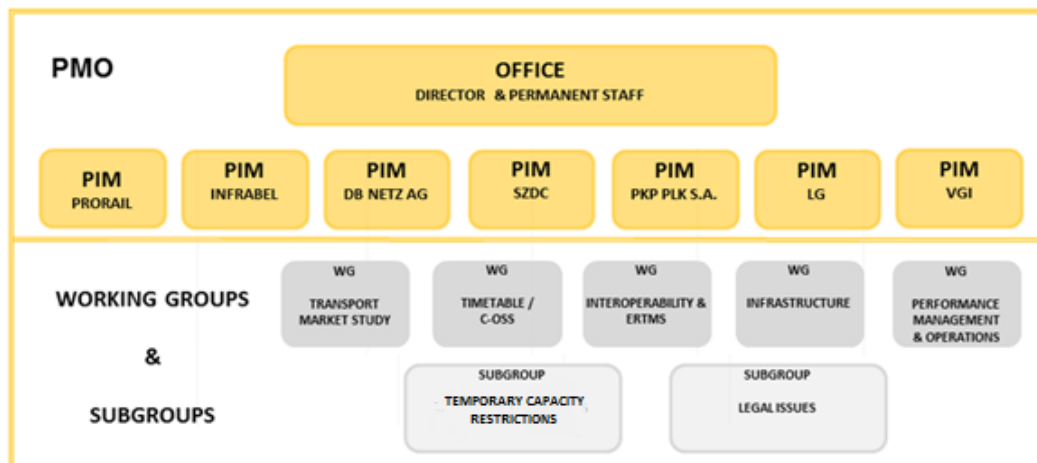


**Jakub Kapturzak**  
**Managing Director**  
(until October 2016)



**Weronika Karbowski**  
**Managing Director**  
(from November 2016)

The structure of Project Management Office and of the different working groups is illustrated in the organigram below:





### 1.3 Advisory Groups

In accordance with the Regulation, two Advisory Groups (AG) continued to cooperate with Management Board:

- Railway Undertaking Advisory Group (RAG) made up of RUs interested in the use of the rail freight corridor;
- Terminal Advisory Group (TAG) made up of managers and owners of the terminals of the freight corridor including sea and inland waterway ports.

Each AG elects a spokesperson, which represents AG and acts as a contact person between MB and AG. Andreas Pietsch (Captrain Netherlands) was the RAG Spokesperson until September 2016, when Dirk Oelschläger (DB Cargo AG) was elected. Jörg Schulz (Eurogate GmbH & Co. KGaA, KG) continuous to be the TAG Spokesperson.

In 2016 two RAG/TAG meetings were organized by the Management Board: on 11<sup>th</sup> of March in Bremen and on 15<sup>th</sup> of September in Prague. Both meetings attracted in total around 40 participants.

At the first meeting in March RAG/TAG members drew attention to the issues of operations and their day-to-day business. During the discussion on development and future of the Corridor participants indicated 15 key factors, which determine increase of freight traffic in the Corridor, among others: 740 m train length, a common signaling system, average speed 70 km/h, the same operational rules (braking) and harmonized train parameters.



Marshalling yard Antwerp North.  
Photo: Johan Dehon, Infrabel.

The current capacity offer schedule of PaPs for TT 2017 and Reserve Capacity for TT 2016 along with the new version of IT tool PCS New Generation was presented by C-OSS Manager. Discussion on capacity issue concentrated on subjects related to train operations with train length of 740m.

A great interest was expressed towards availability of information on temporary capacity restrictions and their impact on freight operations. This subject was addressed with presentation on Coordination of Works and changes in timetable process by leader of the RFC NS-B Working Group TT/C-OSS.

Attention was also brought to the topic of the latest status on cross-border interoperability with a focus on language requirements for train drivers in cross-border operations. During the meeting RUs raised an issue of temporal flexibility in the border operations which in their opinion should be extended as currently the time reserved for necessary actions is too short.

The last point of the meeting presented by Managing Director of RFC NS-B concerned new RNE guidelines, which paved the way for a common set of key performance indicators for all RFCs. These guidelines are expected to tighten cooperation between RFCs.

In the second meeting a great interest was expressed towards availability of information on temporary capacity restrictions which disrupt freight operations and hugely impact capacity. It was confirmed that this subject had been recognized by IM experts and impact analysis for both types of traffic: passenger and freight were already conducted resulting in setting priority rules.

Attention was also attracted to the topic of cross-border interoperability with a focus on language requirements for train drivers in cross-border operations. RUs expressed their concerns in implementation of these requirements and asked the Corridor authorities to advocate RUs rights by honoring current bilateral agreements.

There were also two documents discussed: “Follow up to the 21 June Rotterdam Sector declaration” and “Report by the EU court of Auditors 'Rail freight in the EU: still not on the right track'”. The first document was issued during the Dutch presidency and identifies objectives and activities that are important to increase rail freight traffic. The second document conveyed a critic view of the current status on rail freight developments. RAG/TAG members were asked to reflect on these documents in order to intensify the dialogue between Advisory Groups and Corridor authorities.

In pursue of improvement of Corridor governance Management Board recommended to tighten cooperation between Advisory Groups, Management and Executive Board by inviting AG Spokespersons to their meetings. In 2016 the RAG Spokesperson took the opportunity twice to join these meetings, to deliver a presentation with concrete topics of importance for RAG members and to start a discussion on these issues.

During the first meeting with Management Board Mr. Andreas Pietsch shared his farewell remarks and recommendations on current developments on the Corridor. During the second joint meeting of the Boards Mr. Dirk Oelschläger concentrated on three topics: harmonization of braking sheets, information requirements beyond TAF TSI, suggestion for a communication process regarding cross-border agreements. These topics will be further discussed in 2017.

In 2016 two RAG/TAG meetings for all RFCs took place where main subjects discussed concerned the cooperation between the RFCs and the RAGs, cross-border information, collection of needs, Code of Conduct, Time Table Redesign (TTR), follow-up Rotterdam Sector declaration, commonly used RFC KPIs, User Satisfaction Survey (USS) and European wide transport flows analysis.



## 2. Main activities

### 2.1 Corridor One-Stop-Shop and Corridor Offer

Corridor One-Stop-Shop (C-OSS) facilitates train path management for international rail freight along the RFC NS-B. It serves as a single contact point allowing to request and to receive answers regarding infrastructure capacity for international freight trains along the Corridor.

In 2016 Mr. Florian Müller continued to act as the RFC NS-B C-OSS Manager.



**Florian Müller**  
**C-OSS Manager**

In order to put the Corridor, its products and C-OSS in the spotlight and to improve C-OSS products, the C-OSS Manager organized 23 Customer Meetings during which applicants were informed about RFC NS-B current offer. In the following events around 50 RUs took part:

- ✓ 17 Customer visits (common or individual in every country along the corridor - IMs always participated);
- ✓ 6 other meetings where customers were informed about the Corridor:
  - Inauguration Event in Vienna;
  - Market Stand during „Infrastructure-Works Information Meeting“ in Berlin;
  - PCS Training in Frankfurt;
  - RAG/TAG Meeting in Bremen;
  - Forum Train Europe – B Meeting in Ljubljana (4 Days);
  - Kick Off Meeting for the annual timetable in Rotterdam.

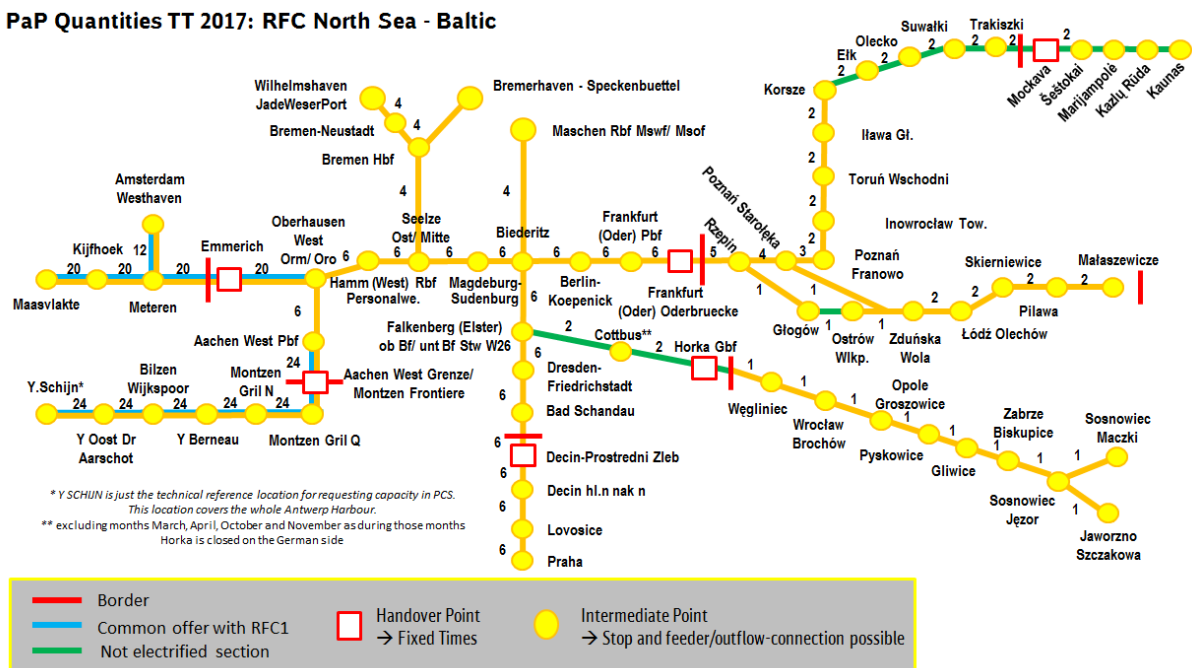
These events served as excellent opportunities to gather experience and learn about customer and market needs. Such approach ensured enhanced and customer-oriented PaPs offer in terms of quantity and quality.

#### 2.1.1 Pre-arranged Paths

On 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 first catalogue of pre-arranged train paths for timetable 2017 was published, offering to customers not less than 14.5 million kilometers\*running days of high quality paths for international traffic. PaPs which are based on standard parameters for rail freight were previously coordinated between the IMs/AB at the borders to enable attractive running times.

The creation process of PaPs was initiated in September 2015 at the Kick-Off Meeting in which all IMs along the Corridor participated. During this meeting all necessary issues about the construction of the first PaP-catalogue have been discussed.

#### PaP Quantities TT 2017: RFC North Sea - Baltic



In April 2016 after receipt of 63 dossiers for TT 2017 the requests had to be examined by C-OSS Manager for plausibility. All conflicts were successfully solved (33 dossiers) and finally PaPs were allocated in time by applying the rules of the Framework for Capacity Allocation (FCA). Individual customer letters with the specific results of pre-allocation were sent to all applicants. At the end of April 2016 process of PaPs pre-allocation for TT 2017 was successfully finalized.

Preparation of the PaP offer for the TT 2018 has started directly after the pre-allocation phase: firstly with the evaluation process. Experiences obtained from the applicants during individual customer visits and customer workshop, the offer, the FCA, the request and allocation process were carefully analyzed. The results were used to improve the product and the process for the following timetabling year. Based on this result, the quantity and quality of PaP was proposed and approved by the Management Board.

The creation of PaPs for TT 2018 started with the Kick-Off Meeting with all IMs in September 2016. During this meeting all necessary issues about the construction for the second PaP-catalogue have been discussed.

From September to December 2016 PaPs were consulted with the IMs according to the agreed timeline in order to be published early January 2017. This construction time was actively managed and supervised by the C-OSS. After checking the construction results, the preparation for publication

started by creation of a PaP catalogue in PCS. In addition a printout of the PaP catalogue helped the applicants with their planning.

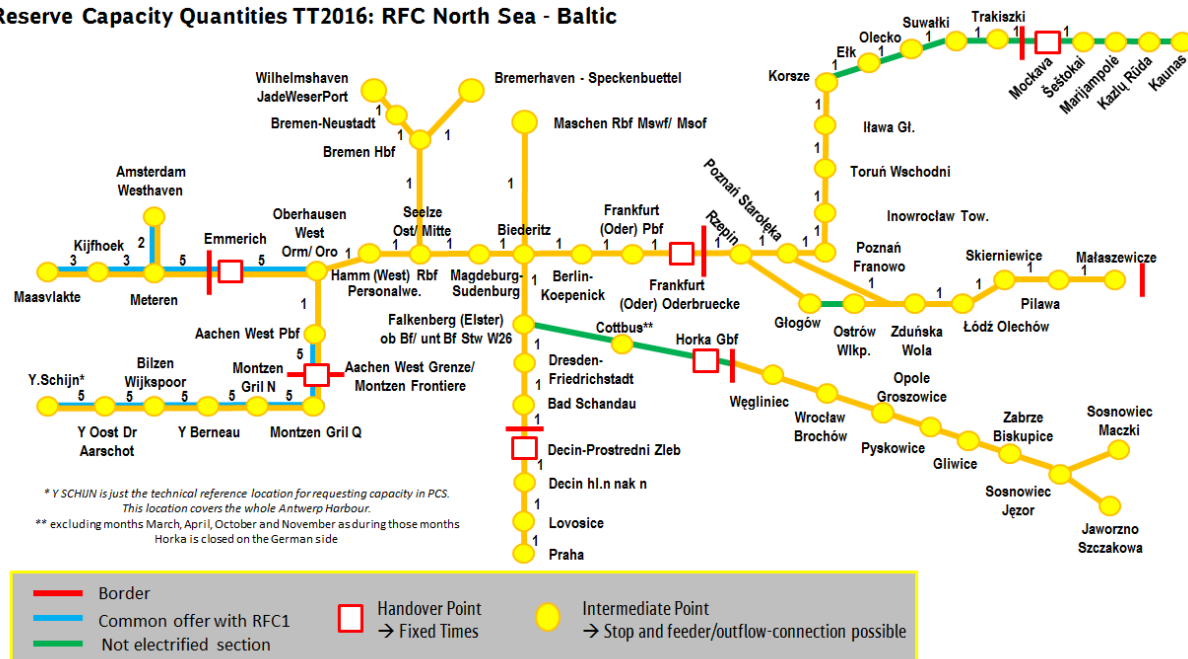
The new path offer for the TT 2018 encompasses all experiences gathered since the publication of the first offer in January 2016. On this occasion we thank our customers for expressing interest in our offer and willingness to assist our C-OSS Manager in constructing better offer expressed during numerous meetings with our customers held in 2016.

### 2.1.2 Reserve Capacity

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 RFC NS-B published RC for TT 2016 for the first time through its C-OSS. The offer was published in PCS and also as an overview of the available capacity on the corridor website. This offer was available for applicants to request until November 2016.

The RC offer for TT 2016 for international rail freight on RFC NS-B has been developed as a flexible approach. The RC offer has been published in the form of capacity slots. Due to this, the capacity was offered within a time range and not as the standard PaP product with fixed times. Applicants can request RC via the C-OSS 30 days before the train run. This approach and the RC product was explained in several customer visits and customers information events.

Reserve Capacity Quantities TT2016: RFC North Sea - Baltic



In October 2016 Reserve Capacity for TT 2017 was published.

## 2.2 Establishment of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG)

The Management Board representing Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body decided in 2015 to take the form of an EEIG in accordance with Regulation (EEC) 2137/85 of 25 July 1985 on the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG).

On 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 a legal entity of European Economic Interest Grouping was successfully registered in the Polish National Court Register providing Management Board with the legal body, which is expected to ease the facilitation of the obligations resulting from implementation of the RFC NS-B. The EEIG is located in Warsaw.

The RFC North Sea – Baltic now legally acts as EEIG “North Sea-Baltic Rail Freight Corridor” EZIG.

## 2.3 Customer Information Platform

In 2015 the Management Board of RFC NS-B decided to use the Customer Information Platform (CIP), an interactive information tool operated by RailNetEurope, in order to provide customers and users of the Corridor with the information about the exact corridor routing, corridor terminals, and basic track properties. At the moment CIP displays information on railway infrastructure in 18 European countries covering the network of 6 RFCs: Rhine-Alpine (RFC 1), North Sea – Mediterranean (RFC 2), Scandinavian – Mediterranean (RFC 3), Atlantic (RFC 4), Baltic – Adriatic (RFC 5) and North Sea – Baltic (RFC 8). During 2016 the RFC NS-B Customer Information Platform was successfully implemented, it is available online and can be reached via RFC NS-B website.

Additionally the RFCs in cooperation with RNE are working on the development and new functionalities of CIP, e.g. a multi-corridor view which should give users an overview picture of the lines and terminals on all involved RFC's.



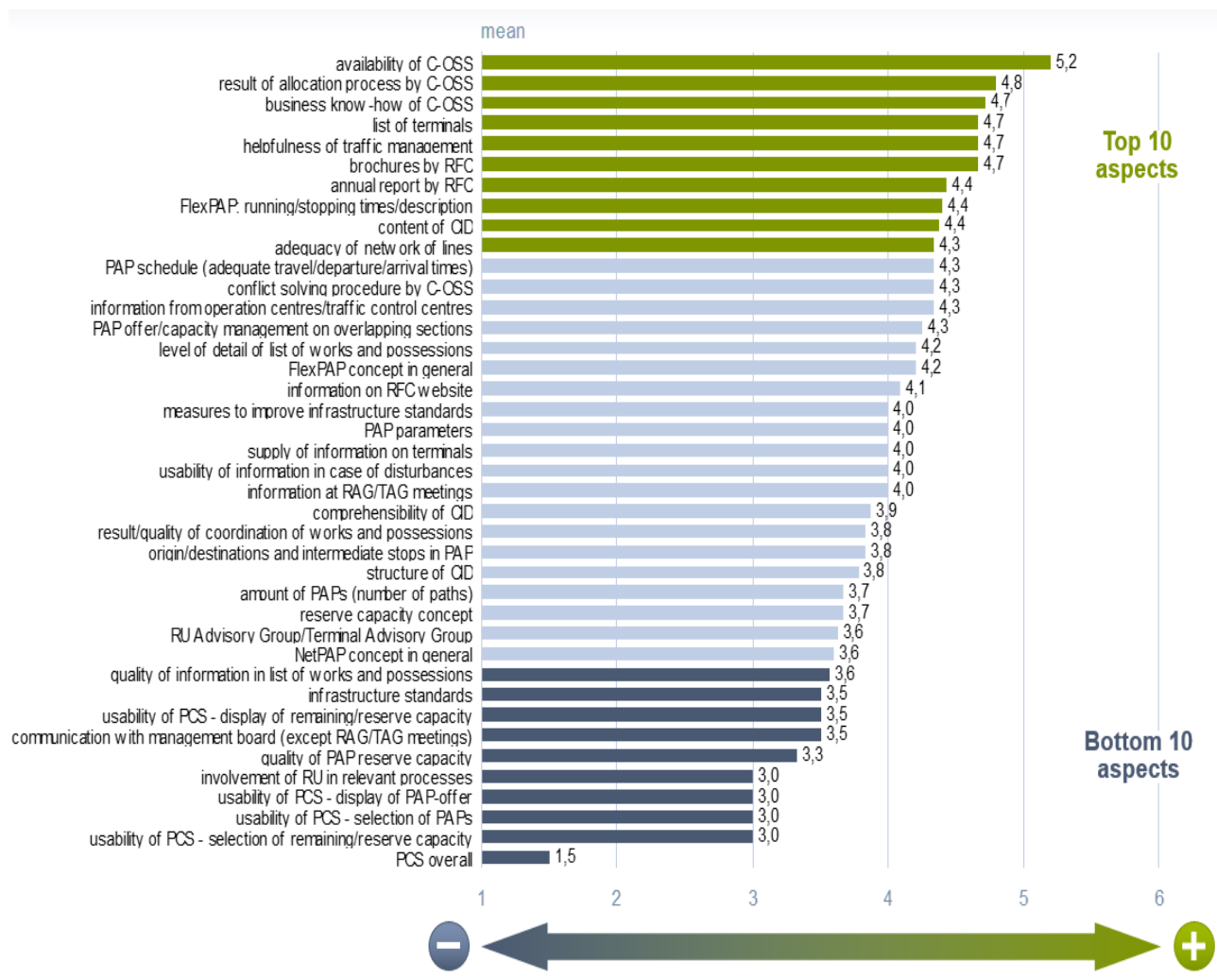
## 2.4 Performance Report

According to the article 19 (2) of the Regulation 913/2010 Management Board of the RFC NS–B monitors the performance of rail freight services on the freight corridor and publish the results of this monitoring once a year.

The Performance Report for 2016 will be published on the corridor website on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017 (Corridor – Customer – Key Performance Indicators).

## 2.5 User Satisfaction Survey

Article 19 (3) of the Regulation 913/2010 requires the Management Board of the Rail Freight Corridors to conduct a satisfaction survey of the users of the freight corridor and to publish its results once a year. In 2016 the RFC NS-B conducted this survey for the first time. The Rail Freight Corridors decided to cooperate with RailNetEurope and perform one, joint User Satisfaction Survey in order to avoid the situation of sending multiply number of surveys. The survey was performed with Computer Aided Web Interviews. Marks are from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied). The RFC NS-B satisfaction ratings are displayed below:



The RFC NS-B specific results can be found on the RFC NS-B website:

<http://rfc8.eu/corridor/customer/customer-satisfaction-survey/>.

The overall results of the User Satisfaction Survey 2016 can be also found on the RNE website:

([http://www.rne.eu/tl\\_files/RNE\\_Upload/Jakob/RFC\\_User\\_Satisfaction\\_Survey\\_2016\\_Overall\\_Results\\_RNE\\_website.pdf](http://www.rne.eu/tl_files/RNE_Upload/Jakob/RFC_User_Satisfaction_Survey_2016_Overall_Results_RNE_website.pdf)).

The RFC NS-B appreciates all the effort customers put in order to complete the survey and is proud of the performance of its C-OSS, which earned the highest appreciation from the customers, who emphasized their satisfaction by giving the highest rates to the following actions: availability of C-OSS, result of allocation process and business know-how of C-OSS. Regarding the Path Coordination System (PCS), where the effort still has to be made, the RFC NS-B is actively involved in the system development. All results of the USS 2016 will be carefully analyzed and will serve as the basis for Corridor improvement in 2017.

## 2.6 Events

### 2.6.1 Launching Event, Vienna, 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2016

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> in Vienna's Hofburg Palace a joint event was organized to celebrate the launch of three rail freight corridors: RFC ScanMed, Baltic-Adriatic and North Sea-Baltic as well as the extension of the Atlantic Corridor to Germany.



RFC North Sea - Baltic representatives during Launching Event in Vienna. Photo: Österreichischen Bundes Bahnen.



For the event's conference titled "Competitive future for international rail freight – deepening the dialogue" each Corridor delivered concise presentation on its main infrastructural and operational characteristics along with the introduction of people from the top managerial level responsible for successful running of the Corridor projects. RFC NS-B was represented by the Chairman of the Management Board, the Managing Director and the C-OSS Manager.

The conference gathered more than two hundred delegates from European Commission, ministries, corridor organizations and customers. Therefore this event served as an excellent opportunity for the presentation of the Rail Freight Corridor concept, which strives to converge diverse stakeholders on finding common solutions offering harmonized services for international rail freight operations.

### 2.6.2 TEN-T Days, Rotterdam, 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2016

During the TEN-T Days 2016 in Rotterdam a business conference on Rail Freight Corridors was organized. The topics discussed during the conference concentrated on the network of nine Rail Freight Corridors, which faces the challenge of attracting customers by offering products of higher standard, improved capacity and service quality. Possible solutions for short term actions were identified in a form of quick wins, which could be achieved through the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders.



RFC North Sea - Baltic representatives during TEN-T Days in Rotterdam. Photo: PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A.

The mid to long term strategy for rail freight and the Rail Freight Corridors referred to broader issues, which are linked to the daily work of the rail freight corridors, such as capacity allocation, railway noise, the logistic supply chain, operational efficiency, governance, and innovation. In short, the conference on RFCs focused on the exchange of best practice in order to create a true network of corridors.

During the conference a ministerial declaration was issued which stated the importance of close cooperation to promote the competitiveness and growth of international rail freight transport and to work towards a sustainable Single European Railway Area for freight. This Declaration on Rail Freight Corridors was endorsed by ministers from the EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway. It is worth mentioning that Ministerial Declaration was complemented by sector declaration, which is further described in chapter 4.2 **Rail Freight Corridors**.

RFC NS-B actively participated in the conference and exhibition part of TEN-T Days in Rotterdam. During the conference, a special session was dedicated to the Rail Freight Corridors. The Managing Director of RFC NS-B was one of the speakers during the workshop “Adequate capacity allocation”, which was the part of business conference on rail freight corridors to boost international rail freight. The Chairman of the Management Board represented RFC NS-B in the panel of “Core Network Corridor in Progress”, which contributed to the discussion on innovative infrastructure for smart and sustainable mobility.

All Rail Freight Corridors organized a common booth in the exhibition hall. For RFC NS-B it was a great opportunity to get in contact with potential customers, investors, EU institutions and partners from other modes of transports and thus opening new possibilities for partnership and cooperation.

### 2.6.3 Rail Freight Day, Vienna, 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2016

In December 2016 RFC NS-B participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rail Freight Day, a conference organized by the European Commission and RNE in Palace Ferstel in Vienna. RFCs organized a joint stand with information brochures and Corridor gadgets. It was another opportunity for RFC NS-B to exchange opinions with the representatives of rail freight sector and to advertise the Corridor among potential customers.



RFC North Sea - Baltic representatives during Rail Freight Day in Vienna. Photo: RailNetEurope.

At the conference Jarosław Majchrzak - Managing Director of RFC5 representing all RFCs participated in the strategy input session: “Do Rail Freight Corridors meet customers’ needs?” in which rail freight customers defined the service they expect from RFCs.

This event served as an exceptional opportunity for promotion of the RFCs concept through fruitful exchange of points of view on operational issues and interoperability for international rail freight transport between the stakeholders of European rail freight and the European Commission.

### **3. European Funding**

#### **3.1 TEN-T**

Following the submission of the Final Report on the implementation of the action “Preparatory studies and activities of the organizational structures of Rail Freight Corridor 8 Bremerhaven / Rotterdam / Antwerp - Aachen / Berlin - Warsaw - Terespol (Poland – Belarus border) / Kaunas) 2011-EU-95090-S” in December 2015, INEA accepted the report and the financial statement. The total cost of the project amounted to: EUR 1.872.577,53.

#### **3.2 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**

For the sake of the RFC NS-B Infrastructure Managers continued in 2016 the implementation of the CEF project ‘Establishment of Rail Freight Corridor „North Sea-Baltic“ and its further development aiming at improving conditions for international rail freight transport, 2014-EU-TM-0217-S’. The project progressed according to schedule. In March 2016 the Action Status Report (ASR) for 2015 was delivered to INEA by PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A. in its capacity of the Coordinator. After the establishment of the EEIG, it was decided to amend the Grant Agreement in order for the EEIG to become the sole beneficiary.

### **4. Cooperation with other stakeholders**

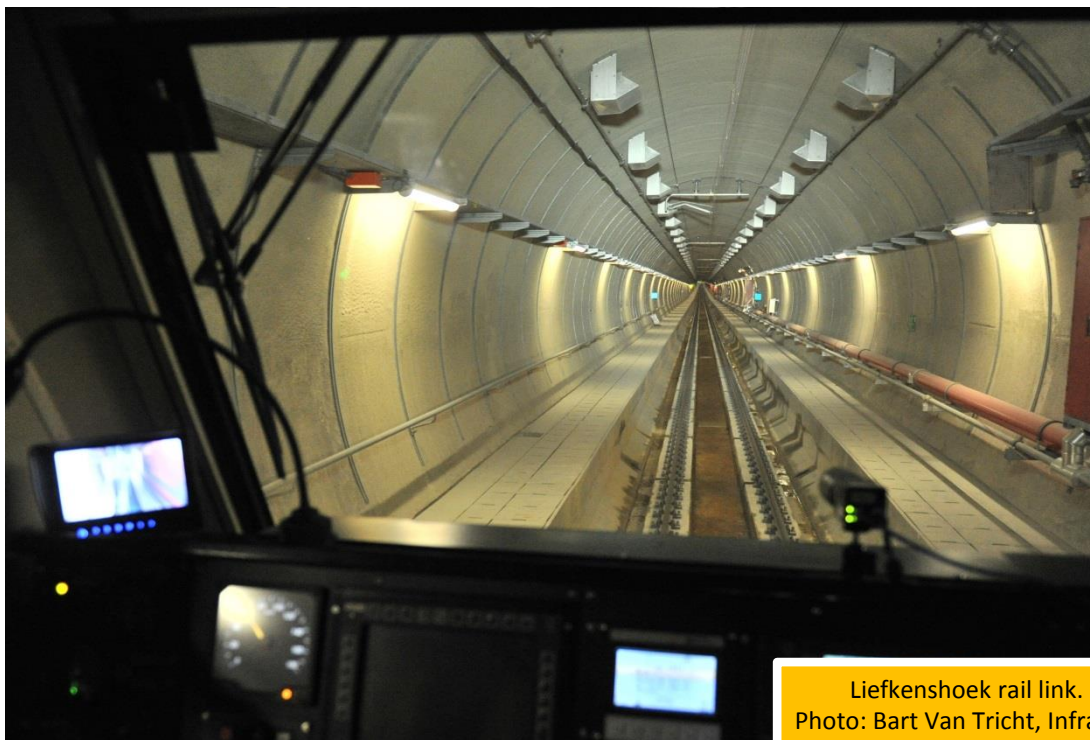
#### **4.1 RailNetEurope**

RFC NS-B is an associated member of RNE and uses RNE services and guidelines as well as the RNE IT tools: PCS (Path Coordination System), TIS (Train Information System) and CIP (Corridor Information Platform). The Infrastructure Managers are already full members of RNE.

In 2016 RFC NS-B was engaged in a number of RNE initiatives:

- development of Corridor One-Stop-Shop products:
  - participation in elaboration of guidelines for Pre-arranged Paths and Reserve Capacity product,
  - participation in preparation of feasibility study on a more attractive Ad Hoc Capacity product on RFCs,
- improvement of traffic and train performance management:

- evaluation of Key Performance Indicators for traffic and train performance monitoring common for all RFCs,
- participation in pre-study on corridor train and priority rules definition,
- elaboration of a common template for Book 2 and harmonized texts for Book 4 of the Corridor Information Document for all RFCs,
- participation and coordination of the User Satisfaction Survey,
- development of the Customer Information Platform,
- participation in a feasibility study and in drafting Terms of References for a common RFC traffic analyses for the updates of individual Transport Market Studies.



Liefkenshoek rail link.  
Photo: Bart Van Tricht, Infrabel.

## 4.2 Rail Freight Corridors

All nine Rail Freight Corridors acknowledged the common aim of developing a network and the promotion of consistency of approaches for issues of cross-corridor interest. Therefore the RFCs established a framework of cooperation between corridors, which takes place on different levels. Management Board representatives meet regularly on the so called “RFC Talks”, C-OSS Managers collaborate within the C-OSS Community and RNE serves as a common platform for RFCs related initiatives and IT tools.

In 2016 six “RFC Talks” meetings were organized in which RFC NS-B participated. The discussions concentrated on issues stipulated by the Regulation or asked by the users and/or stakeholders such as the harmonization of the Corridor Information Document, the drafting of a common Transport Market Study, the execution of the User Satisfaction Survey, the possible revision of the Regulation, the



development of the Corridor products, the improvement of traffic and train performance management and the development of a Customer Information Platform.

In May 2016 a far-reaching impact document on RFC's activities was issued by rail sector associations and their members under the title: Sector Statement on Rail Freight Corridors: "Boosting International Rail Freight". Signatories of this document committed 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. In June 2016 the sector statement message was echoed in a Ministerial Declaration issued during the TEN-T Days conference in Rotterdam (see chapter 2.6.2 TEN-T Days, Rotterdam, 20th - 22nd of June 2016).



Pruszków area on the railway line between Warszawa and Łódź.  
Photo: PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A.

In response the Sector Action List as a Follow-up of the Sector Statement and Ministerial Declaration on Rail Freight Corridors was composed by RFCs on the basis of issues raised in both documents. In this document an extensive description of actions structured in distinct activities convey the project approach envisaged by RFCs. Key elements for each action were identified such as: clear indication of objectives, work to be carried out, timeframe, actors and main responsibilities in order to undertake tailored measures. The Sector Action List was well-received by the users of RFC NS-B during the RAG/TAG meeting in Prague who in return were requested to give their assistance in prioritization of projects.

Following the political declaration made during the TEN-T days RFCs' managers listed ten priorities that should be taken into account as soon as possible in order to meet the challenges defined in the documents.

## 4.3 European Commission

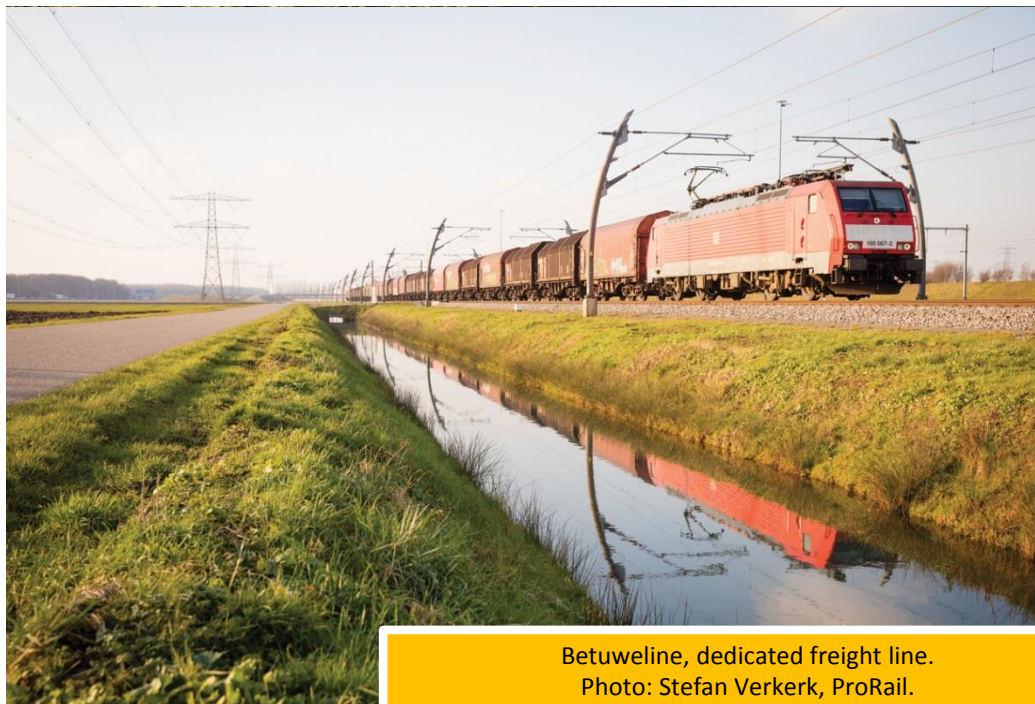
### 4.3.1 North Sea-Baltic Core Network Corridor

In 2016 RFC NS-B continued to work with its corresponding North Sea-Baltic CNC in the framework of the model for cooperation between Rail Freight Corridors and TEN-T Core Network Corridors. This model ensures achievement of the objectives of both the RFCs and CNCs and at avoiding duplication of work through effective exchanges of information and consultations.

Representatives of RFC North Sea-Baltic attended the three meetings of the North Sea-Baltic Core Network Corridor Forum. The main subjects discussed were the CNC work plan, the update of the project list and the corridor study.

One session during the conference of TEN-T Days in Rotterdam was dedicated to Core Network Corridors (see chapter 2.6.2 TEN-T Days, Rotterdam, 20th - 22nd of June 2016). RFC NS-B was represented by Managing Director and Chairman of the MB who participated in the panel on CNC North Sea – Baltic.

Mrs. Catherine Trautmann, coordinator of CNC NS-B expressed her satisfaction with further development of the Corridor including analysis of KPIs and planned/needed investments during the meeting with ExBo in Vilnius. She also encouraged RFC NS-B to attract more traffic and urged for successful implementation of ERTMS. Chairman of the MB of RFC NS-B highlighted RFC NS-B specific alignment in the west-east axis, which represents potential undermined by insufficient infrastructure towards Belarus/Ukraine border.



Betuweline, dedicated freight line.  
Photo: Stefan Verkerk, ProRail.



### **4.3.2 DG Mobility and Transport**

The Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) represents European Commission in facilitating dialogue and coordination between RFCs.

The main platform for issues related to RFCs activities is the SERAC (Single European Railway Area Committee) Working Group on RFCs. Two meetings were organized in 2016 (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> SERAC meeting) which gathered ministries, infrastructure managers, allocation and regulatory bodies. RFC North Sea – Baltic was also attending the meetings. During these meetings following topics were discussed:

- the language requirements for train drivers, safety certificate “B” and loco authorization in border sections;
- the cooperation framework between core network corridors and rail freight corridors;
- the ETCS deployment plan of the European Coordinator Karel Vinck;
- the evaluation process of Regulation (EU) 913/2010;
- the results of the 2016 user satisfaction survey;
- the evaluation of capacity offered and requested in 2016 within a Framework of Capacity Allocation;
- further cross-border interoperability issues.

### **4.4 Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD)**

In 2016 possible ways of cooperation between RFCs and OSJD corridors were further explored. It is expected to strengthen cooperation when corridors of both organizations become more mature.

In November 2016 RFC NS-B sent a letter of intent to the OSJD organization welcoming openness towards mutual cooperation, exchange of experience and information. Furthermore establishment of a relation on working level was proposed aiming at improvement of corridor offer for rail freight transport.

In order to advance this cooperation both organizations agreed that specific subjects should be selected in order to make a strong case for future meetings. The first meeting is supposed to be organized in March 2017 and address day-to-day business issues relevant to both organizations. Potential subjects are listed below:

- market expectations and requirements of railway undertakings that operate on the corridors and most common difficulties;
- planning of investments and capacity restrictions;
- information regarding current and future investment projects on lines which are part of the corridors;
- harmonization of infrastructure and train parameters;
- overview of procedures regarding cross-border interoperability, bottlenecks in the operation of trains and possibilities of improvement.

## 5. Activities planned for the future

### 5.1 Update of the Transport Market Study

According to EU Regulation 913/2010 the Management Board is entitled to carry out a Transport Market Study (TMS) to investigate the observed and expected changes of the traffic on the freight corridor. In particular the analysis concentrates on freight with a short view also on passenger traffic and socio-economic costs and benefits. The TMS is an essential part of the implementation plan for the Corridor and in accordance with the Regulation needs to be updated periodically.

The first TMS of RFC NS-B was conducted and published in 2013/2014 and the Management Board had foreseen its update for the end of 2018 in order to include also the extension to Estonia, Latvia and to the Polish-Ukrainian border.

In order to provide a consistent data basis for all TMS updates the RFCs decided to investigate the possibility of a common European traffic flow matrix which should be done under the umbrella of RNE. A separate working group was installed with representatives of the RFCs. In detail, it was foreseen to conduct a joint Europe-wide analysis of European freight traffic flows of all transportation modes with relevance for RFCs on the basis of a common database of origins and destinations including RFC-transit traffic with destination or origin in third countries.



Frankfurt Oderbrücke.  
Photo: Sebastian Naundorf, DB Netz AG.

The results of the analysis would have been used by all RFCs as a basis for their individual more qualitative transport market studies.

Meanwhile RNE and all RFCs decided in agreement with the European Commission to investigate the possibility to use instead the needed data from the TRIMODE project which will be delivered to the European Commission by the end of 2019. Currently RNE, the European Commission and TRIMODE are negotiating this possibility. RFC NS-B Management Board decided to wait for the end result of these negotiations before it proceeds with the Transport Market Study project.

## **5.2 Capacity Improvement Study**

Management Board decided in 2016 to carry out the Capacity Improvement Study (CIS), which is a logical continuation of the “Study on the Corridor's infrastructure characteristics” conducted and finalized by the Working Group Infrastructure in 2014.

In June 2016 Working Group Infrastructure submitted CIS Terms of Reference, which were adopted by Management Board. Tendering procedure for the CIS is expected to start in the beginning of 2017.

The CIS defines operational and infrastructural parameters which are to be studied in order to improve the conditions of operations in rail freight transport along the corridor with an ultimate result of increased capacity.

The study on capacity improvement focuses on the length of the trains and possibly other parameters such as maximum speed, axle load, loading gauge, profile, etc., with the following expected results:

- identifying main infrastructure obstacles to allow long trains,
- identifying measures to remove these infrastructure obstacles, to allow a smooth and undisturbed run of long trains,
- assessment of the effectiveness of such a solution,
- identification of infrastructure investments needed.

The summary of the study is to conclude a list of recommendations, in which the most pragmatic and efficient measures leading to improved capacity on the corridor are proposed.

Project „Establishment of Rail Freight Corridor „North Sea – Baltic“ and its further development aiming at improving conditions for international rail freight transport” number 2014-EU-TM-0217-S is co-financed by the European Union's CEF program. The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.