

## Summary of the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting with the RFC North Sea – Baltic RAG & TAG

**Date: 16.03.2023 09:00 - 15:00**

Venue: Radisson Blu Latvia Conference & Spa Hotel  
Elizabetes Street 55,  
Riga LV-1010 Latvia

### **1. Welcome and introduction.**

Guus de Mol, the NS-B Management Board Member welcomed the participants and presented the agenda. He introduced Weronika Karbowskiak, former Managing Director and Katarzyna Wachowicz, new RFC NS-B Managing Director. All participants introduced themselves.

### **2. Presentation of Infrastructure Managers from Latvia and Estonia**

Patriks Markēvičs, representative of the Ministry of Transport from Republic of Latvia, announced the speech of Latvian Transport Minister Mr. Jānis Vitenbergs.

Mr. Jānis Vitenbergs stated that he appreciates that all RFC NS-B experts who daily care for this corridor and ensure its development, are gathered together in Latvia. He stated that Latvia is very much interested in development of this network. The Rail Baltica is the most important infrastructure project for Latvia and Baltic region, as it is a key for growth of the region. Mr. Jānis Vitenbergs also mentioned the revision of the TEN-T regulation security aspects and wished the participants a very fruitful meeting.

The Chairman of the Board of SJSC “Latvijas dzelzceļš” Mr. Rinalds Pļavnieks welcomed the participants in Riga and gave a speech. He pointed out that Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic means cooperation, solidarity and working together. He added that Latvia has invested a lot of work and made a significant practical contribution together with Lithuania and Estonia in achieving the goals of the corridor. In particular, international carriers are provided with an easy access to the infrastructure capacity, a favourable corridor tariff is provided, there are no bottlenecks and a fast border crossing is ensured.

Gundars Ābols, RFC NS-B Management Board Member presented Latvian Railways:

- Established in 1991
- Financial turnover 153 000 mil. €
- Employees 6305
- “Latvijas dzelzceļš” infrastructure, overall length of railway lines 3180 km
- In 2022, railway quality rating was 19.6 points, or “excellent”
- Latvia is RFC NS-B opportunity to connect Scandinavia, 1520 area and China in the shortest and most appropriate way.

Taavi Toom, the NS-B Management Board Member introduced the Estonian Railways:

- Estonian Railways is the largest railway company in Estonia, operating since 1870
- Free capacity both on railways and in the ports
- Infrastructure is in a very good condition
- 1500 meter station yards at borders and intermediate stations that provide proper conditions for servicing heavy and long freight trains

- Quality and reliable traffic management ensuring fast circulation of wagons.

### **3. Follow up of the topics from previous meetings:**

Weronika Karbowskiak, the NS-B Management Board Member presented the state of play regarding the topics from the previous meeting including:

- TCR publication process at PLK
- Cases of theft at Horka/Węglińiec station
- Codification of PLK lines

#### TCR publication process at PLK

Damian Figurski from DB Cargo Polska pointed out that the PLK S.A.'s TCR information on RFC NS-B website is very poor. The second conclusion is that information regarding TCRs should be published more often. Weronika Karbowskiak explained that it is regulated by Annex VII, however PLK S.A. will publishing a more extensive list, including restrictions caused by announcement of trains by means of telephone communication devices.

Additionally, the WG members will review TCRs more often and the Management Board will discuss the frequency of reviews and publications. Guus de Mol confirmed that good balance in this process has to be found.

#### Cases of theft at Horka/Węglińiec station

Weronika Karbowskiak informed that PLK, following a request from the Ministry of Infrastructure, contacted Railroad Guards headquarters, Police headquarters in Wrocław and Director of our Office in Wrocław to gather up information and solve this problem. PLK is open to cooperate further with both the Police and the RUs to ensure safety of the transported goods.

Paweł Wiechoczek, RAG Speaker thanked for the efforts and pointed out that lots of actions were taken so it seems that RAG/TAG meetings are effective as they resulted in improvement, the situation will be monitored.

#### Codification of PLK lines

Weronika Karbowskiak informed that codification process is ongoing and in line with the guidelines laid out in the TEN-T regulation revision. This procedure, although it might seem as a hindrance, is necessary to ensure the capacity and safety while PLK is working on codification. The process of obtaining permissions has been harmonised and works well. Paweł Wiechoczek pointed out that it is very important topic, so it should be kept on the agenda for the next meeting.

### **4. RAG slot**

Paweł Wiechoczek, presented topics pre-discussed with RUs:

- Testing the possibility of using English as the second language at the border, i.e. Frankfurt Oder – Kunowice;  
Guus de Mol stated that the RFC NS-B Management Board is aware of the language issue and the train drivers directive is negotiated. The problem for IMs is a shortage of staff of traffic control. Paweł Wiechoczek explained that the issues is about a single contact point, for example on borders. Guus de Mol informed that German-Dutch border controllers speak Dutch and German but 100km further, controllers do not speak in a foreign language. Paweł Wiechoczek pointed out that there is a working group dedicated to

border crossings so hopefully issues can be solved. Weronika Karbowski confirmed that Quality Circle Operation Frankfurt Oder working group members are working on the improvement.

- Details of Rail Baltica's future plans, including language regulations, requirements for admission of rail carriers to the infrastructure, etc.;
- Request to include Luxembourg to RFC NS-B corridor; Paweł Wiechoczek asked about the state of play regarding the request of Luxembourg. Patriks Markēvičs the ExBo Chairman explained that the situation is not clear yet as the revision of the Regulation is ongoing.

## 5. TAG slot

Erik Nieuwenhuis, the TAG Speaker presented the Rail Facilities Portal and terminals on RFC North Sea-Baltic topic, including:

- Obligations for terminals from the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2177
- Obligations for RFCs from the Regulation (EU) 913/2010
- Discrepancies of terminal data on RFC NS-B
- Introduction to Rail Facilities Portal (RFP)
- Benefits of Rail Facilities Portal for terminals
- Moving Forward: Extending value to stakeholders of the Corridors and webinar on RFP for terminal owners

Weronika Karbowski thanked Erik Nieuwenhuis and Anna Difliff, RFC NS-B C-OSS Manager for research and preparing the presentation. She pointed out that this topic was raised by the RAG/TAG Members, so it was investigated as the RAG/TAG opinion is valid by the Management Board.

Guus de Mol pointed out that if customer searches for data using three different tools and for the time being, none of this tool provides enough information..

## 6. Information from the C-OSS: PaP capacity offer TT2024

Anna Difliff, the C-OSS Manager introduced herself and presented the PaP capacity offer TT2024, including:

- Improvements implemented for the PaP capacity offer TT2024
- Updated Schematic map including minor changes for TT2024
- Long-distance & Short-distance PaPs in the PaP capacity offer TT2024
- KPIs - PaP capacity offer TT2024
- Next steps in the PaP booking process

Anna Difliff informed that online training and two in-person trainings regarding PCS usage took place in Frankfurt and Vilnius. She added that recent trainings were really fruitful, one of the conclusions was that the participants were surprised how user-friendly PCS is. Additionally, the training in Vilnius gave Baltic stakeholders and customers the opportunity for networking, probably for the first time ever since the Covid-19 restrictions. The C-OSS also announced that the new PCS version – called „Capacity Broker” – and with a go-live planned for 2024, will technically enable the booking of ad-hoc capacity.

## 7. PLK investments on PL-UA border

Weronika Karbowski, the Member of the Management Board presented the topic concentrated on the joint EU project Ukraine - PLK:

- Rzeszów – Medyka, PLK plans to reconstruct this section. The investment on this section will involve adaptation of the station to 750m, as well as construction of loading and reloading yards, especially at Żurawica and Medyka stations.
- Jagodzin/Dorohusk - for the 2022/23 timetable, in agreement with UZ, we have increased the number of freight trains on the normal gauge track from 3 to 4;
- Medyka/Mościska I and Mościska II - area of the railway border crossing and facilitating project development;
- Railway line no. 7 between Lublin and Dorohusk (border crossing).

## **8. RFC NS-B User Satisfaction Survey 2022 results and action plan**

Katarzyna Wachowicz presented the topic:

- For the third time, the Survey was organized and conducted by RailNetEurope and for the first time participants could also choose to be directly interviewed via MS Teams
- The percentage indicates the number of participants who think that a specific topic needs improvement, excluding general satisfaction. Figures are rounded without comma
- 7 respondents and 7 evaluations
- 39 e-mail invitations sent
- Field Phase: 19<sup>th</sup> of September to 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2022

Katarzyna Wachowicz, presented the results of the User Satisfaction Survey 2022 and action plan. The customers were satisfied the most with:

- The C-OSS Manager performance on: allocation process (pre-allocation by the C-OSS) and conflict-solving procedure by the C-OSS;
- The information on works and possessions;
- The information in annual reports and information provided on the NCI

The topics RFC NS-B should put more focus on were:

- The timetable of PaPs;
- Relations (PaPs origin/destinations) and parameters of PaPs (train length/weight);
- Quality of the Reserve Capacity offer;
- Organization of the RAG/TAG meetings which could be improved – this topic was discussed under next point of the RAG/TAG meeting agenda.

Weronika Karbowski pointed out that every year this study results show what is important for the customers and what are the pressing points. She also stressed that the survey is the same for all corridors. The Management Board encourages customers to participate in the Working Group meetings to discuss the punctuality topic and send wishes what is the most important for the customers regarding the TCR.

Dirk Oelschläeger from DB Cargo AG asked about DB Cargo answer. Patrycja Urbańska, RFC NS-B Office clarified that it is included in the User Satisfaction Survey 2022 results which are published on the [RFC website](#).

Discussion regarding the response rate and survey format took place. Pierre Bodiaux, representative of the Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport from Belgium pointed out that the Regulation mentions the survey but doesn't provide or impose exact format of it. Marcel Tijs, representative of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management from the Netherlands pointed out that the survey should be shorter and simpler. Patrycja Urbańska explained that the Working Group is working on a new, shorter survey format. She kindly asked to use this opportunity to volunteer and express RAG/TAG members opinion. She

thanked in advance to volunteers who will complete the User Satisfaction Survey 2023 for their valuable input and time.

### **9. Organization of future RAG/TAG meetings**

Katarzyna Wachowicz presented the topic. During the previous RAG/TAG meeting in Rostock on 11.10.2022, the RFC was asked to organize future meetings for Railway Undertakings and Terminals in a modified form. After consultation with the RAG/TAG Speakers and internal discussion, RFC NS-B propose as follows:

- Organization of joint RAG/TAG meetings with other RFCs
- Organization of a short online meetings of specific topics and advices

Next RFC NS-B RAG/TAG meeting will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> of October in Frankfurt am Main.

### **10. AOB:**

#### **Topics for next RAG/TAG meeting**

Katarzyna Wachowicz, listed that the below topics will be discussed during the next meeting:

- state of play of codification of PLK lines
- initiative of RAG for language programme status
- Article 65 developments, train drivers directive
- Proposal for streamlined RFC meetings - Guus de Mol suggested that the idea presented by Erik Nieuwenhuis will be discussed by the RFC Network.

#### **List of annexes and presentations:**

All the presentations and annexes are available on the RFC NS-B website in the Download area <https://rfc8.eu/downloads/>.

- 1) Agenda for the RAG-TAG meeting on 16.03.2023
- 2) Annex 2a. Presentation of Infrastructure Manager from Latvia  
Annex 2b. Presentation of Infrastructure Manager from Estonia
- 3) Annex 3. Follow up of the topics from previous meetings
- 4) Annex 4. RAG slot
- 5) Annex 5. TAG slot
- 6) Annex 6. Information from the C-OSS PaP capacity offer TT2024
- 7) Annex 7. PLK investments on PL-UA border
- 8) Annex 8. RFC NS-B User Satisfaction Survey 2022 results and action plan
- 9) Annex 9. Organization of future RAGTAG meetings