

**JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR  
NORTH SEA - BALTIC**

**THE MINISTRIES IN CHARGE OF TRANSPORT OF**

**THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, THE REPUBLIC OF  
ESTONIA; THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA,  
THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, AND THE  
REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

The implementation of a European rail freight network is one of the objectives of the European transport policy. In this policy framework, the goal is to encourage the gradual development of trans-European corridors for competitive rail freight transport, thus enabling higher usage of the railway system with positive effects on modal shift. The gradual establishment of corridors giving a higher level of quality to rail freight transport has to be achieved through improvements in capacity, including the upgrading and the rehabilitation of infrastructure or through the development of traffic management systems and better access to the terminals of the corridor. The improved level of quality offered by rail infrastructure should make it possible to develop seamless international rail freight services or create new ones.

Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight (hereinafter referred to as 'the Regulation') came into force on 9 November 2010.

The Regulation lays down rules for the establishment and organisation of international rail freight corridors with a view to the development of a European rail network for competitive freight. It sets out rules for the selection, organisation, management and indicative investment planning of freight corridors. The Regulation applies to the management and the use of railway infrastructure included in rail freight corridors.

The Regulation has set up Rail Freight Corridor No. 8 (RFC 8) as one of the initial freight corridors. In line with the provisions of the Regulation, it became operational on 10 November 2015.

The list of initial freight corridors in the Regulation has been amended by Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility. RFC 8 has been given a new designation with the name Rail Freight Corridor "North Sea - Baltic". Furthermore, its primary route network has been extended towards the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia, pursuant to the stipulations of Annex II of Regulation (EU) No

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1316/2013, with a provision to take the necessary implementation measures until 10 November 2020. However, in line with Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013, 'until the realisation of a Rail Baltic line in 1 435 mm nominal track gauge, the specificities of different track gauge systems shall be taken into account in the establishment and operation of this corridor'. It is also intended to gradually extend the corridor towards Poland – Ukraine border.

Article 8(1) of the Regulation stipulates that each rail freight corridor needs an Executive Board, composed of representatives of the authorities of the Member States concerned.

The Executive Board of the RFC 8 was created on 20 March 2012 by adoption of a mission statement.

By agreement among the Ministers of respective countries of 8 October 2014, the Executive Board of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic was extended to Czech Republic. This agreement replaced the mission statement of 2012.

Considering the extension to two new Member States, as foreseen in the aforementioned Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013, a new Executive Board needs to be established.

The Ministries in charge of transport of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Poland:

- recognise the contribution of rail freight to Europe's socio-economic development and to the environment;
- stress the high potential of rail freight corridors to utilise in a more efficient and effective way the TEN-T Core Network;
- stress the high potential of the corridor within the stronger developing connections to Asia and its high potential in terms of multimodality and its benefits for the global transport;
- share the ambition to continue to work together to develop a network of rail freight corridors by the management of the corridors and their interconnections, but also by the improvement of the interoperability, the removal of bottlenecks, the harmonisation of operational rules and the capacity management;
- wish to increase the involvement of the business community in developing the rail freight corridors;
- acknowledge the work carried out until now on the basis of the Agreement adopted on 8 October 2014;

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- emphasize that attention should be given by Infrastructure Managers, with support from Ministries and other stakeholders, to cross-border operational issues which still create bottlenecks
- consider that the present Joint Declaration of Intent is without prejudice to the competence of the Member States regarding planning and funding of the rail infrastructure on their territories;
- encourage the regulatory bodies and national safety authorities to improve their cooperation along the rail freight corridor;

With regards to the above and in order to comply with the provisions laid down in Article 8(1) of the Regulation, the Ministries have come to the following understanding:

**Generally:**

The Agreement adopted on 8 October 2014, replacing the Mission Statement of the original Member States of this Corridor adopted on 20 March 2012, will be replaced by this Joint Declaration of Intent.

**Participation of Estonia and Latvia:**

The Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia will be represented on the Executive Board of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea Baltic (“the Board”).

**Composition and responsibilities of the Board**

The Board will be composed of representatives of authorities of the Member States concerned.

Under the EU legislations and political commitments referred to in the introduction to this Joint Declaration of Intent, the responsibilities of the Board will include:

- to implement Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 , in particular the governance structure foreseen in Article 8, with regard to the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic;
- In accordance with Article 48 of Regulation (EU) 1315/2013, to coordinate the work of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea Baltic and the Trans-European Transport Network North Sea-Baltic core network corridor with the European coordinator and national authorities;
- to work together where necessary with the European institutions and organisations, the national railway safety authorities, and the regulatory bodies of its members.
- to ask the Management board to report on any matter relating at the smooth functioning of the corridor;
- to ensure the extensions of the North Sea-Baltic corridor rail freight are duly established; however, in line with the provisions foreseen in CEF Regulation (EU) No. 1316/2013, ‘until the realisation of a Rail Baltic line in 1 435 mm nominal track gauge, the specificities of different track gauge systems shall be taken into account in the establishment and operation of this corridor.’

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- to take decisions on general matters of common interest concerning the internal functioning of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic without prejudice to the competence of Member States regarding the planning and funding of rail infrastructure;
- to support the need of infrastructure managers by taking relevant decisions in time, as well as to have sufficient resources for the development and the deployment of ERTMS and interoperability, but also for all other measures of the corridor's investment plan intended to improve the corridor's quality, without prejudice to the national and community budgetary competences;
- to monitor the realized progress with regard to the implementation plan's measures on the basis of the reporting performed by the Management board;
- to consider, and where appropriate to support the requests of the Management board for European subsidies within the framework of Regulation (EU) No. 1316/2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility;
- to support the involvement of National Safety Authorities and Regulatory Bodies in the development of the Rail Freight Corridor and to facilitate the dialogue with the Management board and where needed take relevant actions without prejudice to the competencies of these bodies.

**General rules for the functioning of the Board**

The working language of the Board will be English.

The Board will take its decisions on the basis of mutual consent of the representatives of the authorities of the Member States.

The Board will take decisions which are provided for by Regulation (EU) No 913/2010; these decisions are legally binding and directly applicable. They will be signed by all the members of the Board and should be published.

The Board should adopt its rules of procedure.

The decisions taken by the former Executive Board established by the Mission Statement of 20 March 2012 replaced by the Agreement of 8 October 2014 remain valid for the parties to these decisions only.

**Signed in English on** 22-11-2014

François BELLOT,  
Minister of Mobility of the Kingdom of Belgium

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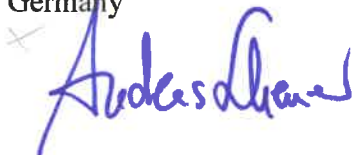
Vladimír KREMLÍK

Minister of the Transport of the Czech Republic



Andreas SCHEUER

Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure of the Federal Republic of  
Germany



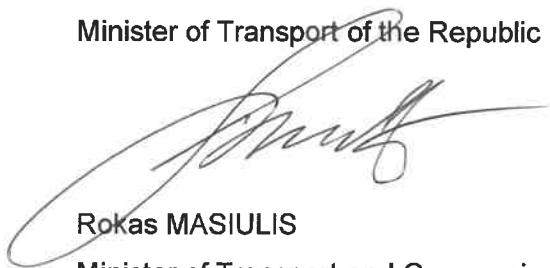
Kadri SIMSON

Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of the Republic of Estonia



Tālis LINKAITS

Minister of Transport of the Republic of Latvia



Rokas MASIULIS

Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania



Stientje van VELDHOVEN

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Andrzej ADAMCZYK

Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland



