

Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic





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List of Abbreviations

AB – Allocation Body

AG – Advisory Group

CEF – Connecting Europe Facility

CID – Corridor Information Document

CIP – Customer Information Platform

CNC – Core Network Corridor

C-OSS – Corridor One-Stop-Shop

EC – European Commission

EEIG – European Economic Interest Grouping (EZIG in Polish)

ELETA – Electronic Exchange of Estimated Time of Arrival

ERTMS - European Rail Traffic Management System

EU – European Union

ExBo – Executive Board

FTE - Forum Train Europe

ICM – International Contingency Management

IM – Infrastructure Manager

IP – Implementation Plan

INEA – Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (from 01.04.2021 European Climate,

Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA))

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

MB – Management Board

MD – Managing Director

MoT – Ministry responsible for transport

NExBo – Network of Executive Boards

NS - Network Statement

PaP – Pre-arranged Path

PCS – Path Coordination System

PIM – Project Implementation Manager

PMO – Project Management Office

PSA - Programme Support Action

RAG – Railway undertaking Advisory Group

RB – Regulatory Body

RC – Reserve Capacity

RFC – Rail Freight Corridor

RFC NS-B - Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic

RFC OEM – Rail Freight Corridor Orient/East-Med

RNE – RailNetEurope

RU – Railway Undertaking

SERAC – Single European Railway Area Committee

TAC - Track Access Charges

TAG – Terminal Advisory Group

TCR - Temporary Capacity Restriction

TEN-T – Trans-European Network – Transport



- TIS Train Information System TMS – Transport Market Study TT – Time Table TTR – Timetabling and Capacity Redesign USS - User Satisfaction Survey
- WG Working Group



FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

2020 will remain in our memories as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic, but for RFC North Sea-Baltic it was an important year due to the extension to Latvia and Estonia, which had been prepared for several years. Consequently in October 2020 we have published the first common capacity offer and updated the Implementation Plan accordingly.

In 2020 also several important milestones have been achieved on the Corridor. Among others a Study on Capacity improvement investigating the possibility to run 740 m trains on the Corridor was finalised. At the end of 2020 the European Commission issued the Implementing Decision (EU) 2020/2168 on the compliance of the request of RFC North Sea-Baltic to extend the Corridor to Medyka and to the Belgian and Dutch ports of Ghent (Terneuzen) and Zeebrugge.

We also started the preparation of projects within the RFC Network to be performed under the new EU co-financing period aiming i.e. on the elaboration and implementation of measures facilitating traffic to China and improving the interoperability at border crossings.

We would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to all stakeholders involved in the Railway undertaking Advisory Group, in the Terminal Advisory Group, in the Working Groups of our Corridor, in the Project Management Office, in RNE, in the EU Commission and in the Executive and Management Board for the work done and contributions given to our Corridor not only in 2020, but also during the last 5 years of the Corridor being operational. Although during the Covid-19 pandemic all meetings were organized in a virtual format we get the impression that the involvement and efforts of the stakeholders were even more extensive. We sincerely hope for further cooperation in order to achieve the ultimate success of the RFC North Sea - Baltic.

We wish you a pleasant reading!

Oliver Sellnick Chairman of the Management Board

Karland

Weronika Karbowiak Managing Director



INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of RFC North Sea – Baltic provides the reader with information on the main aspects of the development of the Corridor and its achievements in the year 2020, including governance, main activities, funding and cooperation with other stakeholders.

RFC North Sea – Baltic currently runs through 8 Member States of the European Union and starts in the North Sea ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven and Hamburg spreading into central Germany through Aachen – Hannover/Magdeburg/Berlin to Warsaw and the Polish-Belarus border in Terespol. A branch leads from Magdeburg to Prague via Falkenberg and Dresden. In Falkenberg starts the Southern branch in Poland to Wroclaw and Katowice. Another branch ending in Kaunas has been extended to Riga and Tallinn in 2020.

In December 2020, the European Commission decided favourably on the further extension of the Corridor towards Medyka (Polish – Ukrainian border) and the ports of Ghent (Terneuzen) and Zeebrugge.

The current description of RFC North Sea – Baltic in numbers is as follows:

- 4480 km of principal lines
- 2524 km of diversionary lines
- 1008 km of connecting lines
- 950 km of expected principal and expected diversionary lines
- 201 terminals
- 10 seaports: (Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Riga, Ventspils, Liepāja, Paldiski, Muuga).

More detailed information on the Corridor's routing and its development can be found on the <u>Corridor's website</u> and in the <u>Customer Information Platform (CIP)</u>.





1. GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of RFC North Sea – Baltic is divided into the following levels: the Executive Board (ExBo), the Management Board (MB) and the Advisory Groups (AGs).

The ExBo is composed of representatives of Ministries in charge of rail transport of the cooperating countries and is responsible for defining the general goals of the Corridor.

The MB is the decision-making body of the Corridor and consists of representatives of the cooperating Infrastructure Managers (IMs) and Allocation Body (AB) of the eight countries involved. Since 2016 the MB has the legal form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG).

The Advisory Groups, consisting of Railway Undertakings (RUs) and interested applicants and Terminal owners/operators, issue opinions on any proposal by the MB, which has direct consequences for them or issue own-initiative opinions, which shall be taken into account by the MB.

The governance structure of the Corridor is illustrated in the organigram below



1.1 EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board (ExBo) of RFC North Sea-Baltic, as referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 913/2010 (hereinafter "the Regulation"), was established on the 20th of March 2012 by the Mission Statement, which was replaced by the Joint Declaration of Intent regarding the establishment of the ExBo of RFC North Sea – Baltic on the 22nd of November 2019.

The ExBo is composed of the representatives of authorities of Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland. Its decisions are based on mutual consent of the representatives of the authorities of the Member States. The ExBo takes legally binding and directly applicable decisions within the scope of its powers defined by the Regulation. They are signed by all members of the ExBo and are published. The ExBo meets four times a year and has a rotating presidency. It was chaired in 2020 by the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.





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1.1.1 Key activities of the ExBo

Despite the adaptations needed in the framework of the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary shift to digital meetings, the ExBo pursued its work throughout the year 2020.

The ExBo met four times in March, July, September and December, on online platforms. The fourth meeting of 2019, which was held in January 2020, could however take place physically in Prague. Each meeting was followed by a common meeting with the Management Board. However, a workshop planned with the Management Board, in order to increase the efficiency of the cooperation, had to be postponed to an undetermined date in 2021 to be held inperson.

In addition to the activities related to the implementation of the Regulation, the ExBo focused on supporting the rail freight activities throughout the Covid-19 crisis. The train performance and the possible bottlenecks related to the pandemic have been monitored by the ExBo throughout the whole year.

The ExBo also pursued in 2020 its work on the milestones identified during its special session in March 2019.

For example, regarding the improvement of border crossings and especially of the one in Bad Bentheim, a third focus session was held in February 2020 in the Netherlands. As a result, a monthly continuous improvement process was launched by ProRail and DB Netz AG together with customers. This process started in Spring 2020 in order to develop common solutions for the actions identified and also to exchange on ad hoc operational issues.

Furthermore, other important topics were discussed within the ExBo meetings, such as the monitoring of the Pre-arranged Paths (PaPs) quality or the Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCRs) on the RFC network.

Another key activity of the ExBo in 2020 concerned the extension of the Corridor to Latvia and Estonia.

Estonia and Latvia are full members of the ExBo since the 22nd November 2019, with the entry into force of the Joint Declaration of Intent regarding the establishment of the ExBo of RFC North Sea – Baltic. Before this date, and since 2018, the ministries of Estonia and Latvia participated as observers within the ExBo meetings, in order to foster the integration of the two countries within the RFC North Sea – Baltic.

However, even with the status of observers, the two ministries took actively part in the work of the ExBo, through the creation of a milestone named "Smooth extension to Latvia and Estonia". This milestone was part of the six defined priorities put into place by the ExBo and aimed at facilitating the extension of the Corridor regarding the operational, legal, administrative and financial constraints. The three Baltic ministries, from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were responsible for it. With the extension of the Corridor in October 2020, the milestone was completed.

In regard to the inclusion of Latvia and Estonia, the routing of the RFC North Sea – Baltic throughout both countries was discussed among the different participants of the Corridor,

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together with the routing from Kaunas (Lithuania) to the Lithuanian/Latvian border. The principal and diversionary lines were approved by the Executive Board in January 2020. In order to extend the principal lines of the RFC towards its two neighbours, Russia and Belarus, Latvia introduced a request to extend the Corridor towards Rezekne and Daugavpils, which is on a diversionary line of the RFC at the moment. The ExBo voted in favour of this extension on the 31th of March 2020. Following this decision, a letter of intent was drafted and circulated among the ministries of the RFC North Sea – Baltic. This letter has been transmitted to the European Commission in January 2021.

The ExBo also delivered its report pursuant Article 22 of the Regulation on the 3rd of April 2020. This report focused on the evolution of the traffic on the Corridor and the state of play of the objectives set up. It also concluded on how to further improve the functioning of the RFC North Sea-Baltic. After the delivering of the report, the Chair of the Board participated to an evaluation of the Article 22 procedure, conducted by a consultant of the European Commission.

Additionally, the report also reported on the milestones elaborated by the ExBo during its special session in March 2019.

Those milestones have been refined during the year 2020 and integrated within a work programme¹, which displays the key topics for the ExBo meetings of the year with a strategic outlook. With the integration of the milestones within the work programme, it was decided to focus on three of them:

- The facilitation of cross-border procedures and promotion of the Europe Asia traffic;
- The ERTMS deployment on RFC North Sea Baltic;
- The enabling of 740 m trains on the RFC North Sea Baltic.

Each member of the ExBo will especially focus on one of those topics.

The ExBo also adopted the update of the Implementation Plan (IP) of the Corridor on 15th of September 2020, which contains the following aspects:

- The inclusion of Latvia and Estonia within RFC North Sea Baltic;
- The changes to the routing previously decided and not yet formally integrated and additional changes due to new developments;
- The update of the Transport Market Study (TMS);
- The update of the objectives and performance;
- The update of the investment plan and of the ERTMS Deployment Plan.

Regarding the Programme Support Action (PSA) granted to some Executive Board members and the Latvian IM/AB for the time period 2018 – 2020, it was decided to apply for an

¹ This work programme, along with some administrative changes regarding the internal rules and processes about the meetings and minutes, are part of internal initiatives put in place in 2020.



extension until mid-2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it impossible to spend the allocated resources.

1.1.2 Cooperation at EU level

The ExBo reinforced its collaboration with the Core Network Corridor (CNC) RFC North Sea – Baltic throughout the year 2020. The CNC Coordinator, Mrs. Catherine Trautmann, was invited to take part in the ExBo meeting of September. The reinforcement of this collaboration will be continued in 2021.

The Ministers of Transport of RFC North Sea - Baltic also adopted the Berlin Declaration, supporting the further development of the rail freight corridors, alongside with the other Ministers of Transport from the European Union, Norway and Switzerland. This Declaration was presented on the 21st of September 2020, during the Ministerial Conference "Innovative Rail Transport – connecting, sustainable, digital".

Moreover, the members of the ExBo contributed to the work of the Network of Executive Boards of the RFCs (NExBo), established in 2016. This informal body aims at exchanging good practices and establishing recommendations for the rail freight corridors. It was chaired by Germany and Croatia in 2020.

The NExBo met twice in 2020, on the 26th of June and on the 1st of December. During its meetings, the NExBo focused on different topics such as allocation rules, Timetabling and Capacity Redesign (TTR) or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Berlin Declaration was also discussed during these meetings. In addition to the meetings, the NExBo created a task force to work on the topic of allocation rules. This task force focused on the allocation rules in cases where not enough capacity is available on re-routing lines. The task force occurred between September and November and reported back to the NExBo during the meeting of December. A follow-up of the task force is planned in 2021.

1.2 MANAGEMENT BOARD

The MB is the decision-making body of the Corridor. Since 2014, the MB is chaired by Mr. Oliver Sellnick from DB Netz AG.

In 2020 Latvian IM "Latvijas dzelzceļš" (LDz), Estonian IM "Eesti Raudtee" (EVR) and the Latvian Allocation Body "LatRailNet" (LRN) became full members of the Corridor and as of 1st of January 2021 members of the EEIG "North Sea-Baltic Rail Freight Corridor" EZIG.

Furthermore, two Infrastructure Managers changed their company name in 2020: the "Lietuvos geležinkelių infrastruktūra" (LGI) became the "LTG Infra" and "Správa železniční dopravní cesty, státní organizace" was changed to "Správa železnic, státní organizace".

The MB is composed of the following Members representing the IMs and AB of the eight countries of the Corridor.

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Ten MB meetings and web conferences took place in 2020. The activities of the MB in 2020 and an outlook for 2021 are further described in chapters 2 and 5.

The MB is supported by the Project Implementation Managers (PIMs) and the RFC Office in Warsaw with its permanent staff and Managing Director (MD), Weronika Karbowiak.





The structure of the Project Management Office (PMO) and the different working groups, subgroup and task forces is shown below.



1.3 ADVISORY GROUPS

Each Advisory Group serves as a platform to facilitate the exchange of information, to find solutions and create mutual understanding in a non-discriminatory way. The AGs are chaired by a Speaker who acts as the contact person between the MB and the AG members.

In 2020 the RAG is chaired by Mr. Dirk Zender from DB Cargo AG and the TAG is chaired by Mr. Friedrich Stuhrmann from MSC Gate Bremerhaven GmbH & Co. KG.





Two RAG/TAG web conferences were held in 2020 with representatives of RUs, applicants, terminals, IMs/AB, Ministries, Regulatory Bodies, DG Move and invited guests. Stakeholders from Latvian and Estonia participated for the first time. Both meetings were attended by in total more than 40 participants.

During the first RAG/TAG meeting in May the RAG Speaker, Mr. Dirk Zender, presented the results of the RU discussion during their pre-RAG meeting focusing on the analysis of the RFC offer. RUs recognised that their wishes from the capacity needs list were partially respected, as well as noted that the improved structure and features of the DigiCat – representation of the PaP catalogue² – supported customers in reviewing the offer. Feedback on expected further improvements was also given, especially in terms of offering alternative capacity during TCRs and general benefits from PaP usage. Terminal representatives focused on ERTMS deployment and 740 m trains on the Corridor. The participants were provided with information about the extension to Latvia and Estonia and the related processes. The results of the User Satisfaction Survey performed in 2019, were also presented including top ten aspects and actions taken by the Corridor to improve the aspects rated as the bottom ten.

During the second RAG/TAG video conference in September the results of the Final Offer for TT2021 and the PaP construction approach for TT2022 were presented. The discussion focused on the Landbridge to Asia topic with the presentation of the potential involvement of RFC North Sea – Baltic in a possible new project starting in 2021. RUs presented challenges they face in daily business and the potential role of RFC North Sea – Baltic in solving them. It was concluded that these observations should be included in the preparation for the workshop in Małaszewicze to be organized by the Polish MoT. As requested during the previous RAG/TAG meeting latest developments from the ELETA project were presented pointing out possible usage of the Train Information System (TIS) by all stakeholders.

² The PaP catalogue is published mid-January of each year for the following network timetable (11 months before timetable change). The PaP is displayed in the IT-Tool PCS of RNE and the PaP catalogue is also published on the website of RFC North Sea -Baltic.

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More information regarding other topics raised during the RAG/TAG meetings in 2020 can be found in different chapters of this Annual Report. The summaries and the documents of the above meetings can be found also on the <u>Corridor's website</u>.

2. MAIN ACTIVITIES

2.1 EXTENSION TO RIGA AND TALLINN

One of the highlights in 2020 was the extension of the Corridor to Latvia and Estonia as foreseen by the Regulation (EU) 913/2010 and that became operational on the 12th of October 2020.

Throughout the year, the MB continued the work on the tasks to make the extension operational. Main milestones achieved were the agreement on the Corridor routing, the update of the Implementation Plan and finally the preparation of the capacity offer.

The Corridor now runs also from Kaunas to Riga and Tallinn as a principal line and as a diversionary line via Vilnius, Daugavpils and Krustpils between Kaunas and Riga. Additional connecting lines have been included to connect the ports and terminals in Latvia and Estonia.

These new lines are part of the 1520mm network as the new Rail Baltica line with 1425mm gauge is still to be constructed (see also chapter 4.3.1).

More information can be found in the Implementation Plan that was consulted with the stakeholders and approved by the ExBo (see also chapter 1.1.1).



The publication of Reserve Capacity for TT 2021 on the 12th of October 2020 marked the start of the capacity offer on the new extensions. The PaP catalogue for TT2022 was prepared for the first time for Latvia and Estonia and published on the 11th of January 2021.

Thanks to the excellent cooperation of all involved stakeholders, all tasks required by the Regulation to extend the Corridor were performed in due time.

2.2 CORRIDOR ONE-STOP-SHOP AND CORRIDOR OFFER

The Corridor One-Stop-Shop (C-OSS) is the joint body of the IMs/AB involved in RFC North Sea – Baltic and the single point of access providing Corridor capacity products to the applicants.



RFC North Sea – Baltic is highly committed to offer capacity products that comply with the market demand and the expectations of applicants regardless if they are RU or non-RU applicants.

To achieve the aim to be a customer and service oriented corridor with fitting capacity products, the applicants are asked for direct and indirect feedback that supports the C-OSS Manager to shape the capacity portfolio constantly.

In order to intensify the close cooperation with applicants and improve the capacity offer, the C-OSS Manager participated in the

- Customer conference between DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A. in Poznań;
- Forum Train Europe Conference (FTE) B and D in Ljubljana;
- RNE working group for the further development of PCS with applicants involvement;
- C-OSS community working group.

Besides that, the C-OSS participated in several RNE meetings to advice on international processes and working methods in cooperation with applicants and IMs.

Moreover, the C-OSS Manager was acting as the leader of the working group TT/C-OSS. Based on the knowledge of national developments in rail freight transport and deep understanding of the market needs this working group is deriving essential insights for capacity-related issues and further developments of the Corridor.

Throughout customer events and individual meetings organized by the C-OSS, applicants were trained in using the Path Coordination System (PCS), the ordering system to request international paths in one step and in a single operation.



2.2.1 Pre-arranged Paths

The TT2021 PaP catalogue was published on the 13th of January 2020 for the sections indicated in the schematic map below:



Around 14,1million path-km were constructed as Pre-arranged Paths for the RFC North Sea -Baltic lines. This dedicated capacity was offered and coordinated by the C-OSS.



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Allocation of PaPs for TT 2021

Nineteen applicants were involved in requesting paths for international freight traffic along the Corridor. All requests were placed in time, by the 13th of April 2020 in PCS. The graph below presents the comparison of the number of requests, where the RFC North Sea – Baltic C-OSS was in the lead and the number of conflicts, which were solved completely.



The graph below presents the comparison of the volume of capacity offered, requested and pre-booked, where the RFC North Sea – Baltic C-OSS Manager was in the lead.



The success seen over the past years regarding capacity requests and pre-booking of PaPs could be repeated and even enhanced in 2020. Looking at the results, even though the offered capacity was reduced by 13 %, the requested capacity had increased by 190 % and the pre-booked (reserved) capacity by 74%.



All subsequent process steps were also successfully completed, as the draft and final offers were provided in time and all requests reached the active timetable to conclude the contracts for the train run starting with the timetable change on 13th December 2020.

2.2.2 Reserve Capacity

Reserve Capacity (RC) on RFC North Sea – Baltic is the capacity product for the running timetable in order to provide applicants with an internationally harmonized path offer for new traffic needs during the year. RC is offered as a guaranteed contingent of "capacity slots" for international freight paths per day, direction, and section on RFC North Sea – Baltic lines. For TT2020, RFC North Sea – Baltic offered 3,9 million path kilometres and one slot per day and direction. The capacity contingent of RC is allocated on the "first come, first served" principle. The TT2020 catalogue for the RC slots was published on the 12th of October 2019. RC was not requested for TT2020.

2.2.3 Cooperation with other Corridors

The extension of RFC Orient/East-Med (RFC OEM) to Germany in 2018 as required by the amended Regulation (EU) 913/2010 led to long overlapping sections with RFC North Sea – Baltic. In order to optimize the usage of the scarce capacity in the bottleneck sections and to avoid negative competition between the corridors, a collaborative model was chosen to regulate the workflow of both C-OSS Managers. The C-OSS of RFC North Sea – Baltic is in charge of the capacity offer north of Prague and Kolín, while the C-OSS of RFC OEM manages the capacity offer south of Prague and Kolín including the section Prague and Kolín. To enable this solution, an operational extension to Rostock and Kolín has been implemented. Besides that, PaP offers in cooperation with RFC Rhine-Alpine, North Sea – Mediterranean and Scan-Med have been harmonized jointly.

2.3 TRANSPORT MARKET STUDY

In view of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 913/2010, the RFC North Sea – Baltic MB has commissioned a consortium of consultant firms to carry out an update of the TMS performed in 2014, including the analysis of the extension to Latvia and Estonia and other possible extensions. The TMS final report was delivered on 12th of December 2019 and the MB and ExBo approval was given on 28th of January 2020. The Executive Summary of the TMS can be found under the following link:

http://rfc8.eu/files/public/Downloads STUDIES/RFC NSB TMS Report Executive Summary .pdf

The most important findings were as follows:

 Transport trends for the period 2004-2017 along the corridor confirmed a dualism, with the market share for rail growing or stabilising in the Western part of the RFC North Sea – Baltic and a generally declining share for rail in the Eastern part of the RFC North Sea – Baltic (with a relatively stronger decline in the Baltic States).



- Line modernisation projects in Poland and in the Baltic States are ongoing. It is expected that the outcome together with the Rail Baltica Global Project will improve the performance of the corridor.
- The heterogeneous pattern along the corridor reflects a fragility of the rail sector that generally suffers from the competition of road transport along the investigated trade lanes:
- Governmental regulation and modal shift promotion policies either in favour of rail transport (i.e. subsidies on Track Access Charges (TAC) as implemented by Germany and the Netherlands) or discouraging road transport can support the competitiveness of the rail transport mode;
- The European Green Deal and the adoption of policy measures affecting the cost of road transport in the future will further support the development of rail freight traffic along RFC North Sea Baltic;
- The location of the Corridor on the Eurasian Landbridge represents a key advantage for RFC North Sea Baltic.

2.4 STUDY ON CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT

In order to improve the conditions for international rail freight transport along the Corridor, the MB decided to carry out a Study on Capacity Improvement. The study was approved by the MB on the 5th of May 2020. The final report of the study can be found under the following link:

http://rfc8.eu/files/public/Downloads STUDIES/RFC NSB SCI Final Report 2020.pdf

The scope of the study included:

- the analysis of the technical maximum train length and possible capacity constraints along the RFC North Sea – Baltic lines, at handover stations and terminals in 2018;

- the analysis of the expected corridor infrastructure and operational characteristics by 2030, based on the review of the impact of ongoing and planned investments by 2030;

- the identification of additional measures to improve the operation of 740 meter trains under the technical and capacity point of view, to allow the smooth and seamless operation of those trains along the RFC North Sea – Baltic by 2030;

- the estimation of the costs related to the additional measures.

Further to the analysis of the train length, the study also assessed the current state and future outlook of the corridor infrastructure with reference to the electrification parameter.

The most important findings were as follows:

- The measures identified within the scope of this study together with the one's ongoing and planned are expected to technically allow the operation of 740 meter long trains on all lines of the RFC North Sea Baltic by 2030;
- The ambitious modernisation programme of the railway lines in Poland might be affected by implementation delays, also due to the different technical/financial maturity of the required investments.



This emphasises the opportunity to financially and administratively support the development of a stable and mature pipeline of projects in Poland to mitigate the risk of persistency of technical constraints towards the operation of 740 meter long trains along the RFC North Sea – Baltic by 2030.

• Further infrastructure investments, operational measures (i.e. scheduling and timetable planning, blocking the use of stations with short tracks and/or retouring) are already in use by the concerned infrastructure managers, which could also be adopted in the future.

2.5 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

In 2020, the User Satisfaction Survey (USS) was carried out for the fifth time in a row. Based on the feedback given in the past years by the participants, the survey was shortened and the questions were adapted to focus on concrete proposals for improvement. Out of 35 invitations sent on behalf of RFC North Sea – Baltic, 16 respondents took part in the survey.



Summary of the USS 2020 – wish for improvement



The topics RFC North Sea – Baltic should work on were infrastructure parameters, alternative offers during TCRs and implementation of the new processes within the International Contingency Management (ICM). In terms of infrastructure, the MB, after the analysis of the Study on Capacity Improvement and other analysis made by the WGs, will exchange with the ExBo to address these issues. The work will continue on providing stability and reliability in the capacity offer including in case of TCRs. In regard to the ICM process RFC North Sea – Baltic will update the re-routing scenarios to include Latvia and Estonia and will adopt changes resulting from the update of the Handbook for ICM planned in the middle of 2021.

2.6 CORRIDOR PERFORMANCE

According to Article 19 (2) of the Regulation the MB of RFC North Sea – Baltic monitors the performance of rail freight services on the freight corridor and publishes the results of this monitoring once a year.

The Performance Report of RFC North Sea – Baltic is published annually on the Corridor's website: <u>http://rfc8.eu/customer/corridor-performance/</u>. The results for the year 2020 will be published in the first half of 2021 but some KPIs are already included in this report. Basis is the commonly agreed KPIs as described in the RNE KPI Guidelines, where the KPIs are divided in 3 categories: Operations, Capacity Management and Market Development.

Operations

Under this category, two KPIs are measured:

1) Overall number of trains on the RFC and

2) Punctuality at RFC Entry (origin) and RFC Exit (destination).

The KPI "Overall number of trains on the RFC" as shown in the graph below displays the number of all international trains running on RFC North Sea – Baltic infrastructure, crossing at least one border on the Corridor. The total amount of trains for 2020 was 80148. The decrease in numbers, especially between March and June is mainly due to the impact of Covid-19 on both economic affairs and on operational procedures and this is also expected to continue after 2020.





The second KPI as shown in the graph below represents the average punctuality of trains running on the Corridor at RFC Entry and RFC Exit. Calculation is based on the data from the Train Information System (TIS). Punctuality for 2020 at entry is 57% and at exit 48%.



RFC North Sea – Baltic also publishes Monthly Punctuality Reports on the Corridor's website where information on the punctuality development is provided for a period of 12 months accompanied by the amount of delay minutes and distribution of delays. These reports are the basis for possible bilateral discussions with the customers on the measures needed for the improvement of the performance.

General comments on punctuality

The Netherlands

On the ProRail network there were some structural problems affecting the punctuality of freight trains and a major issue was capacity at the shunting yard Kijfhoek due to long-lasting infrastructure problems in Waalhaven Zuid. Also, during the year there were a few major infrastructural problems which also caused large delays; various infra malfunctions at shunting yard Kijfhoek, availability of the line at Maasvlakte due to problems with sand and wind and problems with the overhead line in the Rotterdam harbour area.

Belgium

Due to Covid-19, punctuality on the network in general increased, especially during the first Covid-19 phase between April and May.

The biggest incidents of delay on the network were the impact on the train process due to an irregular signal passing in the harbour, incidents involving a person and natural causes, e.g.



exceptional weather conditions like storms, lightning and snow. These causes created a total delay of 34458 minutes for freight traffic.

Germany

Total delays decreased by approximately 1 million minutes in 2020 compared to the previous year. The reason for this is certainly due to the Covid-19 situation as there was less passenger traffic on the DB AG network overall. Most of the primary delays were due to RU causes in the implementation of the traffic, including the preparation of the trains. Another large proportion was due to delays from neighbouring IMs, followed by infrastructure restrictions due to construction works. Disruptions to safety technology systems only accounted for a small proportion of the delays. In general, it can be said that there were no significant shifts in the causes of delays when comparing 2019 and 2020 and as in 2019, most of the delays occurred in Frankfurt (Oderbrücke).

Czech Republic

The main delay reason is formation of trains by RUs (late train ready message at origin - handover at origin, loading problems, late loading). The other not so significant reasons, which affect punctuality on the Corridor, are capacity restrictions due to maintenance works and constructions, bad weather conditions, infrastructure failures and rolling stock problems.

Poland

There were no specific delays concerning the freight traffic in 2020 on the railway lines of RFC North Sea-Baltic. The main delay reasons for international freight traffic at PKP PLK S.A network were related to occupancy of station tracks, rolling stock transfer to another train, rolling stock failure and late notification of readiness for departure. PKP PLK S.A. as an infrastructure manager was responsible for rather minor delays, mainly related to emergency closure of route or station tracks.





Lithuania

On the border section Mockava (LT) – Trakiszki (PL) there is not much traffic. There were no specific problems causing serious performance issues.

2.7 EVENTS

2.7.1 Customer Conference of DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A., 3rd – 4th March 2020.



The Customer Conference of DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A. took place on the 3rd – 4th of March 2020 in Poznań. The conference was divided into thematic blocks. The first one concerned strategic issues in the field of the development of rail connections between Poland and Germany, including presentations and information on the plans and implementation of the transport and infrastructure projects. The second thematic block was devoted to issues related to the timetable and operations. The German and Polish IMs familiarized the guests with changes in rail freight traffic related to investment works, summed up the year of cooperation in the field of rail freight traffic and presented tools to improve cooperation between RUs and IMs in planning and implementation of the rail freight transport process. At the RFC North Sea – Baltic stand, participants of the Conference had the opportunity to obtain detailed information regarding the RFC North Sea – Baltic offer.

2.7.2 Rail Freight Day 2020, 10th December 2020.

The Rail Freight Day 2020 took place as an online event on the 10th of December 2020. The event was co-organised by the European Commission and RailNetEurope. The Rail Freight Day 2020 event provided a platform for debate on all major aspects of the rail freight sector. The



conference opened with a speech of the European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Adina Vălean, and was divided in three sessions:

- Session 1: The Unfulfilled Need for Capacity of Good Quantity and Quality
- Session 2: Delivering Capacity and Efficiency The Role of Digital Solutions
- Session 3: Delivering High-Quality Transport Services to Freight Customers.

Despite the fact that it was an online event, some very active discussions took place in the meeting chat. The presentations and conclusions of the Rail Freight Day 2020 can be found on the <u>RNE website</u>.

3. EUROPEAN FUNDING - CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY (CEF)

In 2020 RFC North Sea – Baltic continued the implementation of the CEF action "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) with the EEIG as beneficiary of the project. The action progressed according to schedule. In March 2020 the Action Status Report for 2019 was successfully delivered to INEA.

As the action ended in 2020 it is envisioned that in 2021 RFC North Sea – Baltic will apply for further financing, once available.



Šķirotava shunting yard in Riga, Latvia Photo: SJSC Latvian Railway Toms Kalnītis



4. COOPERATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 RAILNETEUROPE

RFC North Sea – Baltic is an associate member of RNE and continued to cooperate closely with other RFCs in view of the harmonization and development of services under the RNE umbrella. RFC North Sea – Baltic applies RNE services and guidelines as well as the RNE IT tools: PCS, TIS, CIP and the Charging Information System.

In 2020, RFC North Sea – Baltic representatives participated in two RNE General Assembly meetings and two RFC/RNE High Level Meetings. RFC North Sea – Baltic was also actively engaged in a number of RNE initiatives:

- Further harmonisation and digitalization of CID;
- Further development of PCS;
- Improvement of traffic and train performance management;
- Participation and coordination of the USS;
- Further development of CIP and the CIP strategy;
- TTR Programme and survey;
- Participation in the RNE/RFC KPI WG.

4.1.1 Harmonization of the Corridor Information Document

The harmonization of the CID was one of the RFC priorities and great progress has been made so far with the harmonization of CID for TT2022. The common structure and harmonised texts of CID sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been streamlined to facilitate consultation and simplify references and are published in a single document. The IP has been kept as a separate document. Additionally, the <u>Network and Corridor Information (NCI) Platform</u>, a digital solution to provide information on Network Statements and Corridor Information Documents, was developed under the coordination of RNE and will be operational soon.

4.1.2 Customer Information Platform

The Customer Information Platform (CIP) is an interactive, Internet-based tool, which provides customers and users of the Corridor with information on railway infrastructure in 26 European countries covering the network of 10 out of 11 RFCs. RFC Rhine-Danube, which is operational since October 2020, is expected to implement CIP in the first semester of 2021. As in previous years RFC North Sea – Baltic together with other RFCs under coordination of RNE was working on the development of the existing and new functionalities in CIP. Among others, the CIP interactive map search functionality and the functionalities "ICM Re-routing Options" and "Route planning" were improved. Information on ERTMS deployment projects was implemented. In 2020, the extension of RFC North Sea-Baltic from Lithuania to Latvia and Estonia has been mapped in CIP.

In 2020 the CIP USS was conducted online again; 42 respondents participated in the survey. The results will enable RNE and the RFCs to further improve CIP. Furthermore, the CIP user interface has been reviewed and work on the improvement started; the updated CIP user interface is expected to be available in the first quarter of 2021.



4.1.3 RFC Network

The RFC Network is a platform for cooperation of all Rail Freight Corridors. It consists of the Managing Directors and Chairpersons of the Management Board of the RFCs with RNE representatives invited to participate as observers. The RFC Network is supported by the RFC Network Assistant. In 2020 four RFC Network online meetings were organized in which RFC North Sea-Baltic participated. Among the topics which RFCs worked on in 2020 were the revision of the ICM handbook, the revision of the Regulation, the RFC Network guidelines, further harmonization of common activities and exchange on best practices.

In 2020, the RFC Network also launched the description of future cross-corridor projects to be performed in the coming years with the support of EU funding. RFC North Sea – Baltic representatives are involved in the elaboration of several projects, among others the Landbridge to Asia. In cooperation with other involved Corridors, RFC North Sea – Baltic will work in 2021 on the project definition and its set up.

Another important project is concentrated on TTR and the definition of the coordinating international entity in the process.

4.2 DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

The European Commission organises the Single European Railway Area Committee (SERAC) Working Group on Rail Freight Corridors, which aims at facilitating exchange of views with all ministries, infrastructure managers, allocation bodies and regulatory bodies involved in the RFCs. In 2020, three separate videoconferences took place on 26th of May, 25th of June and 8th of July. During the meetings the significant role of rail freight during the Covid-19 pandemic was underlined by the EC.

The following topics were addressed during the meetings:

- Rail freight policy;
- Outlook on EU co-financing for RFCs as of 2021 and on the second call of the PSA supporting the Issues Logbook;
- Article 22 reports submitted by ExBos in 2020;
- Evaluation of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010;
- Management of temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs): implementation of Annex VII of Directive 2012/34/EU and cross-border coordination;
- Traffic management and the quality of international rail freight services including the performance monitoring;
- International Contingency Management;
- RFC Governance, implementation plans, transport market studies and investment planning;
- Capacity allocation (pre-arranged n paths, reserve capacity the quality of the products and reasons for limited market appeal).

4.3 NORTH SEA-BALTIC CORE NETWORK CORRIDOR

In 2020 no meetings of the CNC Forum took place. CNC Coordinator, Mrs. Catherine Trautmann participated in the ExBo meeting in September (see chapter 1.1.2).



4.3.1 Rail Baltica project implementation

Rail Baltica is a new fast conventional double track electrified railway line that is an integral part of the North Sea - Baltic Core Network Corridor and is an expected principal line of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic. Rail Baltica is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring its functioning via an interoperable and efficient connection of the Baltic States with Poland and on to Finland, as well as multimodal connections between sea, rail and road transport.

In 2020, the Rail Baltica project has advanced further into the design phase and firmly entered the construction phase:



- Further design works have commenced in Latvia and Estonia, now covering all sections of the main line;
- Construction works began in the Riga Central Station;
- First master designs approved and subsequently tenders for construction works launched for extending the 1435 mm railway line from Kaunas towards the Latvian border;
- Territorial planning has commenced for further development of the 1435 mm railway infrastructure in the section from the Polish/Lithuanian state border to Kaunas.

Most significantly, in 2020 the European standard gauge (1435 mm) railway line has been connected to Kaunas (Palemonas) Intermodal Terminal, making it the most Eastern point of the European rail network. It is planned to commence the operations and train traffic in 2021. A video segment with additional information can be found <u>here</u>.





4.4 REGULATORY BODIES

The annual meeting with the Regulatory Bodies (RB) of the Corridor took place online on the 23rd of October. During this meeting, the C-OSS Manager provided information about the results of the allocation process for TT2021 as well as the preparation of the capacity offer for TT2022. The RFC informed RBs about the handling process of the capacity needs list and analysis of TT2021.

The Regulatory Bodies of RFC North Sea – Baltic are cooperating through a Cooperation Agreement. With the extension of RFC North Sea – Baltic to Estonia and Latvia, this Cooperation Agreement needed to be agreed and signed by the RB of these 2 countries This was not possible in time for the formal integration of Estonia and Latvia, but will be finalised early 2021. In the meantime, the applicants apply the procedure described in the Corridor Information Document in case of complaints.

5. OUTLOOK 2021

5.1 EVALUATION OF THE REGULATION 913/2010

In 2021, the European Commission will continue the process of the evaluation of the Regulation 913/2010 launched in 2019. After the publication of the report a follow-up is planned with the impact assessment and the revision of the Regulation.

5.2 INTERNATIONAL CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT SIMULATION

The simulation of the ICM process planned on the route of RFC North Sea – Baltic in 2020 had to be postponed. Taking into account the foreseen update of the ICM Handbook in mid-2021 the simulation is planned to take place in the second half of 2021. This way the new procedures included in the revised Handbook can also be tested during the simulation.





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