

Meeting of the terminal advisory group

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Terminal advisory group of RFC 2

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Thomas Vanbeveren, GEIE RFC 2

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Introduction

Paul Mazataud introduces this fourth meeting of the Terminal advisory group. He thanks Infrabel for hosting this event in the beautiful station of Antwerp.

A tour de table is made so that all participants introduce themselves.



Progress of the corridor

Paul Mazataud and Thomas Vanbeveren present the progress of the corridor since last TAG meeting (see presentation “Progress of the corridor”):

- the operational start of RFC 2 on 10 November 2013 with the publication of the Corridor Information Document, the list of works and the catalogue of paths for 2014;
- the extensions of RFC 2 in January 2015, November 2016 and November 2018, and more specifically the extension to UK;
- the capacity management in 2014 for the 2015 timetable, which is the first timetable under the entire responsibility of RFC 2;
- performance indicators of the corridor: traffic, punctuality and theoretical running time.

Paul Mazataud indicates that the data on traffic is both a bad news for the short term and a good news for the long term: the recent strike in France in June 2014 will have a negative impact on the traffic in June and probably will have a negative effect on the 2014 figures, which is a pity because we haven't had any major strike for the last four years. On a longer term, we have more reasons to be optimistic as some railway undertakings expect some growth on three axes:

- the routes Benelux / Switzerland and Benelux / Italy. Railway undertakings have more and more business with existing clients as well as new clients. Their business for 2015 should be quite higher than for 2014. Also, more customers would like to try RFC 2 to be on both corridors and not only on RFC 1;
- the traffic between Benelux and UK, which can grow already in 2016, with the positive impact of the charging measures in the Channel tunnel;
- The traffic from the Benelux to southern France and Spain, for which the main issue is not to have enough demand but for infrastructure managers to be able to offer enough capacity. Indeed, our main concern is the bottleneck in Lyon, where there is heavy passenger traffic and we will make our best to have enough paths crossing Lyon and going on to Corridor 6.

Paul Mazataud informs on the study on loading gauge that is currently taking place. Its aim is to define measures to implement P400 loading gauge (enabling the transport of semi-trailers) on the corridor and to evaluate their cost. The P400 loading gauge already exists on some parts of the corridor but not everywhere. We have minor issues in Luxembourg, more important issues in France between Metz and Strasbourg and between Saint-Louis and Basel. We should know by end 2015 the cost to enhance the tunnels to P 400 traffic as these are the main obstacle.

Damien Comiti would like to know what remains to be done to implement the extensions and if RFC 2 needs help from the concerned terminals.

Paul Mazataud informs that the main work to do for these extensions is to define the lines and terminals to integrate in the corridor. Pre-arranged paths which can be offered on these extensions must be defined, data on investments have to be collected, the performance management system has to be adapted to these extensions and the works which affect capacity on these sections have to be published. This should be fairly easy to do for extensions to Zeebrugge, Amsterdam and Marseille as these terminals are already on other corridors. This is not the case for the extension to UK, which will lead to modifications of their network code. For example, the capacity request planning is not the



same in UK as it is for the rest of the corridor. The corridor can work on a few subjects: the collection of terminal data, understanding issues on operations, evaluating the expectations of terminals and railway undertakings on pre-arranged paths and joint initiatives on marketing and communication issues.

Rudi Achermann explains that investments made in Switzerland are made with the involvement of all partners, and especially also with neighbouring countries. For example, between 2014 and 2020, Switzerland is investing about 920 million CHF to upgrade the railway transit corridor Basel – Gotthard – Chiasso to loading gauge P400. Out of this, about 230 million CHF are invested in connection lines and terminals in Italy to achieve full potential. These investments shall boost the railway capacity between Basel and Chiasso from today's 180 to 260 trains a day in 2020.

Traffic management studies on maritime ports

Paul Mazataud presents the proposal of RFC 2 to study operations management in maritime ports (see presentation “Traffic management studies on maritime ports”). This proposal follows the discussions at the ports business corner of the Ghent conference, where terminals said very clearly that the main train run cost was its first or last mile. For RFC 2, this is a challenge as these lines might even not belong to infrastructure managers of RFC 2. The aim of this study would be to identify soft measures, work on a bilateral level (one port with one or two corridors).

Damien Comiti agrees that this problem is more specific to maritime ports than inland waterway ports and it is also more specific to rail mode.

Koen Cuypers explains that the main problem concerns the port area, as it is in the port that lots of human resources, locomotives and equipment are needed to get the train in the port. This is most specifically the case in the field of single wagon load traffic. We had lots of discussions on this in the port of Antwerp. It is a very unbalance situation as we need about five times more resources to deal with a train in the port than to bring a train to the port.

Antony Pétilion informs that in Port de Calais, port security is an important cost. The end of the trip is not the port, which is not always clear for operators. Operations in the port must be as smooth as possible, despite the train control. For example, there are fences between the train and the ship.

Maurits Van Schuylenburg explains that there are no different security issues in the port of Rotterdam than other modes of transport. Sometimes, it is easier for rail than for barge. For example, trains to Maasvlakte are automatically scanned for security issues. Also, a large part of the port goods don't go on ships; they go to industrial companies that are in the ports.

Jean-Yves Munsters believes that, when a terminal enhances its railway infrastructure, railway undertakings take this opportunity to raise their price to the end customer and therefore keep the corresponding margin for them.

Paul Mazataud raises the question of the choice of the port for the study. He indicates that some infrastructure managers already have an idea of the one to choose, which is easier when the infrastructure manager already had the corresponding initiative, which can be taken over by RFC 2.



Koen Cuypers informs that there is already a working group constituted of the Flemish ports and Infrabel, which deals with traffic management related issues. They work on process optimisation and the improvement of interaction between them. It is a very ambitious project, for which a request for funding may be made to the TEN-T agency.

Paul Mazataud explains that the European funding also came to the mind of RFC 2. We thought of subsidies already received to use for these studies. The only problem is that the money is only available until end 2014.

In the context of the Core Network Corridors, it is in the essence of the EU funding to welcome applications for two different modes. This will be welcomed by the EU, so we may think of applying together for these subsidies.

Paul Mazataud concludes that RFC 2 has ideas of studies to do and will discuss them with some ports. This should be our number one interaction with the terminals and if these studies work as we expect, this will be the main subject of future discussion in the TAG.

North Sea – Mediterranean Core Network Corridor

Paul Mazataud presents the North Sea – Mediterranean Core Network Corridor (see presentation North Sea – Med CNC). He informs on the CNC, its work plan, its links and geographical alignment with RFC 2. RFC 2 approved the Commission's decision to use geographical names, but then the name of "Corridor 8" started to be used. This name mustn't be accepted. Also, our name will soon concentrate on the words "North Sea – Mediterranean".

Paul Mazataud explains that some parts of the CNC are not aligned with the lines of RFC 2 as it is not possible to have two parallel lines on the CNC. Indeed, the CNC aims at having high investments on few lines, but RFC 2 needs to have parallel lines for traffic management in case of works or disturbance. Some terminals are not on the CNC but on RFC 2 and vice versa, due to the definition of criteria (traffic, geography ...) for the CNC.

Kate Verslype informs that the port of Ghent is on RFC 2, with two or three terminals, but on the CNC it does not have any rail terminals. The regulation indicates that Ghent is not a rail terminal, which is difficult to change. The definitive alignment will be decided next week. One of the criteria to be a rail terminal is to enable the access of trains with a length of 750 meters, which the port of Ghent doesn't have. Kate Verslype finds it difficult to understand that in the area of Ghent and Antwerp, the CNC only focusses on rail though it is supposed to have a multimodal focus.

Anthony Pétilion wonders if there are two different policies, one outside the port with RFF and one in the port with RFC 2.

Paul Mazataud answers that, RFF being a member of RFC 2, whatever RFC 2 does is with the blessing of RFF. RFC2 may take initiatives on issues such as traffic management, but this is to make sure that there is consistency between countries. The main counterpart of the port remains RFF. CNCs and RFCs are complementary. To get EU funding, we have to be in relation with CNC. Therefore, if a terminal is not on the North Sea – Mediterranean CNC, it will benefit of the work of RFC 2 but might not benefit from EU funding.

Vos Wouter would like to know if the port of Terneuzen can become a terminal of RFC 2 as it has traffic on the corridor.



Paul Mazataud answers that the list of RFC 2 terminals can be modified as wished. RFC2 will update this list once a year. Zealand Seaports can make the request to RFC 2 and to their ministry in parallel.

Damien Comiti informs that a study exists on the North Sea – Mediterranean CNC and its connection with inland navigation, represented by Voies Navigables de France.

Paul Mazataud is aware of the existence of three market studies: the RFC2 study (done in 2012/2013), the CNC study (in progress) and the “VNF” study. All three are funded by the EU;

Communication

Claire Hamoniau informs on RFC 2 communication issues (see presentation “Communication”): the way RFC 2 communicated on the corridor in 2013 and 2014, the geographical information system (GIS) project and its wish to communicate together with terminals.

Following a question from Rudi Achermann, currently no terminal has information linked to a geographical system.

Paul Mazataud adds that the possible cooperation between a terminal and RFC 2 can be done in a very informal way.

Information on terminals

Claire Hamoniau informs on steps to take for the information on terminals (see presentation “Terminal information”). Regulation 913-2010 requests that the Corridor Information Document contains information on terminals. For this reason, it was decided in the last TAG meeting that each terminal will fill in the forms, one for each type of terminal, with the necessary information, place them on their website and send the link of the corresponding page to the corridor. The corridor will then make a link from its own website to the webpage of the terminal.

Kate Verslype asks if there is a specific reason for the forms to be located on the terminal’s website and not on RFC 2’s website. Also it is currently difficult for the port of Ghent to put the form on its own website.

Claire Hamoniau answers that this solution enables the terminal to keep the forms updated without having to go through the corridor, as the link remains the same.

Paul Mazataud adds that there is also an issue of liability. RFC 2 doesn’t want to be responsible for terminal information. Nevertheless, an alternative solution can be found for terminals which can’t put the forms on their own websites, such as to download the forms on RFC 2’s website with a disclaimer. He adds that this initiative was done with RFC 1. Therefore another advantage of having the form on the terminal’s website is that it can be accessible by more than one corridor. This information will be a big added value for stakeholders, especially when it is on a geographical information system.

Filip Merckx asks if each corridor will create its own GIS.



Paul Mazataud answers that this is a difficult subject. There are two ways of creating a GIS: to do it separately, but then it doesn't serve customers which are on different corridors, or for all corridors to do it together. If we create a GIS all together, the best solution would then be to mandate a third party to coordinate the process. All corridors would like to have a unique GIS. However, it is already difficult to work with five countries and it will become a complex project to work with twenty countries. Therefore, it might be easier to make a GIS with five countries now, than in a long time with twenty countries.

Rudi Achermann explains that the import of infrastructure data is a major issue and it has to be automated.

Pre-arranged Paths linked to terminals for the 2015 timetable

Thomas Vanbeveren informs on the pre-arranged paths for the 2015 timetable, focusing on the terminal perspective (see presentation "capacity"). He describes the booking calendar, gives a geographical overview of paths per section and informs on the consultation done for the 2016 timetable.

Maurits Van Schuylenburg would like to know if paths have a better quality now.

Thomas Vanbeveren answers that we will have to see this after the final allocation with feeders/outflows and after the train has run, as these paths are protected from works and we will have to see if this rule was followed.

Paul Mazataud adds that these paths should be of better quality due to the way the infrastructure managers worked on the RFC 2 paths. Indeed, before publishing the paths, they did their best to see if there was a conflict with works.

On Kate Verslype's request, Thomas Vanbeveren will send further details on paths to Ghent.

Paul Mazataud explains that the 2015 timetable was RFC 2's first year so RFC2 IMs were careful with the quality of these paths. It is our intension to increase the number of paths and the corridor will be extended, therefore in 2016 we hope to be able to provide 10 to 12 million km of paths instead of 7 million.

Filip Merckx would like to know if paths can be cancelled.

Paul Mazataud answers that paths can be cancelled, but if they are cancelled late, a fee might have to be paid by the applicant. This fee is different according to the infrastructure manager.

Filip Merckx would like to know if the corridor approaches railway undertakings which are not yet on the corridor.

Mazataud answers that the corridor received booking request from three applicants between January and April 2014 for timetabling 2015. Two of them are not railway undertakings. This year we did our best to meet all possible applicants and met seven. Most of them seem to be willing to book paths for 2016. We also tried to meet other railway undertakings. One issue is that we don't have many Dutch railway undertakings involved, but we will meet them in two weeks at their request. We have a railway advisory group (RAG) and we observe that at each RAG meeting, new railway undertakings come. They are more and more interested in our corridor.



Liefkenshoek tunnel

Paul Mazataud informs that a visit of the Liefkenshoek tunnel was organised. Unfortunately, as some tests have been delayed, the visit of the tunnel is cancelled. He apologises for this change of program. A film on this tunnel is shown instead.

Paul Mazataud and Thomas Vanbeveren explain that the opening of the Liefkenshoek tunnel has been taken into account in the construction of the 2015 Pre-arranged Paths. It has a positive impact on the performance of the Antwerp – Lille Pre-arranged Paths. The tunnel will also reduce the distances between the terminals of the port of Antwerp and the Antwerp North marshalling yard.

Conclusion

Paul Mazataud concludes this meeting. He thanks the participants for having come and informs that the next meeting could take place next December with a feedback on maritime port traffic management studies.