

Meeting of the railway undertaking advisory group

19 March 2014 - Brussels

Participants	2
Introduction	3
Progress of the corridor	3
Communication	4
RAG working groups	4
Pre-arranged paths (PaPs)	5
Corridor Information Document (CID)	6
Path Coordination System (PCS)	6
ERTMS	6
Conclusion	7

Participants

Railway undertakings advisory group of RFC 2

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Régis Vircondelet, Fret SNCF

David Tellouk, Fret SNCF

Marie-Anne Menguy, Fret SNCF

Eric Mollet, Fret SNCF

Antoine Curatola, CFL Cargo

John Langerak, DB Schenker NL

Nicolas Corbeel, B-Logistics

François Coart, Europorte

Jacques Dirand, CER

Regulatory body

Gretel Panneels (Belgium)

Management board of RFC 2

Rudi Achermann, SBB

Andri Mathis, Trasse Schweiz

Maurice Faramelli, ACF

Marc Oestreicher, ACF

Daniel Thull, CFL

Lucie Chevrat, RFF

Sylvain Mosmann, RFF

David Marteau, Eurotunnel

Kris van Crombruggen, Infrabel

Paul Mazataud, GEIE RFC 2

Eric Guenther, GEIE RFC 2

Thomas Vanbeveren, GEIE RFC 2

Claire Hamoniau, GEIE RFC 2



Introduction

Paul Mazataud introduces this fifth meeting of the Railway undertaking advisory group. He thanks Infrabel for hosting the meeting.

Régis Vircondelet asks the adding of a point to the agenda on the extension to UK.

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

Progress of the corridor

Paul Mazataud presents the progress of the corridor since last RAG meeting (see presentation "Progress of the corridor"): the operational launch of the corridor in November 2013, the publication of the 2015 catalogue of Pre-arranged Paths in January 2014, the set-up of the Executive Board ERTMS working group, the action plan for the extension to UK, the North Sea – Mediterranean Core Network Corridor and the upcoming events or challenges on capacity, communication and investments in the spring 2014.

Régis Vircondelet informs that he identified existing traffic of about 40 international trains out of 50 per week beyond London, i.e. about 2000 out of 2500 in 2013. Therefore, if the corridor doesn't go beyond London, there will be a lack. Without a market study, it is clear that the North of London is interesting for the corridor.

Concerning HS1, Régis Vircondelet explains that there are three advantages and one disadvantage to use this high speed line.

- Advantages:
 - o HS1 is accessible with European type wagons;
 - o the access to the terminals of Barking and Dagenham is direct via HS1, which saves three hours compared to the use of the conventional line;
 - o freight trains can access HS1 on one track six hours a day, between 11pm and 5 am, which is a good schedule (after the last Eurostar and before the first one of the next morning).

- Disadvantage: the cost of the path is quite high. Efforts must be made to lower it.

All in all, he concludes that there are more pros than cons and that HS1 is an attractive option for rail operators. It should be included in RFC2.

Paul Mazataud suggests the railway undertakings to express this message in a formal way, and for example with a letter to the Executive board and the British ministry. Régis Vircondelet suggests writing a letter only to the Executive Board who will transmit it to the British ministry. He will include the names of the terminals used.

François Coart adds that the request has to focus on the West Coast Main Line.

Paul Mazataud encourages that this letter is sent quickly. He then informs the participants of the work to be done on the extension to UK: technical subjects must be



dealt with by the infrastructure managers, the choices of lines and terminals must be made. The British network code will have to be modified. Rules of RFC 2 will also have to be modified and railway undertakings could have comments to make on these modifications. A sub-group of this RAG could be set-up on the UK extension. Railway undertakings from UK will also have to be integrated.

Communication

Claire Hamoniau presents the communication activities of the corridor (see presentation “Communication”): the launch of the website in November 2013, the communication done through the press, the events, with a special focus on the Ghent inauguration event, and the study of a geographical information system.

She asks the participants if they have special wishes in terms of communication. Participants agree that RFC 2’s website should have a link to PCS and to the websites of the other corridors.

RAG working groups

Working group Coordination of works

Eric Guenther presents the state of play of the group (see presentation “RU working group Coordination of works”). He informs on the agenda of the meeting which took place the 3 December 2013, on the coordination of works’ calendar, on the reliability of pre-arranged paths versus other international paths and feeder/outflow paths and on the request of the group to encourage RFC 2 to coordinate capacity supply on Athus-Meuse and the French North-East line.

Régis Vircondelet thinks that the fact that feeder/outflow sections can be affected by works in the short term should not be accepted. What could the railway undertakings and the corridor do to improve this situation?

Paul Mazataud answers that a midterm solution exists: the number of corridor lines will greatly improve in the coming years, which means that there will be many more pre-arranged paths, which are protected from works.

He indicates that, following the infrastructure managers’ coordination of works meeting of yesterday, it was agreed that the readability of the existing excel-file for publication of works had to be greatly improved. At the moment, it is just a list with over 2000 lines. The goal is to focus on works which have a bigger impact and to provide a graphical overview.

John Langerak asks what happens when a PaP is changed and how this information is communicated to the client. Paul Mazataud answers that the current PaPs have a lot of flexibility build into them. Specifically, the way they are defined is compatible with different itineraries. For example, the PaP that is defined as “Metz-Strasbourg” is compatible with two itineraries, either via Remilly or via Nancy.

John Langerak expresses doubts about the two years forecast on works, which seems too far in time since most works are only planned half year, or even less, in advance. Paul

Mazataud answers that the list is continuously updated. However the goal is to not change the PaPs after publication.

Working group Infrastructure upgrade

Eric Guenther informs on the status of this working group (see presentation “RU working group – Infrastructure upgrade”): the needs of railway undertakings in terms of loading gauge, the state of play of studies launched (North East line in France and Vosges tunnels), the alternatives to the use of the Vosges tunnels and the wagon specifications.

John Langerak indicates that a study is undergoing to see if a shortcut through France is possible to avoid the works near Oberhausen in Germany (for the Rotterdam-Switzerland traffic on RFC1). Unfortunately, the loading gauge on these RFC 2 lines is insufficient at the moment.

Régis Vircondelet informs that if freight trains would want to use the high speed line through Lorraine and Alsace, at least two locomotives for a maximum of 1300 tons would be needed (or an extra pushing locomotive).

Nicolas Corbeel adds that usually, it is not the railway undertaking which is responsible for loading gauge, as the combined transport operators chose the wagons. In case of doubts, B-Logistics usually requests an exceptional transport to make sure there will be no loading gauge problems (infrastructure managers have to study the path for such a request). Railway undertakings understand that infrastructure managers could attach conditions to the use of the concerned lines, as the fact of using wagons 27 cms high.

Paul Mazataud asks the participants if currently wagons are used with a floor more than 27 cms above the rails. Nicolas Corbeel answers that these wagons exist but are not numerous.

Paul Mazataud informs that a study, which will assess the costs of enhancing the infrastructure of the Luxembourg and French parts of the corridor is underway. Daniel Thull adds that this study lists the places where changes have to be made and their cost.

Paul Mazataud informs that there may be a problem in Switzerland with two tunnels which don't allow P400 loading gauge trains. However, SBB is constructively working with the other RFC2 infrastructure managers to find a solution to this problem.

Pre-arranged paths (PaPs)

Thomas Vanbeveren gives an update on the Pre-arranged paths catalogues (see presentation “PaP catalogue update”): the publication of the catalogue for the 2015 timetable, its characteristics, the conditions to request a PaP, the status of reserve capacity for the 2014 timetable and information on the consultation of applicants for the 2016 timetable.

Paul Mazataud insists on the importance of the meeting which will be held by RFF on 12 May 2014, in order to consult applicants on capacity request.

Concerning the priority rule, he explains that the existing rule will be reviewed to take into consideration, at the request of RFC 1, conflicts on lines with heavy traffic.



Corridor Information Document (CID)

Thomas Vanbeveren presents the CID for the 2015 timetable as well as the preparation of the CID for the 2016 timetable (see presentation “Corridor Information Document”).

The presentation doesn't call for comments from participants.

Path Coordination System (PCS)

Thomas Vanbeveren informs on the way to use PCS to request a PaP (see presentation “PCS – usage and feedback”).

Nicolas Corbeel would prefer that railway undertakings could book themselves a path and transfer it at a later stage to another railway undertaking. Daniel Thull thinks that, according to directive 2012-34, the transfer of a path from one railway undertaking to another one is not possible. Marie-Anne Menguy informs that SNCF raised this question, in the context of the EC consultation about the “handbook”. She also asks how long it takes to get an answer to a path request.

Thomas Vanbeveren answers that it depends on the complexity of the dossier. It takes longer if there is a feeder/outflow and if the request concerns the annual booking, as allocations are made in September.

A representative from SNCF asks what has to be done on PCS to add days to the path request, for example a Saturday or Sunday. Thomas Vanbeveren informs that another dossier must be created. Maurice Faramelli adds that it is planned that for next year the customer fills in one dossier and that PCS then splits it in two.

ERTMS

Sylvain Mosmann presents a state of play of ERTMS on the corridor (see presentation “ERTMS on Corridor 2”), focussing on the launch of an Executive Board working group which aim is to find an agreement on the ERTMS deployment.

François Coart informs of the shortage of locomotives with KVB equipment on board. Also, he regrets that there is no unified strategy at corridor level. For example, in Belgium, it was decided to withdraw the Memor system, but to allow the TBL1 system. This generates competition problems as well as timing problems. Indeed, the notice was given to railway undertakings in the summer 2013. This is too short for most new entrants wanting to enter the Antwerp zone to comply with this new constraint. Also, on some Belgium lines, Limited Supervision is requested, which implies that locomotives have on-board Baseline 3 equipment.

François Coart indicates that no study has been performed to assess the consequences of a locomotive upgrade. He also informs that Belgian authorities informed that there was a consultation on the deployment of ERTMS, but neither CER nor ERFA were consulted.



Régis Vircondelet indicates that the ERTMS retrofit of locomotives has a high cost. Daniel Thull informs that railway undertakings can request EU subsidies in September 2014 for the equipment in Baseline 3. François Coart points out that Baseline 3 is still very experimental.

Régis Vircondelet concludes that the most important is to be aware of the deployment plan and mainly to know at which date the ERTMS equipment will be compulsory on the corridor.

Conclusion

Paul Mazataud concludes this meeting. He thanks the participants for having come and informs that the next meeting could take place after this summer, when the PaPs for the 2015 timetable will have been allocated, the ERTMS working group will have come to an agreement and the working groups made progresses.