





Content

Message from the Presidents and Managing Director————————————————————————————————————	 04
1. About the Corridor	o6
1.1 A major European rail freight route	 06
1.2 Easier, Faster, Safer	08
13. An initiative of the European Commission	<mark>09</mark>
2. The governance of the Corridor, an ambitious collaborative approach————————————————————————————————————	10
2.1. The Executive Board	11
2.2 The Management Board————————————————————————————————————	<mark>15</mark>
2.3. The Advisory Groups	22
3. Cooperation with stakeholders	26
3.1. The European Commission—	26
3.2. The Rail Freight Corridors Network————————————————————————————————————	27
3.3. The Core Network Corridor	2 7
3.4. The Regulatory bodies	2 7
3.5. RailNetEurope	28
4. Key activities and topics in 2020	29
4.1. Activities of the Executive Board	
4.2. Activities of the Management Board	31
4.3. Capacity and Temporary Capacity Restrictions—	33
4.4. Train performance and traffic management—	37
4.5. Information to the customers	 38
5. Performance of the Corridor and User Satisfaction Survey	3 9
5.1. Performance of the Corridor	3 9
5.2. User Satisfaction Survey 2020	42
6. Events	44
7 Finance	47

Message from the Presidents and Managing Director







There will not be an activity report this year that does not mention the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scale of the event makes it a historic one. The annual report of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Med is not an exception. Let us therefore begin with three interesting and ultimately rather positive lessons.

Firstly, this crisis has given a new 'gain of respect' to an often invisible sector, that of logistics. While the world went in lockdown, logistics operators, and above all rail operators, were ensuring the continuity of supply for an entire continent. The rail sector has shown great resilience and adaptability, which demonstrates that it will be a force to be reckoned with in the decades to come.

This is rather encouraging.

Secondly, we all have had to reinvent modes of cooperation through sharing tools, digital platforms and online meetings. And even if many of us miss the interactivity, informality, non-verbal communication of face-to-face meetings, this forced transition to remote working methods has led us to dive into the digital world and discover all its benefits. Work will be a mix of face-to-face and remote work, certainly offering a better balance between efficiency and environmental impact while bringing people together.

This offers perspectives.

And thirdly, this crisis has shown that our institutions, and more generally the «European project», have all the sense they need to face up to the challenges ahead, including that of global warming and its effects, which we are already seeing.

This is reassuring and interesting at the same time.

Besides that, like many Europeans, we were saddened by the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, at the corridor level translated by the leave of the Department for Transport of the United Kingdom from the Executive Board at the beginning of the transition

period, in January 2020, as well as of Network Rail and Eurotunnel at the end of 2020. However, the Channel Tunnel remains, as does its traffic, and we remain confident that in the near future we will be able to develop a new mode of cooperation with our British colleagues for the benefit of our industry and economy. Despite the difficult times we face, the European ambition of modal shift continues and RFC North Sea - Med remains a major axis in Western Europe to connect economic hubs as the Benelux, the Paris Region, the Rhone Valley, Switzerland, Northern Italy, Luxembourg or the French Grand Est region.

In 2021, the Permanent Team, the Management Board and Executive Board, will therefore continue the actions undertaken in 2020 to be as close as possible to their customers:

- accompany Railway undertakings throughout their capacity request process,
- increase field trips and customer meetings to assist customers in the deployment of their strategy,
- strengthen bilateral meetings between Infrastructure Managers and Railway undertakings to identify the root causes of non-quality and thus improve service reliability,
- continue to monitor until the end of any issue for which the Corridor has been seized by one of its customers,
- consolidate cooperation with the terminals, which are our interface with «the rest of the world»!

And in these turbulent times, trust, cooperation and openness remain our guiding principles for pursuing our common ambition to see rail freight develop.

Yann Le Floc'h

Managing Director RFC North Sea - Med

Valérie Verzele

President Executive board

Michaël Dierickx

President of the Assembly RFC North Sea – Med

1. About the corridor

1.1. A major European rail freight route

Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Mediterranean (RFC North Sea – Med) is a freight oriented route connecting the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom¹. It links main European ports (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, North Sea Port, Zeebrugge, Dunkirk, Calais and Marseille) to the industrial zones of Western Europe and to the gateways of Southern Europe, with more than 6000 kilometers of lines.

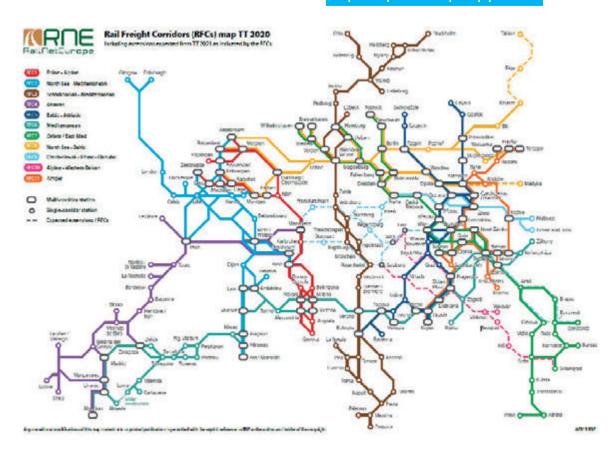
The Corridor is also an access to the rest of Europe, being connected to the RFCs Rhine-

Alpine, Atlantic, Mediterranean, North Sea – Baltic and Rhine-Danube, hence building a European network of rail freight corridors.

RFC North Sea – Med is one of the most promising rail freight corridors in Europe, with more than 40.000^2 international trains per year.

Information on the routing of the Corridor and of the RFC Network can be found in the Customer Information Platform (CIP). CIP is accessible, without registration, and free of charge, via the following link:

https://cip.rne.eu/apex/f?p=212:65





1.2. Easier, Faster, Safer

Easier, with a single counter for the supply of quality paths

Railway undertakings and other entities, such as shippers, freight forwarders and combined transport operators, can request capacity for international rail freight traffic, through the corridor one-stop-shop (C-OSS) by using the Path Coordination System (PCS) for international bookings.

This capacity takes the form of "off the shelf" paths, called Pre-arranged Paths (PaPs), reserved for international freight and that can either be requested for the next annual timetable or, for more flexibility, at short term notice (up to 30 days before the train run).

These paths benefit from a high quality:

- they are defined after the yearly consultation of all our customers;
- theγ are reserved for international freight traffic ahead of booking time and benefit from a specific legal protection against cancellation;
- they are built on the basis of coordinated works along the Corridor;
- they are coordinated with the paths of other rail freight corridors.

Faster, with a high level of performance

In order to increase punctuality on the Corridor, train performance is measured and analysed. When a train deviates from its planned schedule, the European IT tool Train Information System

(TIS) provides the relevant information on the delay. Railway undertakings therefore benefit from an international view of the punctuality of their trains, summarised in regular reports.

Safer, with an optimised network

By improving interoperability and exchanging information on investments across borders, the lines of the Corridor are optimised for international traffic.

RFC North Sea - Med is gradually deploying the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) on its main lines following the European Deployment Plan (EDP) published by the European Commission. This system is designed to replace national ones, which require specific equipment for engines running on several networks.

More information on the topic can be found under Chapter 4 – Key activities and topics in 2020.

1.3. An initiative of the European Commission

The Rail Freight Corridors

In order to promote rail freight transport and increase its modal share, the European Parliament and Council adopted Regulation (EU) 913/2010 concerning a European rail network for compe-

titive freight, which entered into force on 9 November 2010. The network of Rail Freight Corridors now consists of 11 corridors across Europe, that regularly meet and coordinate their activities.

The Core Network Corridors

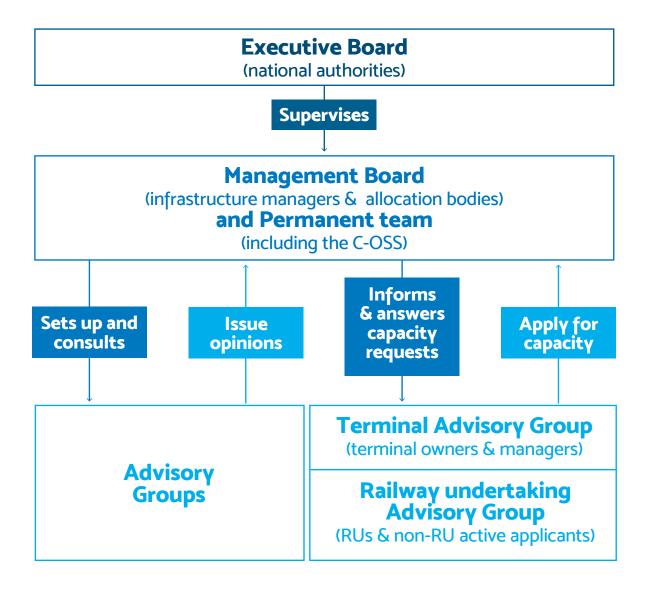
Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network and Regulation (EU) 1316/2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, both adopted on 11 December 2013, have brought new challenges for the rail freight corridors. The first

Regulation created nine multimodal Core Network Corridors (CNC), which are led by nine European Coordinators and two horizontal coordinators: one for ERTMS and one for Motorways of the Sea. The second Regulation amended the Regulation (EU) 913/2010.



2. The governance of the Corridor, an ambitious collaborative approach

The governance of the rail freight corridors includes an Executive Board, a Management Board and two Advisory Groups. The coordination between these entities is shown in the chart below:



2.1. The Executive Board



Mission and vision

The Executive Board, through its cooperation at the level of the Ministries of Transport has the objective of improving the conditions for international rail freight transport. It has the general responsibility to implement Regulation (EU) 913/2010 with regard to RFC North Sea - Med, and the equivalent Swiss measures.

According to the Agreement establishing the Executive Board, it has the following main responsibilities:

- to ask the Management Board to report on any matter relating to the smooth functioning of the Corridor;
- to ensure that the extensions of the RFC North Sea Med are duly established
- to take decisions on general matters of common interest concerning the internal functioning of RFC North Sea Med without prejudice to the competence of Member States and Switzerland regarding the planning and financing of rail infrastructure;
- to adopt the Framework for Capacity Allocation (FCA);
- to consider, and where appropriate to support, the requests of the Management Board for European subsidies;
- to support the Management Board's work, in particular if the latter encounters anγ difficulties in fulfilling its tasks.

It has the following cooperation responsibilities:

to ensure, as far as it can, that the development and implementation of RFC North Sea - Med is conducted in a manner consistent with those of ERTMS Corridor C and in line with the EDP published by the European Commission;

- to work together where necessary with the European institutions and organisations, the National railway Safety Authorities, and the regulatory bodies of its members;
- to strive for good cooperation between rail freight corridors;
- to coordinate the work of the RFC North Sea Med and the CNC North Sea-Med with the European coordinator and national authorities.

The Executive Board of RFC North Sea - Med also assumes the responsibilities of the Executive Board created by the Letter of Intent for the deployment of ERTMS on Corridor C "Antwerp - Basel/ Lyon" signed on 6 June 2006 by the Ministers of Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

The functions of the Board under this Letter of Intent include:

the coordination of deployment of ERTMS along the former ERTMS Corridor C and ERTMS coordination along the Corridor in accordance with national implementation plans, as well as coordination of decommissioning of national systems in order to foster the implementation of ERTMS on the Corridor.

Organisation

The Board is constituted on the basis of an international Agreement which was signed on 8 October 2014 by the Ministers of Transport of Belgium, France Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

It is composed of representatives of the authorities of the Member States concerned and Switzerland. Following the application of the agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European

Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (2019/C 384 I/O1), the UK representatives did not seat in the Executive Board during the transition period starting on the 1st February 2020.

The Board takes decisions, which are provided for by Regulation (EU) 913/2010, on the basis of mutual consent. These decisions, signed by all the members of the Board and published, are legally binding on their addressees.

The Executive Board meets four times a year. The following have a standing invitation to attend the meetings of the Board:

- the representatives of the Management Board and Permanent Team;
- the representatives of the European Commission and of the Innovation & Networks Executive Agencγ (INEA – from 01.04.2021 CINEA);
- a representative of the Regulatory Bodies for the railway sector in the countries concerned.

And on invitation:

- the European coordinators for TEN-T;
- the representative(s) of the National Safety Authorities of the countries concerned;
- the representative(s) of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA);
- the Speakers of the Advisory Groups.

The Executive Board is chaired by the Belgian Ministry of Transport. The chair is responsible for the secretariat, which provides the appropriate administrative support to enable the Board to carry out its work. It ensures that the tasks of the Board are properly coordinated and organises all other associated aspects of the work.

The activities of the Executive Board are described in Chapter 4 - Key activities and topics in 2020.

FULL REPRESENTATIVES



Valérie Verzele
Director-General
Federal Public
Service Mobility
and Transport of
Belgium



Jeannot Poeker
Principal Inspector
Ministry of Mobility
and Public works,
Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg



Pierre-André Meyrat

Deputy Director

Federal Office of

Transport of

Switzerland



Rob Morsink

Program Manager

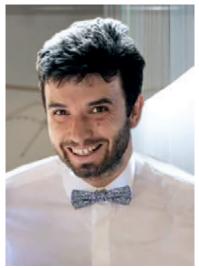
Rail Freight,

Ministry of

Infrastructure and

Water management of

The Netherlands



Joseph Lunet
Head of unit National
railway network unit,
Ministry of Ecological
and Inclusive Transition
of France

Following the application of the agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (2019/C 384 I/O1), the UK representatives did not seat in the Executive Board during the transition period starting on the 1st February 2020

STAND-IN REPRESENTATIVES



Pierre Bodiaux
Federal Public
Service Mobility
and Transport
of Belgium



André Bissen

Ministry of Mobility and

Public works,

Grand Duchy of

Luxembourg



Matthias Wagner
Federal Office of
Transport of
Switzerland



Hinne Groot
Ministry of
Infrastructure and
Water management
of The Netherlands



Antoine Haouchine

Ministry of

Ecological and

Inclusive Transition

of France

Following the application of the agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (2019/C 384 I/O1), the UK representatives did not seat in the Executive Board during the transition period starting on the 1st February 2020

2.2. The Management Board

Mission and vision

The mission of the Management Board is to offer services to customers that answer their needs and the needs of the market. By doing this, we intend to increase the market share of rail freight by promoting measures to improve its efficiency and more specially:

- to offer good quality capacity;
- to improve interoperability, inter alia by the deployment of ERTMS on the lines of the Corridor;
- to improve quality of service on the Corridor;
- to coordinate and monitor applications for financial support related to the Corridor;
- to coordinate the Corridor approach and action plan with the other RFCs;
- to check and evaluate the results obtained, with a view to implement further developments to progressively improve the quality offered.

Organisation

The EEIG

The Management Board takes the form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), named Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Mediterranean. Its head office is located in Luxembourg and the

office of its corridor one-stop-shop in Brussels. It is composed of the infrastructure managers and allocation bodies of the Corridor, which either have the status of member³ or partner⁴.



3/ Members Network Rail and Eurotunnel left the EEIG as of 1st of January 2021.

4/ From 1 January 2021 on, Trasse Schweiz became a non-profit entity under public law with a separate legal personality, the so called «Schweizerische Trassenvergabestelle (TVS)». It is owned by the Swiss federal government, but is independently organised and it runs and keeps its own accounts. TVS is responsible for drawing up the timetable,

planning and allocating paths. In addition, it also ensures the collection of the track access charges, keeps the Swiss infrastructure register (RINF) and publishes the investment plans of the Infrastructure Managers.

TVS is the legal successor of Trasse Schweiz and therefore all rights and obligations automatically pass to TVS, meaning that contractual relations with RFC North Sea – Med remain unchanged.

Members

The Netherlands:

ProRail

ProRail

Belgium: Infrabel **INFR/ABEL**

France:

SCNF Réseau



Luxembourg:

CFL



United Kingdom: Network Rail



France / United Kingdom: Eurotunnel/Getlink



-Partners

Luxembourg: ACF



Switzerland:

Trasse Schweiz, SBB Infra





The Assembly



Decisions on the strategy of the Corridor, its objectives, actions and any administrative and financial issues of importance are taken by the Assembly, with mutual consent.

The Assembly is chaired by Michaël Dierickx.

The Vice-President of the Assembly is Britta Schreiner, who took over this function from Daniel Thull at the beginning of 2020. We thank Daniel for his valuable work over the years.

The representative or stand-in representative of each member and partner, the Managing Director of the EEIG, the ERTMS technical advisor and the Permanent Team attend the Assembly meetings. The Assembly meets on average six times per year.



ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES



John VoppenPresident Director
ProRail



Benoit Gilson CEO, Infrabel



Luc Lallemand
President,
SNCF Réseau



Marc Wengler General Director, CFL



Marc Oestreicher

Director,

ACF



Peter Kummer Head of SBB Infrastructure



Jacques GounonChairman and Chief Executive
Officer Eurotunnel



Thomas Isenmann Managing Director, Trasse Schweiz



Andrew Haines
CEO,
Network Rail

STAND-IN REPRESENTATIVES



Guus de Mol Head International Logistic Affairs ProRail



Claire Hamoniau Corridor Manager SNCF Réseau



Michel Geubelle Manager Corridor Management, Infrabel



Britta SchreinerHead of external affairs, Infrastructure management department, CFL



Claude Lambert Head of Path Division, ACF



Rudi Achermann
Program Manager
SBB Infrastructure



Daniel Haltner Head of Path Capacity, Trasse Schweiz



David Marteau
Head of European affairs
Eurotunnel



Matthew Dickerson
Regional Freight Manager
(Southern)

THE PERMANANENT TEAM



Yann Le Floc'h Managing Director

The Management Board has a Permanent Team which is responsible for the day-to-day business and the chairing of working groups. It consists of four people, all coming from the members of the EEIG. This streamlined structure allows the EEIG to react with promptness, flexibility and efficiency.

In September 2020 Jean Quaeyhaegens took over from Thomas Vanbeveren as C OSS leader.

The Permanent Team,
Management Board and
Executive Board members
want to thank Thomas for
all the years of dedication
and fruitful work as
C-OSS leader.



Thomas Vanbeveren
One-stop shop leader
Quality & Capacity Manager
(Until October 2020)



Jean Quaeyhaegens
One-stop shop leader
Quality & Capacity Manager
(From October 2020)



Matthieu Maeselle Communication & Finance Manager Advisory Groups



Marie-Anne Menguγ Operations & Investments manager, ERTMS coordinator

Working groups and Committees

C-OSS WG	Temporary Capacity Restrictions	TPM* &Traffic management WG
Leader Jean Quaeyhaegens RFC NSM	Leader Jean Quaeγhaegens RFC NSM	Leader Marie-Anne Menguy RFC NSM
Communication WG	Corridor Information Document WG	Legal WG
Leader Matthieu Maeselle RFC NSM	Leader Matthieu Maeselle RFC NSM	Leader Yann Le Floc'h RFC NSM
CID** WC		
CIP** WG Leader Matthieu Maeselle RFC NSM	ERTMS Commitee Leader Marie-Anne Menguy RFC NSM	Transport market studγ Commitee Leader Marie-Anne Menguγ **** RFC NSM

[•] Train performance management **Customer Information Platform ***Temporarγ unactive or stopped

The activities of the Management Board, including the Permanent Team and the Working groups and Committees are described in Chapter 4 - Key activities and topics in 2020.



2.3. The Advisory Groups

The Railway undertaking Advisory Group (RAG) and the Terminal Advisory Group (TAG) were created in 2012 in order to comply with the Regulation (EU) 913/2010. These groups

can issue an opinion on any proposal made by the Management Board. They may also issue own-initiative opinions, which are to be considered by the Management Board.

The Railway undertaking Advisory Group (RAG)

The RAG is composed of all Railway undertakings interested in the use of the corridor. In addition, the following are also invited to take part in the activities of the RAG:

- four railway sector organisations: CER (Community of European Railways and Infrastructure Companies), ERFA (European Rail Freight Association), RFG (Rail Freight Group) and KNV (Royal Dutch transport federation);
- applicants who are active on the Corridor, but are not Railwaγ undertakings.

The RAG is chaired by Lieven Goethals (Lineas).

Vice-Chairman of the RAG is Eric Lambert (CFL Multimodal)





"Rail freight business is always challenging: we are moving goods a fully competitive market; to keep a freight train rolling on track we are depending on more people than only our (train) driver... When a pandemic and social climate is impacting this chain of human resources in our sector, we are confronted with the even bigger challenge to maintain the trust of our customers. 2020 was of course not our best year in that matter, with our growth coming to a stop. Let us together work on Performance and competitive infrastructure to turn the tide!"

Lieven Goethals, Chairman of the RAG

Two RAG meetings were organised in 2020, each preceded by a pre-RAG between Railway undertakings:

On the 26th of February in Brussels, where the following topics were discussed:

- New style Action plan;
- TCR Coordination process;
- Business situation post French industrial action;
- Wagons parked on sidings and capacity issue (Terminal request);
- Feedback on ICM & preparation of the 2020 ICM simulation.

On the 18th of November, as an online meeting given the COVID-19 situation:

- RFC Approach: Helpdesk Clients entry point;
- State of play Coopere/P400;
- State of play ERTMS;
- State of plaγ Long trains;
- Terminal on time project: state of play pilot Lyon-Bettembourg (see also Chapter 4.4).



The Terminal Advisory Group (TAG)

All the managers and owners of terminals - such as combined transport terminals, river ports, multimodal platforms, maritime ports or infrastructure managers' marshalling yards - which belong to the Corridor are invited to the TAG meetings.

The Terminal Advisory Group members agreed on the nomination of a TAG Chair, Paul Kronenberger, and of a Vice-Chair, Frédéric Buyse. As speakers of the TAG community, they represent and advocate the interests of the whole community.

The tasks of the Chair of the TAG are the following:

- Chair the γearly TAG meeting organised by RFC North Sea Med in order to coordinate the messages and expectations from the TAG members to the Rail Freight Corridor Management Board & Permanent Team:
- To participate, where possible, in meetings and events organised by the European Commission (two to three a year, such as SERAC, Rail Freight Day, TEN-T Days, ...) as speaker of the TAG community of RFC North Sea Med.



Paul Kronenberger
Head of Freight
CFL-MultiModal
Chair of the TAG
community



Frédéric Buyse
Head of Freight
Terminals
Vice-Chair of the
TAG community

In 2019, I said that the rail freight business was a challenge, both for the employees and for the customers and their trust in us.

For 2020, I can say that the pandemic and our handling of the situation have shown that we can and want to be the backbone of the entire supply chain!

Ecologically as well as economically...

Paul Kronenberger, Chairman of the TAG

The joint TAG meeting with RFC Rhine-Alpine that was planned in Ghent in November 2020 could not take place. Therefore, an online TAG meeting of RFC North Sea – Med was organised on the 3rd of December 2020 with the following topics:

- Update action plan
- RFC Approach: Helpdesk Clients entry point
- State of play Coopere/P400
- State of play Long trains
- State of play pilot Lyon-Bettembourg (See also Chapter 4.4)
- State of play traffic on the RFC in 2020, perspectives for 2021, followed by a discussion on the need of good governance, the quality of traffic management and coordination between the IMs.

In spring 2021, RFC North Sea-Med and Rhine-Alpine organised a first common dedicated TAG around the theme 'Innovation'. This was highly appreciated by the TAG audience, and both RFCs will continue to organise this kind of common TAG workshops in the future.



3. Cooperation with stakeholders

The European Commission

The European Commission plays a major role in the Corridor. Sharing the common objective of improving the conditions for international rail freight, it acts as a facilitator for communication and coordination. It also contributes to the development of the Corridor through its financial support (see Chapter 7. Finance).

The European Commission organises the Single European Railway Area Committee (SERAC) Working Group on Rail Freight Corridors which aims at facilitating dialogue with the other ministries, infrastructure managers and regulatory bodies involved in the rail freight corridors.

The Permanent Team of the Corridor participated in the 17th SERAC meeting that was split over three days (26/05/2020, 25/06/2020 and 08/07/2020) and held online. The main topic was a discussion on the results of the evaluation of Regulation (EU) 913/2010, which dealt with aspects such as RFC Governance, implementation plan,

traffic management, investment plan, capacity and performance monitoring. An outlook on the EU co-financing for RFCs as of 2021 and on the second call in the framework of the Issues Logbook was also given.

On the 28th of January 2020, the 4th meeting on International Contingency Management (ICM) and Issues Logbook was organised. During this meeting the RUs handbook on ICM as well as experiences from simulations and real ICM cases were discussed. RailNetEurope (RNE) presented its activities related to ICM and first discussions on a European approach for capacity allocation took place. The afternoon session was dedicated to the ongoing activities of the Issues Logbook with a focus on the three priorities (unified braking schemes, technical checks at borders and enhanced communication about train composition) and the second call for interest (PSA) in the framework of the Issues Logbook.



3.2. The Rail Freight Corridors Network

The RFC Network intensified its common work in 2020 in organising three RFC Network meetings and two telco's. These meetings were led by the RFC Network assistant, appointed jointly by all RFCs.

This intensified cooperation intends to harmonise its methods and documentation, with the goal to facilitate the allocation of capacity for trains running on more than a single corridor.

The Managing Director and a representative of the Management Board participated in the meetings of the RFC Network, mainly to discuss harmonisation between RFCs, common tools and studies.

This RFC Network also held a workshop on the evaluation of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010.



3.3. The Core **Network Corridor**

Coordination between the core network and rail freight corridors is required by Regulation (EU) 1315/2013.

In order to foster the collaboration and to favour exchanges between RFC and CNC, the CNC North Sea - Med assistant is invited to all Executive

Board meetings. The Executive Board also tries to hold once a year a dedicated meeting with the CNC Coordinator. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, such meeting was not possible in 2020.



The Regulatory bodies

As required by Regulation (EU) 913/2010, the Regulatory bodies covering the networks of the Corridor coordinate in order to ensure non-discriminatory access to the Corridor for international rail services. They are also the appeal body under Art 56 (1) of Directive 2012/34/EU. In general, the Belgian Regulatory body represents all regulatory bodies at the Executive Board meetings of the

Corridor. The Regulatory bodies also participate in the Advisory Group meetings.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no meeting took place in 2020 between RFC North Sea - Med and the Regulatory bodies, but the intention is to have an annual meeting in 2021.

3.5. RailNet Europe

RailNetEurope (RNE) is an association consisting of 38 rail infrastructure managers and allocation bodies in Europe to enable fast and easy access to European rail, as well as to increase the quality and efficiency of international rail traffic. RFC North Sea – Med, which is an associated member of RNE since May 2015, uses RNE services and guidelines as well as RNE IT tools such as the Path Coordination

System (PCS), the Train Information System (TIS), the Corridor Information Platform (CIP) etc.

RFC North Sea – Med participated in two General Assemblies of RNE as well as in two RNE/RFC High Level Group meetings in preparation of these Assemblies.

The members of the Permanent Team also participated in the following RNE working groups in 2020:

- Traffic management;
- C-OSS Community;
- Capacitγ working group:
 - Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCR) coordination;
 - PCS
 - Train performance management
 - Common KPI's;
- International Contingency Management Planning (ICM);
- Customer Information Document (CID) & Network Statement (NS) working group;
- User satisfaction survey working group;
- Customer Information Platform (CIP) Change Control Board.



4. Keγ activities and topics in 2020

4.1. Activities of the Executive Board

The year 2020 proved to be a year of adaptations, with the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Executive Board (ExBo) did not escape to this rule with the shift from March on to online activities.

The Board however pursued its activities related to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010 and beyond, with the implementation of its strategic objectives as adopted in March 2019.

Those strategic objectives outline the ambitions of the ExBo for the Corridor. They define goals and means by which the ExBo can move forward.

They regroup objectives such as Pre-arranged Path (PaP) quality, Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCRs) coordination or long trains.

Furthermore, the Executive Board continued to monitor the orientations defined after the elaboration of the international contingency management handbook by the infrastructure managers, following the disruption of freight traffic at Rastatt between August and October 2017.

Regular topics addressed

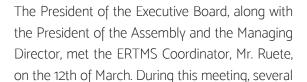
The Executive Board focused on supporting the rail freight activities throughout the COVID-19 crisis and monitored the punctuality on the Corridor as well as the impact of the crisis on the train runs.

The Board also decided to focus on the improvement of the parameters of the Corridor. During its meetings, important topics, such as long trains or the loading gauge, were discussed. The Executive Board prioritized as well the TCRs – including in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic – and

the general performance of the Corridor, with topics such as the monitoring of the PaPs.

Finally, the Executive Board also discussed other topics, such as the ERTMS deployment, and monitored the initiatives launched by the Corridor to improve its parameters. The Board therefore discussed on the pilot Lyon – Bettembourg, the new TCRs coordination process and the Proof of Concept regarding the display of capacity on the Antwerp – St-Louis axis.

European Cooperation





topics were discussed, among which the state of play of the ERTMS implementation, of the incompatibility issues of ERTMS BL2 and OBU BL3 and the financing of the ERTMS implementation. The Ministries of the Executive Board participated to the elaboration of the Berlin Declaration, which was adopted on the 21st of September 2020 by the Ministers of Transport from the European Union, from Switzerland and from Norway. This Declaration supports further the development of the rail freight corridors and was presented on the 21st of September 2020, during the Ministerial Conference "Innovative Rail Transport – connecting, sustainable, digital".

The Locarno Declaration on developing the railway system, elaborated by Switzerland, has been endorsed by the Ministers from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland. This declaration aims at affirming the importance of a modal

shift from road to rail in transalpine transport and of the cross-border cooperation in order to further develop international freight and passenger transport solutions by rail in Europe.

The Ministries of the Executive Board participated to the work of the Network of Executive Boards of RFCs (NExBo). In 2020, the NExBo focused on topics such as TTR, KPIs or the allocation rules. Regarding this last point, a task force has been set up between September and November 2020 and will be subject to a follow-up in 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Executive Board meeting planned together with the RFC Rhine – Alpine has been postponed to 2021.

Cooperation with Railway undertakings and Terminals

Continuing its policy to foster cooperation with the corridor's customers set up since 2017, the Executive Board invited the RAG speaker at each meeting to exchange respective views on the most critical issues expressed by the RAG.

In addition, the Executive Board also invited the TAG representative during its last meeting of 2020 in order to increase its collaboration with the terminals of the Corridor and to share views

on the problems raised by the TAG. This invitation is renewed for the 2021 Executive Board meetings.

The Chair of the Executive Board participated to the RAG and TAG meetings to provide a concrete link between the Executive Board and both Advisory Groups and ensure a follow-up of the problems raised during those meetings at the Executive Board level.

Governance

The Executive Board delivered its report pursuant Article 22 of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010 on the 3rd of March 2020. This report encompasses the years 2017 and 2018 and is based on the previous report, as well as the Implementation Plans of the Corridor.

The Board also adopted a revision of the RFC Implementation Plan for the Timetable 2022. This revision includes the update of the routings, following the end of the transition period referred to in article 126 of the Agreement on the

withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the organisation of the Executive Board working method was modified in 2020. Informal meetings between ministries have been held instead of the restricted sessions. In addition, the assessment and possible revision of the strategic objectives of the Executive Board have been postponed to 2021.

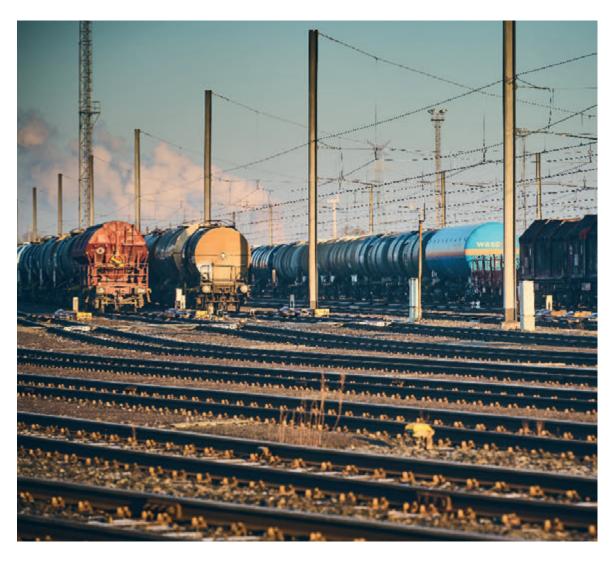
4.2. Activities of the Management Board

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has impacted traffic on the Corridor's routes, after the already relatively unstable years 2018 and 2019. The first cause is direct. The first wave of the pandemic led to the quarantine of personnel working in signal boxes and, as a result, the partial closure of certain sections. All member IMs did their utmost to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. It's worth to mention and welcome the action taken by SNCF Réseau, which was the most affected by these quarantines, which set up a 7-day-a-week system to inform customers of the actual situation day after day and thus limit the impact on traffic, information that was relayed by the Corridor - also 7 days a week - to all its partners.

The other cause is more indirect. This is the brutal slowdown in manufacturing production in the second quarter of 2020, which is clearly shown by Eurostat indicators, and which automatically resulted in a drop in the volume of goods transported in 2020

As mentioned in the previous parts, after the difficult years 2018 and 2019, a significant drop of number of trains occurred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All details can be found in Chapter 5. Performance of the Corridor.



Deployment of ETCS on the Corridor



ERTMS deployment on the Corridor remains patchy depending on the investment choices of countries and infrastructure managers, even though the ERTMS concept and vision to enhance interoperability is not generally questioned by the rail sector.

The European coordinator, Mr. Ruete, published his ERTMS work plan in May 2020, laying down the fundamental conditions and challenges to implement ERTMS on the European TEN-T network. In the framework of the elaboration of the Implementation Plan update in 2020, the state of play of the ETCS deployment on the Corridor was

updated. More information can be found under the link 'Implementation Plan' on our website:

https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/index.php/ en/page/implementation-plan

In 2020 the WG ERTMS was also relaunched.

They met two times, and discussed thefollowing:

- State of play of the deployment per country;
- Investment plan per countrγ;
- Position and vision regarding ERTMS Level 3.



4.3. Capacity and Temporary Capacity Restrictions

Capacity management

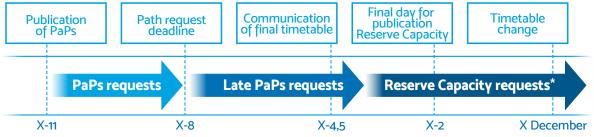
2020 started with the publication of the Pre-arranged Path catalogue for timetable (TT) 2021, and ended with the finalisation of the catalogue for timetable 2022.

The results of the allocation process for TT2021 (capacity KPIs) and the evolution over the years can be found in the Performance Report 2020 published on the website under the following link:

https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/capacity

Another important milestone was reached with the allocation of Rolling Planning paths between Antwerp and Rotterdam, and the extension of the scope of the Capacity and Timetable Redesign (TTR) Pilot to Amsterdam and Paris. ProRail and Infrabel, together with the Railway undertakings running on these lines, opted for the C-OSS as the single source for Rolling planning capacity. With the extension and inclusion of SNCF Réseau, the Corridor enters a next phase, which must see a full implementation of TTR for the entire European network for timetable 2025.

Capacity allocation calendar in 2020



^{*} continues in following year up to 30 days before train run

Proof of Concept 'Capacity visualisation study'

RFC North Sea - Med launched a tender for a Proof of concept (PoC) study on the visualisation of Capacity.

The motivation for the launch of this study is the following: the European Union and its Member States have now set themselves ambitious 2030 targets for modal shift to modes other than road. Corridors therefore reflected on their capacity to support the achievement of these objectives.

While Regulation (EU) 913/2010 placed capacity at the heart of the corridors' activity, in particular via the implementation of the C-OSS and the coordination of catalogue paths and works, RFC North Sea - Med noted that the appropriate analysis tools were not available. Tools to objectively measure the capacity situation on the various international routes in a «seamless» approach, i.e. harmonised between IMs, were missing.

Therefore, in agreement with its Management Board, RFC North Sea - Med initiated an innovative approach, a 'proof of concept', called 'Capacity Intelligence', in reference to the 'Business Intelligence' approach. Business Intelligence aims at collecting, assembling and organising business data in order to feed the decision-making process with consolidated business information. In our case, we wanted to look at how to collect, assemble and organise the data, this time from the capacity data, in order to feed the decision-making process with consolidated capacity information.

After a market consultation, the study was awarded to the Swiss company SMA, and was co-financed under the EU PSA financing scheme (see Chapter 7 - Finance).

This PoC, thanks to a rigorous and scientific approach, delivered concrete and operational results in relation to the core function of corridors and showed that the approach was very promising.

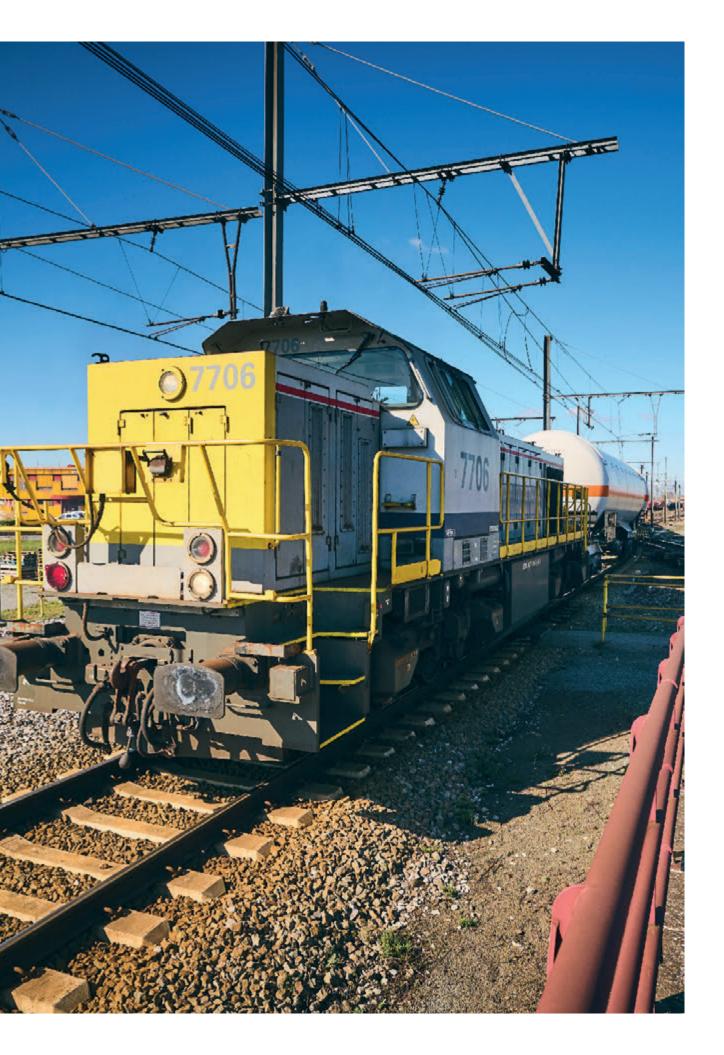
The study resulted in a direct added value for the RFC as it brought innovative insight in the corebusiness activity of the RFC, namely offering capacity on its routes. It also forms a basis for further studies and growing insights in this core activity in the coming years.

Temporary Capacity Restrictions

During the course of the year, Infrastructure Managers along the Corridor faced the problem that the magnitude and volume of TCRs impacting their networks became difficult to manage with the existing set of procedures. The Corridor helped establishing a new long-term coordination process, based on the needs of the customers and of the IMs, and the tools at hand. Such an extensive program for the coming years could be reinforced, with the Corridor in a central role as facilitator and quardian of the process.

Moreover, the display of the TCR list was provided in the past has been updated, offering a Corridor overview of the most impacting TCRs, together with a detailed overview of all TCRs scheduled. This overview is published and updated on the Corridor website each semester https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/index.php/en/page/temporary-capacity-restrictions

Finally, the Corridor has been approached by DB Netz regarding the total line closure during the summer of 2024, between Mannheim and Basel. RFC Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Med facilitated the dialogue between DB Netz, SNCF Réseau, ACF/CFL and Infrabel. The coordination process put in place will be continued in the coming years.





4.4. Train performance and traffic management

In 2020, the Management Board agreed to the merge of the Train Performance Management and the Traffic Management Working Groups.

Train Performance Management

The TPM Working Group monitors the punctuality of international freight trains running on the Corridor, and initiates actions to improve punctuality where necessary. The WG consisting of performance managers from the Infrastructure Managers has been analysing the Corridor punctuality reports on the basis of data from the Train Information System (TIS), which provides real-time train data. A list of poor performing trains has been drafted which are in continuous close observation. In this way, the WG ensures that the problems are tackled at national level and structural issues can be identified where needed.

A precondition for a good reporting is the quality of the data in TIS. Under the umbrella of RNE, a Data Quality project was initiated in order to define common standards for TPM reports and improving the monitoring via automatically linking trains. On the occasion of the TAG held in Lyon on the 8th of October 2019, the participants agreed that it could be beneficial to launch in 2020 a Pilot on «on-time departure» from the originating terminals. As the host terminal for this TAG was Lyon and as the Chairman of the TAG is the terminal manager of Bettembourg, it was agreed that the scope of the pilot should focus on the «Lyon-Bettembourg» traffic.

The pilot aims at establishing certain standards to improve train punctuality, in particular a mapping of the pre-departure processes within the terminals, an associated timetable, operational monitoring of this timetable and the establishment of local governance to ensure continuous improvement. In 2020 the Corridor started this pilot which will continue in 2021 and 2022, the time needed to drive change.

International Contingency Management

The revision of the ICM Handbook under the lead of RNE started in 2020 and will be finalised by mid-2021.

The joint simulation planned with RFC Rhine-Alpine in October 2020 was postponed until November 2021, on the one hand because of the real ICM case on

RFC Rhine-Alpine in Auggen and on the other hand in order to take into account the changes introduced with the new handbook. The aim is also to involve the RUs.

An update of the re-routing scenarios will be carried out in 2021 in time for the planned simulation.

4.5. Information to the customers

Corridor Information Document

All necessary information for using the Corridor is provided in the Corridor Information Document (CID), which is published at www.rfc-northsea-med.eu. This document gives corridor-scale information such as infrastructure and terminal characteristics, TCRs, access conditions, capacity and traffic management on

the Corridor. In 2020, further harmonisation took place, streamlining the information and merging the former Books into one single document with four sections. Moreover, the digitalisation project of the CID, kicked off in 2019, was continued in 2020 and will be fully implemented in 2021.

Geographical information system (GIS)

The Customer Information Platform (CIP) was further developed and improved in 2020 under the lead of RNE.

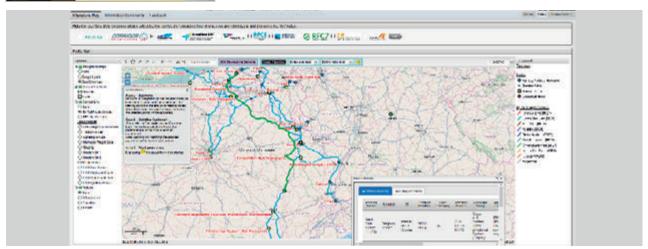
The main achievements were:

- Preparation of the roll-out to RFC Amber. As of January 2021, the stakeholders of ten RFCs benefit from the joint data platform
- Update of the graphical user interface
- General improvements regarding completeness of information on line properties and projects
- Improvement regarding display of coherent ETCS information and ERTMS projects
- Adaptions to the user handbook
- Development of a joint marketing approach.



Nicolas Gatez of Infrabel is improving the quality of the system as implementation manager for RFC North Sea - Med.

Further improvements, developments and integration with other RNE tools are foreseen in 2021, mainly linked to the Big Data project steered by RNE.



Performance of the Corridor and User Satisfaction

5.1. Performance of the Corridor

As requested by the Regulation (EU) 913/2010, RFC North Sea – Med publishes each year its Performance Report. It contains information on KPIs related to capacity, operations and market developments that are monitored by all RFCs according to the RNE guidelines.

Below we present some of the results. The full report can be found on the Corridor website under figures:

https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/ figures-performance-corridor

Operations

Total Corridor Traffic

In the figures presented, all international freight trains that pass a border on the Corridor are taken into account, if they travel at least 70 km on Corridor lines.

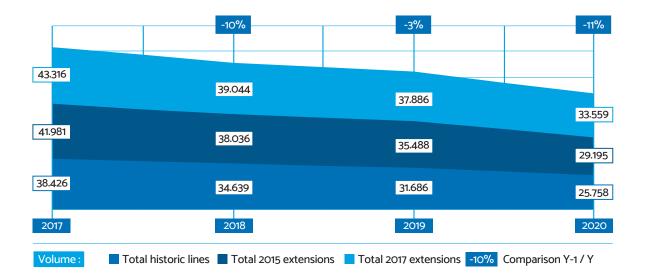
The evolution of the total amount of Corridor traffic is heavily influenced by the economic growth of the Corridor regions.

The strong volume growth in 2017, resulting from re-routings due to Rastatt and the 2nd extension of the Corridor, vanished in 2018 and 2019.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is clearly seen in the number of trains in 2020.

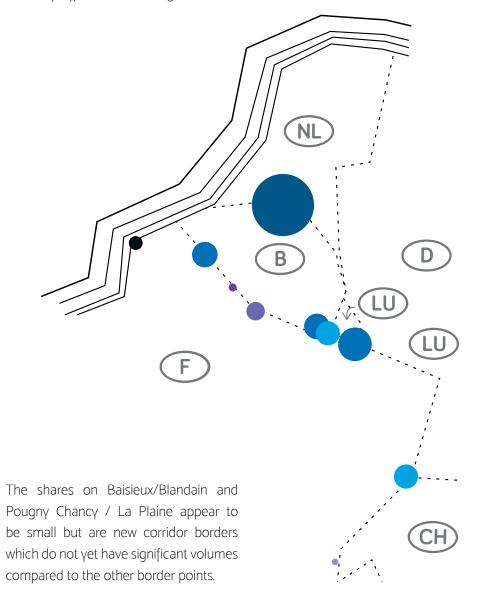
Historical lines 2 2015 extensions 2 2017 extensions

Geneva' volumes counted since 2019



Traffic Volume (Per Corridor Border)

The evolution of the number of trains per Corridor border gives an indication of the geographical spread of the traffic on the Corridor. This is especially important given that there are many different traffic flows with very different O/Ds using the Corridor lines.

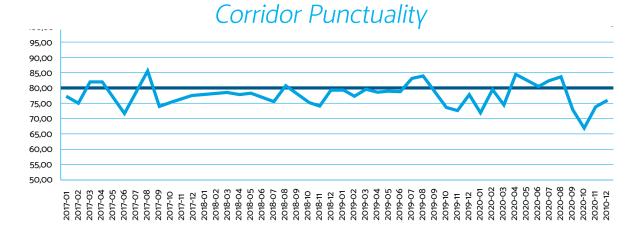


Border location names		Volume (Nb of trains) 2020	Share	Δ 20/19
ProRail	Infrabel			
Roosendaal Grens	Essen Grens	9402	24%	-3%
Infrabel	ACF CFL			
Aubange frontière LU	Rodange frontière	2211	6%	-52%
Infrabel	SNCF Réseau			
Mouscron FR	Tourcoing frontière	3391	9%	-27%
Aubange FR LU	Mont St Martin frontière	4432	11%	19%
Erquelines frontière	Jeumont frontière	2521	6%	-5%
Blandain Frontière	Baisieux frontière	916	2%	-20%
Feignies	Quevy	2702	7%	4%
ACF CFL	SNCF Réseau			
Bettembourg frontière	Zoufftgen frontière	5846	15%	-18%
SNCF Réseau	SBB			
Bâle StJean	Basel St. Johann	5461	14%	-20%
Pougnγ chancγ fr FR CH	La Plaine	299	1%	-12%
Eurotunnel	SNCF Réseau			
Doolands Moor	Calais Frethun faisceau tunnel	1945	5%	-19%

The Belgian - Dutch border point remains the most active for the Corridor. However, the Benelux / Switzerland axis is a strong capacity axis for the development of the Antwerp port area, which explains the good share of traffic on the Basel / St Louis and Bettembourg/Zoufftgen border points.

Punctuality

RFC North Sea – Med continues its efforts to reach the objective of 80% punctuality. For 2020, the global corridor punctuality figure is :



5.2. User Satisfaction Survey 2020

The User Satisfaction Survey 2020 was prepared and for the first time conducted jointly with all eleven rail freight corridors. In 2020, a different approach was chosen by the RFC Network. An entirely new and much more targeted questionnaire was developed by the RFCs. The survey was conducted between September and October 2020 and the results were published in December 2020.

Corridor Punctuality — Target

The overall satisfaction of users with RFC North Sea-Med increased by 8%, reaching 81% of "generally satisfied" respondents.

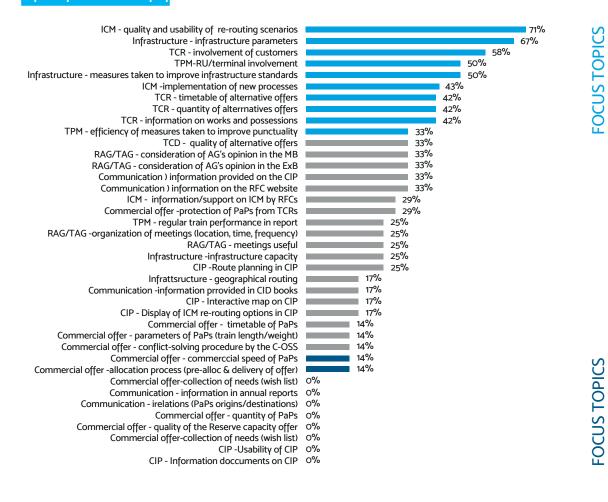
There was a positive feedback on the team's commitment, even if there is still room for improvement according to the survey. Moreover, there was also a positive feedback on the COVID crisis communication.



The topics on which improvements are most needed according to the respondents are summarised below, namely the quality and usability of re-routing scenarios, infrastructure parameters and TCRs.

All details can be found in the full report published on the Corridor's website:

https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/sites/rfc2.eu/files/telechargements/RFC_NSM_USS_2020_ report_final_website.pdf





6. Events

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, major events were cancelled, such as the foreseen TEN-T days in Croatia, or the SITL fair in Paris.

However, some events were held online, as for example the Rail Freight Day 2020, which took place as an online event on 10 December 2020. More than 280 participants joined the event co-organised by the European Commission and RailNetEurope.

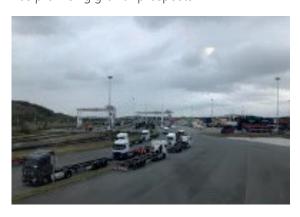
More information about this online event can be found via following link:

https://rne.eu/blog/news/follow-up-railfreight-daγ-2020/

At the Corridor level, and including during the pandemic, the Permanent Team of the Corridor initiated the so-called 'Gemba Walks' in order to strengthen the exchange with its customers and stakeholders.

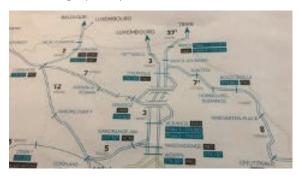
For the first 'Gemba Walk', the Permanent Team visited the Delta3 site which is one of its French terminal customers.

Delta 3 is a French multimodal and logistics platform located in Dourges in the Hauts-de-France region. The site includes a major combined transport terminal, a marshalling yard and a dock on the Deûle canal. Delta 3 is an efficient modal shift tool that handles more than ten trains a day and has promising growth prospects.

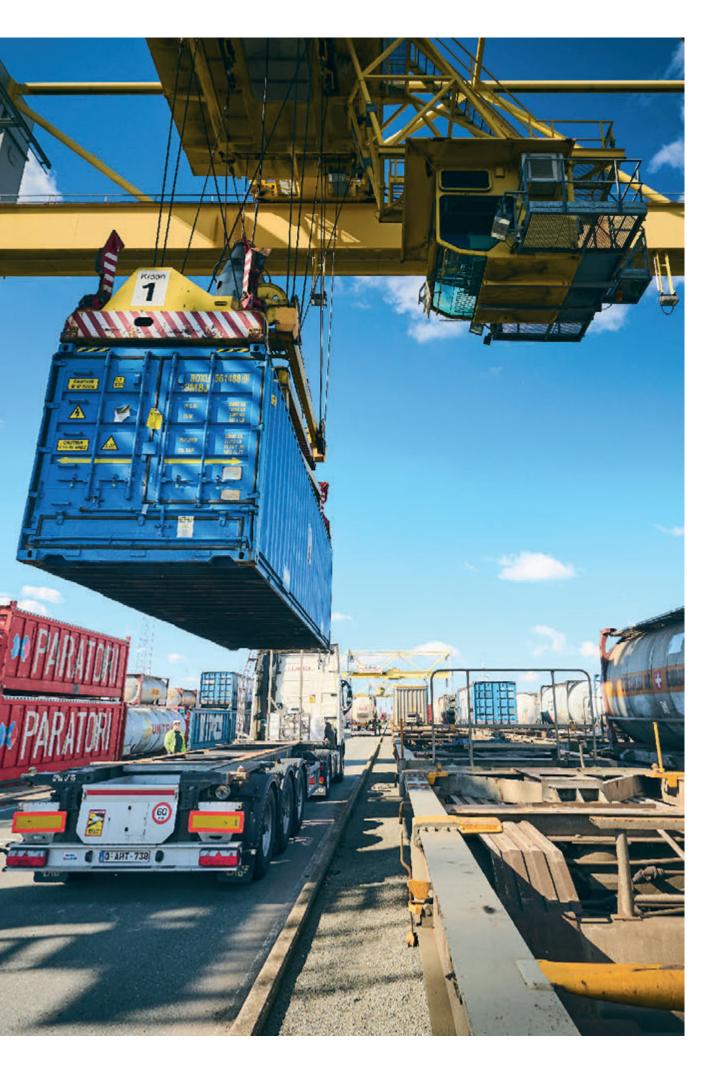


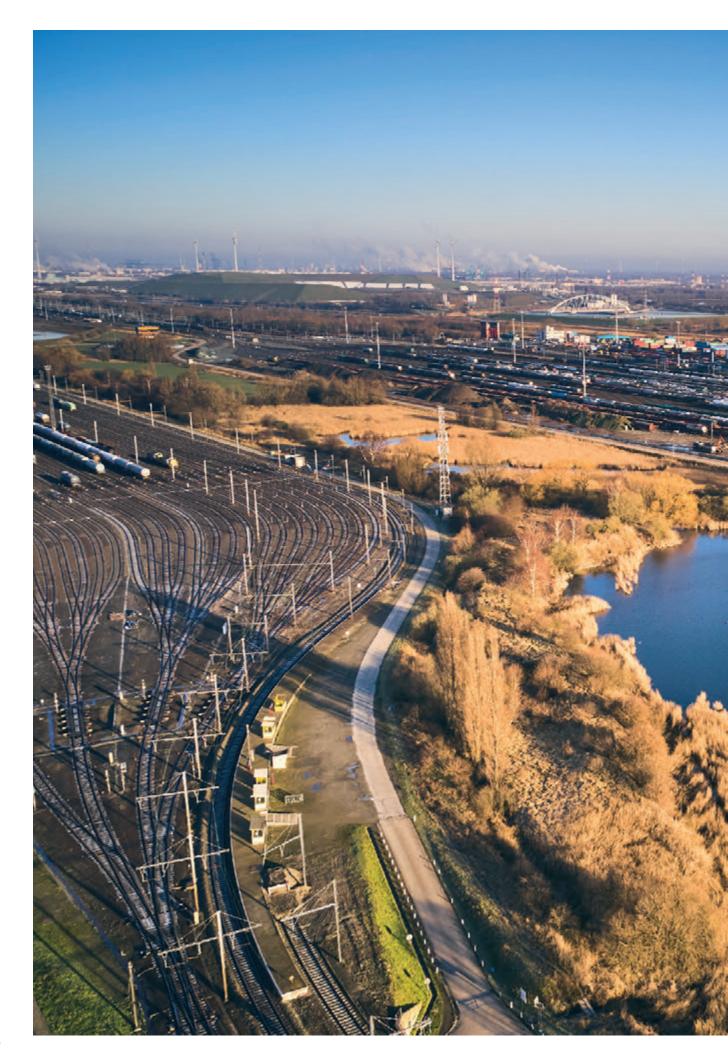


For the second 'Gemba walk' in 2020, the RFC visited the traffic control center and signal boxes of Thionville, Uckange and Longwy. The Permanent Team was accompanied by the operation manager (DUO) of the Lorraine Nord unit as well as the local manager (DPx) of Thionville and Uckange. This field tour was an opportunity not only to examine the border point procedures with Luxembourg and Belgium - which are in fact almost transparent for freight traffic - but also to understand the organisation of the production in this strategic part of the Corridor.







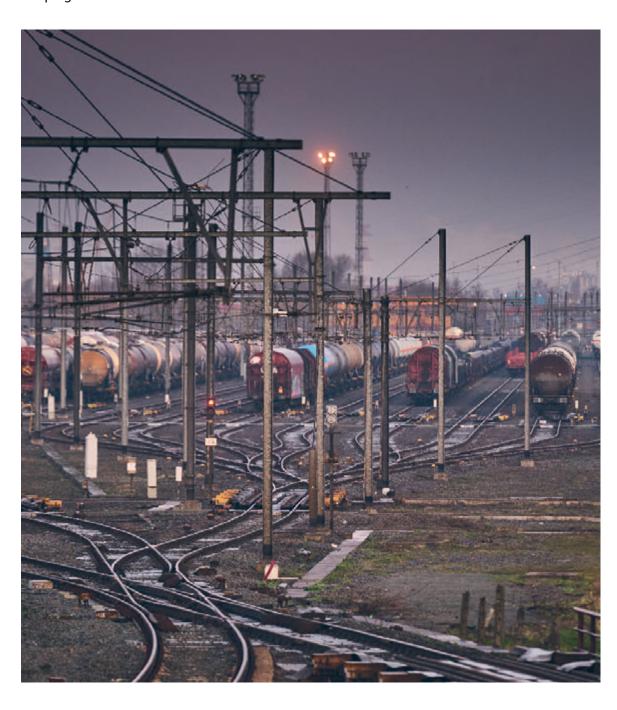


7. Finance

The financial resources available for RFC North Sea-Med come from contributions from its membeand partners and European subsidies received.

In 2020, the PSA funded Action "Long-term development, governance and support to the harmonisation process of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Mediterranean within the European rail freight network" (Action n. 2016-PSA-RFC02)

ended. The final payment request was introduced by the end of March 2021. We are grateful to the EU for this support and hope to benefit from further co-financing from 2021 on.





Office of the Corridor One-stop-shop /

Postal & visiting address

Avenue Fonsny, 13 · B-1060 Brussels · Belgium Tel: +32 (2) 432 2808 · E-mail: oss@rfc-northsea-med.eu

Head office /

Administrative address

EEIG RFC North Sea - Med • 9 Place de la gare L-1616 Luxembourg

Website

www.rfc-northsea-med.eu

The activities of EEIG RFC North Sea - Med are co-financed by the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility.

The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Pictures: DR Infrabel · Benjamin Brolet · Dphotography.be

Design: Grafizm.eu

ProRail

















