

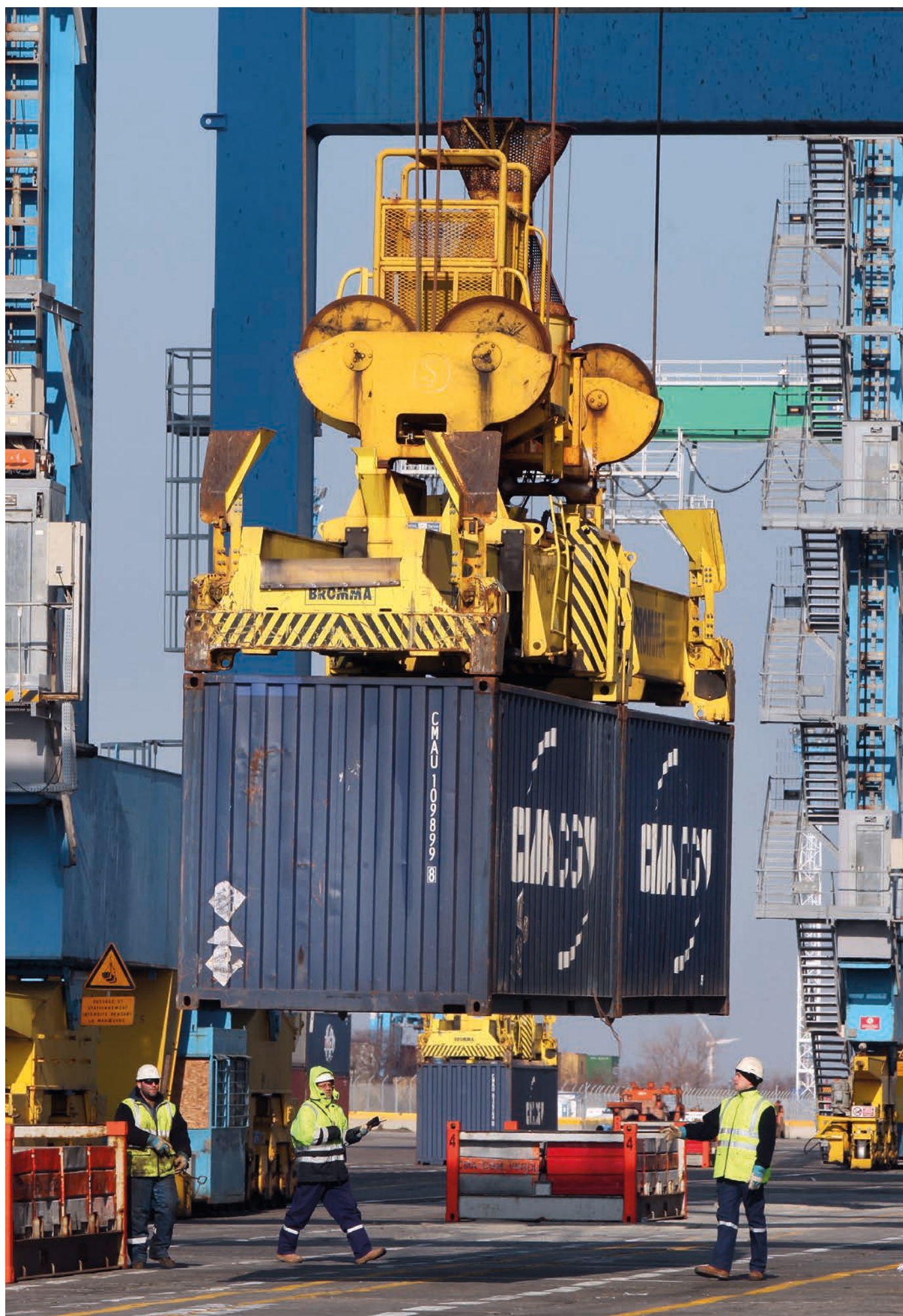
Easier, faster, safer



RFC North Sea - Med 2022 Annual Report



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Message from the Presidents and Managing Director

Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Med stays fully committed to supporting rail freight in these challenging times

During the year 2022 we tilted from the Covid crisis into a geopolitical crisis with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This war and the ensuing energy crisis prolong the period of uncertainty that we face since the start of the Covid crisis and affects the customers of the Corridor.

This situation translates into a limited drop in traffic on RFC North Sea – Med, leading to a fifth year of decline in train numbers.

The Executive Board and Management Board are permanently monitoring the evolution and investigating underlying causes. They remain committed to reverse this negative trend.

Notwithstanding this ongoing decline, the Corridor has maintained its close proximity to its customers and partners throughout 2022. Whether through the action of the C-OSS to assist our customers individually in the preparation of their train path orders, or through bilateral meetings or the organization of several webinars, RFC North Sea-Med has continued to emphasize this proximity to its customers, a guarantee of trust and efficiency in the performance of each of our missions.

In this respect, the very good cooperation between all players involved in the Lyon - Bettembourg Quality Circle Operation launched by the Corridor in 2020 made it possible to significantly improve punctuality from Bettembourg in 2022. Indeed, it was nearly 20 percentage points higher than in 2021 (67% of departures on time compared to 48% in 2021 !). These good results led us to promote the method through a video presented at the 'Connecting Europe Days' organized by the European Commission in Lyon in June 2022. In 2023, the Corridor should extend this experience to other terminals.

In 2022 also, the European Commission decided to continue its support of the corridor activities until 2024, by means of a 'Technical Assistance' financing. This decision was very positively received by the Executive and Management Board members of the Corridor, as it certainly helps to secure the functioning of RFC North Sea – Med in the upcoming years.

Moreover, the European Commission has also decided to finance the Corridor for its «capacity visualisation project» that is a follow-up of the proof of concept of 2021, which aims to create a visualisation and indicators dedicated to capacity issues that could help decision-makers. It is a



project for which we have great expectations and for which we should have results by the end of 2023.

And finally, 2022 was marked by regulatory changes affecting the Corridors: the proposed revision of the TEN-T Regulation and the first conclusions of the evaluation of the 913/2010 Regulation.

In this regard, 2022 was marked by the first discussions on the merger of both Corridors North Sea-Med and Rhine-Alpine, which will be continued in 2023 alongside with proposals for

changes in the organization of capacity allocation in Europe.

While awaiting these developments, the Permanent Team, the members of the Management Board and the Executive Board, in cooperation with the Terminal and Railway undertaking Advisory Groups, will continue their mission of offering train paths, coordinating track works and monitoring performance in order to keep on facilitating international rail freight flows.

Yann Le Floc'h

Managing Director

Valérie Verzele

President of the Executive board

Michaël Dierickx

President of the Assembly

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 and Switzerland. It links the main European ports (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges¹, North Sea Port², Dunkirk, Calais and Marseille) to the industrial zones of Western Europe and to the gateways of Southern Europe, with almost 5000 kilometres of lines.

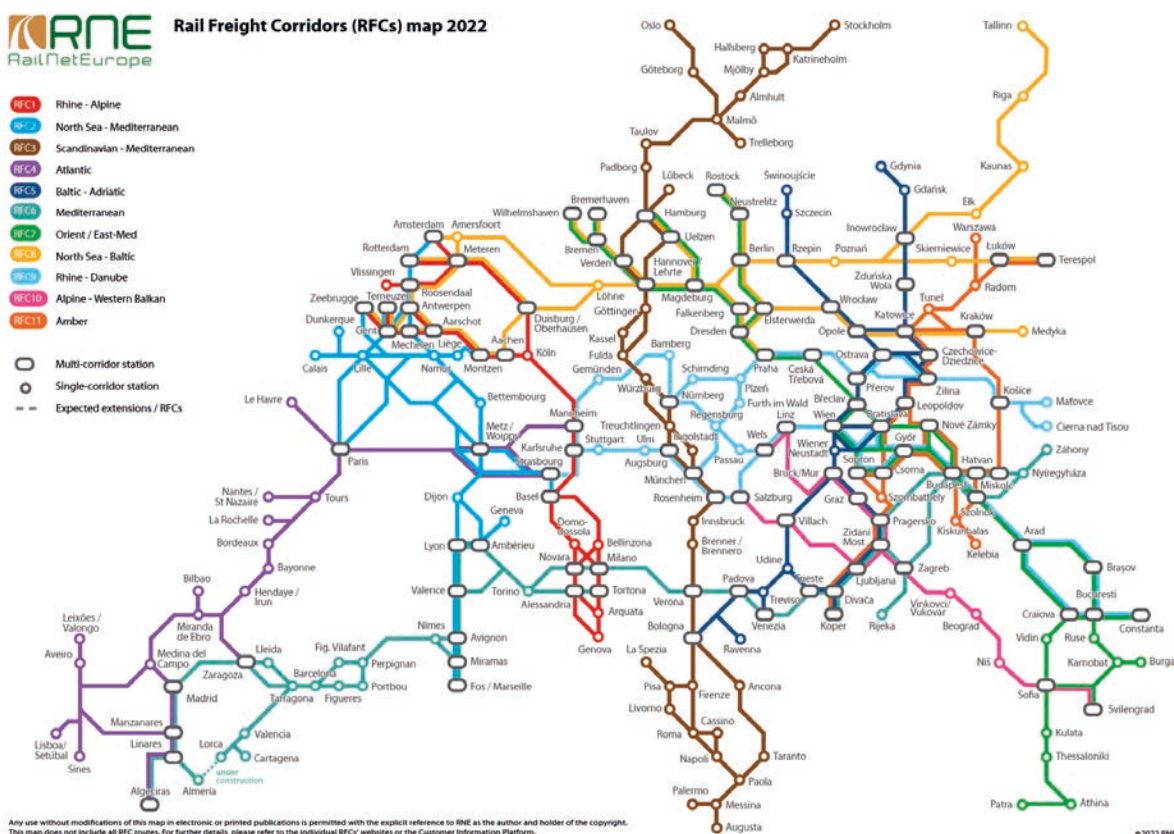
The Corridor is also an access to the rest of Europe, being connected to the RFCs Rhine-

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 almost 33.000 international trains per year.

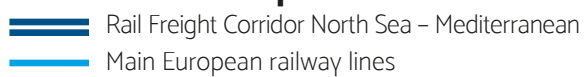
Information on the routing of the Corridor and of the RFC Network can be found in the Customer Information Platform (CIP). CIP is accessible, without registration, and free of charge, via the following link:

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



1/ On the 22nd of April 2022, the merger of the ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge into the unified port company, Port of Antwerp-Bruges, became official.

2/ North Sea Port is the result of a merger between the ports of Vlissingen, Terneuzen and Ghent



1.2. Easier, Faster, Safer

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

Railway undertakings and other applicants, 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;
- they 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.

Also, investments and improvements regarding the train length in order to run 740m trains and loading gauge improvements for running trains loaded with P400 trailers are ongoing.

More information on the topic can be found under Chapter 4 – Key activities and topics in 2022.

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 competitive

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 1316/2013³ 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.

Also, the revision of the TEN-T Regulation was launched by the European Commission in December 2021, impacting both the CNC and RFC. Discussions were ongoing in 2022.

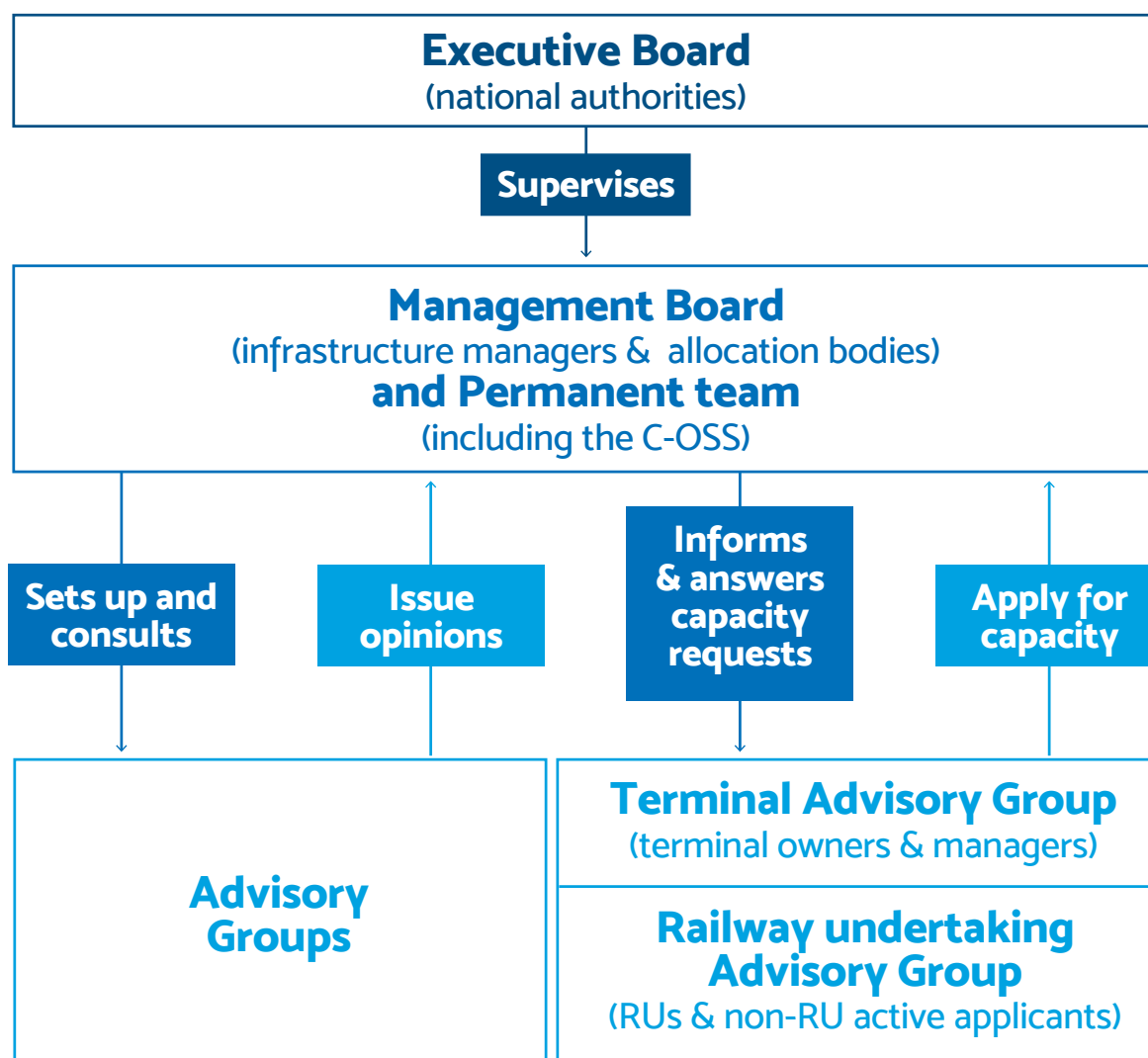
More in Chapter 4 – Key activities and topics in 2022.



^{3/} In the meantime, this Regulation is no longer in place and is repealed by Regulation 2021/1153

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:





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 any 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 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 the deployment of ERTMS along the former ERTMS Corridor C and ERTMS coordination along the Corridor in accordance with the national implementation plans, as well as coordination of the 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 and Switzerland.

It is composed of representatives of the authorities

of the Member States concerned and Switzerland.

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 European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (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 2022.

FULL REPRESENTATIVES



Valérie Verzele

Director General
Federal Public
Service Mobility
and Transport of
Belgium



Raphael Zumsteeg

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



Delphine Chabalier

Head of unit, National
railway network unit,
Ministry for the Ecological
Transition of France

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



Bert van Laar

Ministry of
Infrastructure and
Water Management
of The Netherlands



Milena Kobler

Ministry for the
Ecological Transition
of France



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 the 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 the 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 member or partner.

Members

The Netherlands:
ProRail

ProRail

Belgium:
Infrabel

INFRABEL

France:
SNCF Réseau



Luxembourg:
CFL



Partners

Luxembourg:
ACF



Switzerland:
TVS, 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 of CFL.

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 four times per year, and from 2022 a monthly informal exchange online was introduced.



Michaël Dierickx

President of the Assembly

ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES



John Voppen
President Director
ProRail



Benoît Gilson
CEO,
Infrabel



Marc Wengler
General Director,
CFL



Luc Lallemand
(Till October 2022)
President SNCF Réseau



Matthieu Chabanel
(From October 2022)
President SNCF Réseau



Peter Kummer
Head of
SBB Infrastructure



Thomas Isenmann
Managing Director,
TVS



Claude Mahowald
Director,
ACF

STAND-IN REPRESENTATIVES



Guus de Mol
Head International
Logistic Affairs, ProRail



Claire Hamoniau
Corridor Manager
SNCF Réseau



Michel Geubelle
Manager, Corridor
Management, Infrabel



Britta Schreiner
Head of external affairs, Infrastructure
management department, CFL



Rudi Achermann
(Till May 2022)
Program Manager
SBB Infrastructure



Tenzin Norgay
(From May 2022)
International Affairs Specialist
SBB Infrastructure



Kathleen Pelte
Head of Path Division,
ACF



Daniel Haltner
(Till October 2022)
Head of International Affairs,
TVS



Floraine Stauffer
(From October 2022)
Regulatory Analysis &
Freight Corridors Specialist
TVS

THE PERMANENT TEAM

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.



Yann Le Floc'h
Managing Director



Matthieu Maeselle
Communication & Finance
Manager, Advisory Groups



Jean Quaeyhaegens
Corridor one-stop shop
leader, Capacity Manager



Marie-Anne Menguy
(Till September 2022)
Operations & Investments
manager, ERTMS coordinator



Sibel Ozcan
(From January 2023)
Operations & Investments
manager, ERTMS coordinator

Working groups and Committee

C-OSS WG	WG Temporary Capacity Restrictions	TPM* WG
Leader Jean Quaeyhaegens	Leader Jean Quaeyhaegens	Leader Marie-Anne Menguy
Communication WG	Corridor Information Document WG	Legal WG
Leader Matthieu Maeselle	Leader Matthieu Maeselle	Leader Yann Le Floc'h
CIP** WG	ERTMS Committee	Transport market study*** WG
Leader Matthieu Maeselle	Leader Marie-Anne Menguy	Leader Matthieu Maeselle
Marketing WG		
Leader Marie-Anne Menguy Sibel Ozcan		

* Train performance management

**Customer Information Platform

***Temporary unactive or stopped

The activities of the Management Board, including the Permanent Team and the Working groups and Committee are described in Chapter 4 - Key activities and topics in 2022.



2.3. The Advisory Groups

The Railway undertaking Advisory Group (RAG) and the Terminal Advisory Group (TAG) were created in 2012 according to 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 Railway 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 (both RU and non-RU).

The RAG is chaired by **Lieven Goethals** (Lineas).

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

Eric Lambert retired in 2022 and Paul Hodgson of CFL was, after election in the RAG nominated as Vice-Chair of the RAG. We want to thank Eric Lambert for his years of positive and knowledge driven contributions in the RAG.



Lieven Goethals

Paul Hodgson



Eric Lambert

“ As Freight Railway Undertakings, we are the first choice to decarbonize the supply chain of our customers, seven times more energy efficient than road transport, and we’re fully committed to doing more! A crucial condition is that we control our own chain with our main supplier: we face some challenges ahead in terms of reliability and cost to prevent a reverse modal shift ! In a world where energy is going to become scarce, we must favour rail ! ”

Lieven Goethals, Chairman of the RAG

Two RAG meetings were organised in 2022, each preceded by a pre-RAG between Railway undertakings. Also, for the first year, 3 dedicated RAG webinars were organised:

On the 30th of March as an online meeting, with following topics:

- State of play of the traffic on the Corridor
- State of play on the investments
- State of play PaP Catalogue TT2023 + TCR's
- Tour de table War in Ukraine
- State of Play QCO Lyon - Bettembourg
- First discussions on the merger RFC Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Med

This RAG meeting was followed by a dedicated RAG webinar on the Origin/Destination Diagram as one of the deliverables of the POC Capacity Visualisation (see point 4.3. POC Capacity Visualisation).

On the 1st of December as an online meeting, with following topics:

- News of the Corridor
- State of play on the investments
- State of play Catalogue 2024 + TCRs
- State of Play Path Alteration pilot
- State of Play QCO Lyon-Bettembourg
- Exchange about the User Satisfaction Survey 2022 and potential new approach

A second RAG webinar was organised on 21st of June, discussing the topic of Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC).

A third RAG webinar was organised on 29th of November, discussing the topic of the European Capacity Management Tool (ECMT).



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 TAG community nominated a TAG Chair, **Paul Kronenberger**, and 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 yearly TAG meeting organised by RFC North Sea - Med in order to coordinate the messages and expectations from the TAG members to the Executive Board, 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 WG, Rail Freight Day, ...) as speaker of the TAG community of RFC North Sea - Med.



Frédéric Buyse

BMC-T
Vice-Chair of the TAG community

Paul Kronenberger

Head of Freight
CFL-MultiModal
Chair of the TAG community

"The sector was able to stabilize and has seen even a growth in business. Nevertheless, the first quarter 2023 started with several external challenges like the social movements in France and Germany.

The modernization and extension of the infrastructure is a must, and at the same time it is an additional challenge for all stakeholders."

Paul Kronenberger, Chairman of the TAG

The joint TAG meeting with RFC Rhine-Alpine took place online, on the 29th of March with the following topics:

- Presentation Port of Marseille
- Tour de table: Situation war in Ukraine
- Proposal TEN-T Regulation: Discussion
- KPI Market development
- Performance topics

TAG Webinars organised for the first time

On 23th of March 2022, the first common dedicated TAG webinar of 2022 on 'Innovation' had as subject 'Cranes' and innovation on cranes.

A second webinar was organised on 14th of June, with Train information system (TIS) for Terminals as subject.



3. Cooperation with stakeholders

3.1. 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 the dialogue with the other ministries, infrastructure managers and regulatory bodies involved in the rail freight corridors.

The European Commission published in 2021 a proposal for the revision of the TEN-T Regulation, which is under negotiation. One important point

for RFC North Sea - Med is its suggested merger with RFC Rhine - Alpine.

The combination of the two north-south directed rail freight corridors should further strengthen the already strong interoperable rail freight axis in Europe. In 2022 also preparations were ongoing regarding the revision of the RFC Regulation.

In 2022, also negotiations were ongoing on a broad revision of interoperability specifications (TSI's) including ERTMS upgrades and innovations like Automatic Train Operations and Digital Automatic Coupling



3.2. The Rail Freight Corridors 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, Nuria Pérez Brandón, who joined the RNE as successor of Susanne Kopfer. In 2022, six online and one physical RFC

Network meetings were organized in which RFC North Sea-Med participated. Among the topics, which RFCs worked on were the CEF II call and Technical Assistance, Impact Assessment on the costs of the C-OSS, EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes and further harmonization of common activities and exchange on best practices. The C-OSS Community topics were also discussed.

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 cooperation 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 holds once a year a dedicated meeting with the CNC Coordinator.

In 2022, the CNC assistant, Alexis Padoy left and his successor Arunas Jurevicius took part in the

Executive Board of 8th of December.

In the 2nd half of 2022, the European coordinator, Mr Balasz, published his 5th Work Plan.

On 22-23 November, there was a working group on ports between CNC North Sea-Med and Atlantic, together with the Coordinator for motorways of the sea.

Finally, the 17th NSMED Corridor Forum was organised on the 29th September 2022.

3.4. 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 57 of Directive 2012/34/EU. In general, the Belgian Regulatory body represents all regulatory

bodies at the Executive Board meetings of the Corridor. Representatives of the Regulatory bodies also participate in the Advisory Group meetings.

An online meeting took place on 31st of August 2022 between RFC North Sea – Med and the Regulatory bodies.

3.5. RailNetEurope

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 2022:

- Traffic management
- C-OSS Community
- Capacity working group:
 - Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCR) coordination
 - PCS
- Train performance management
- RNE/RFC KPI coordination working group
- International Contingency Management (ICM)
- Customer Information Document (CID) & Network Statement (NS) working group
- User Satisfaction Survey working group
- Customer Information Platform (CIP) Change Control Board
- Data quality working group;
- Cross-border issues working group.



4. Key activities and topics in 2022

4.1. Activities of the Executive Board

The Executive Board (ExBo) continued its activities related to the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010 and the orientations set within the strategic objectives defined in 2018 and updated in 2019, which specify the policy goals of the

ExBo. The main strategic objectives remain the temporary capacity restrictions, the capacity management along the Corridor and the quality of the offer.

Regular topics addressed

One of the major constraints for operating rail freight lies in its reliability. The temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs) on the lines that are part of the RFC and the potential impact of TCRs located outside of the geographical scope of the RFC were accordingly on the agenda of the Executive Board's meetings.

The Executive Board acknowledged the efforts made by the RFC, the infrastructure managers and the operators to find solutions to alleviate major closures such as on the Athus-Meuse axis and in Strasbourg in 2023 as well as on RFC Rhine-Alpine in 2024. For this last point, the Executive Board noted the close cooperation between the stakeholders, the infrastructure managers, and both RFCs. The impact of the closure of lines on other RFCs on the traffic of this RFC will remain a point of attention for the Executive Board in 2023. The Executive Board will meet its counterpart of RFC Rhine-Alpine in the first quarter of 2023.

On the capacity management side, especially regarding the punctuality, the Executive Board discussed thoroughly the potential causes and learned from the RFC's Lyon-Bettembourg

punctuality project. Based on the findings, the Executive board will reflect further on how to raise the awareness of the stakeholders in order to meet a sufficient level of punctuality overall, in the course of 2023

National rail freight strategies were also presented during the ExBo's sessions.

The ongoing revision of the so-called TEN-T Regulation and its impact on the future of the RFC, including the merger of RFC Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Med, was discussed at Executive Board level with stakeholders, CNC and ERTMS coordinators.

Finally, the development of the parameters along the Corridor was still a point for close monitoring. The Executive Board noted the progress made on the studies on investments to lift restrictions on 740 meter long trains in Belgium, on the discussions to finance projects for 740 meter trains in the Netherlands and on the studies on loading gauge in France, co-financed by a CEF grant. Bilateral cooperation in this regards was especially underlined.

European Cooperation



Cooperation with the CNC

The Executive Board met the CNC Coordinator, Pr. Peter Balázs, on 2 June 2022 to improve a closer cooperation between the RFC and the CNC.

The merging of the corridors North Sea-Med and Rhine-Alpine and the need to have a network approach were discussed. This approach could foster the resilience of rail transport.

The status of implementation of the current requirements and the upcoming requirements from the revised TEN-T Regulation were also addressed.

Cooperation with the ERTMS Coordinator

The Executive Board also invited the ERTMS Coordinator, Mr. Ruete, to participate in its meeting on 2 June 2022. Issues of funding and coordination for decommissioning Class-B systems were addressed. Stability of versioning and certainty for investors mainly were the outcome of the discussions. The opportunity to renew the old rolling stock with a rolling stock already ERTMS-equipped was one of the possible options to accelerate the deployment of ERTMS OBUs. The cost related to this new rolling stock needs however to be considered. On cross-border sections, the Executive Board acknowledged the difference in implementation with RFC Rhine-Alpine. RFC North Sea-Med is rather well equipped with ERTMS while RFC Rhine-Alpine is less advanced. There is accordingly a difference in approach between the two corridors. Bilateral discussions between infrastructure managers on ERTMS deployment on cross-border sections should be further encouraged.

Joint Executive Board meeting RFC North Sea-Med – Rhine-Alpine

A joint meeting between ExBo RFC Rhine-Alpine and ExBo RFC North Sea-Med took place on 8 June 2022. The meeting was dedicated to the merger of RFC Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Med and its implication on the governance structure and on

the customers. The transitional period was also addressed. This item will be further addressed in 2023.

Network of Executive Boards of RFCs

The Executive Board participated again in the Network of Executive Boards of RFCs (NExBo) meetings on 22 June and 17 November 2022.

The activities were related to the Issues Logbook, the allocation rules, TTR and the revision of the ICM Handbook. Pilots on crossing time at the borders were also discussed. A special focus was on pilots and projects on telematics/ETA and KPIs. Furthermore, the NExBo continued to encourage the exchange of good practices and initiatives from various corridors were presented. In this perspective, the progress of the implementation of the Rotterdam Declaration (2016) was discussed. Dedicated discussion took also place on the revision of the TEN-T Regulation, especially exchange of views between Ministries about article 65 of the proposal of the Commission. One of the objectives of the NExBo was to enhance the cooperation with the European Commission, especially taking into account the upcoming revision of the RFC Regulation. The war in Ukraine and its impact on rail freight traffic were also on the agenda of the NExBo.

Swiss conference on Rail Freight Corridors (Bern conference)

On 12 September 2022, the Swiss Ministry of Transport organised a conference in Bern with RFC North Sea-Mediterranean and RFC Rhine-Alpine, with participation of high-level representatives of both corridors. The topics addressed were governance and the revision of the EU-Regulations, quality and punctuality, and capacity management. Quality appeared to be a huge issue for both RFCs, with a high number of trains cancelled and less than 50% of trains on time (on RFC Rhine-Alpine specifically).



On that last point, the usage of the network and the safeguarding of capacity for freight were primary seen as major factors to take into account to improve the reliability of rail freight. The Executive Board decided to start a working group on how

to raise awareness before a decision is taken regarding the lack of capacity and the prioritisation between freight and passengers trains.

Railway undertakings and terminals cooperation

The Executive Board decided to pursue its closer cooperation with TAG representatives during the ExBo meetings. During these exchanges with the TAG Speaker, the Executive Board encouraged the TAG members to initiate a common project to be submitted in a next CEF Call. The situation of the implementation of TAF TSI and the awareness of the terminals on their obligations related to it was of particular importance since it is closely related to the way terminals could play a role in the logistics chain and the need to get a transparency between data holders. The information provided could enhance the understanding of the Ministries on the challenges of the terminal members of the RFC. The lack of resources from terminals is a point which needs to be addressed at the EU level, even if some funding is already available.

The RAG Speaker was also invited during the ExBo meetings, as it is the case since 2017. Thanks to this exchange of views, various issues for the RUs were brought to the Ministries' attention and provided some insight views on how the market works and their challenges, e.g. on the price competitiveness of rail compared to road transport. Loading gauge, longer trains, alignment of cross-border TCRs and the impact of major TCRs in 2024 were particularly addressed during these sessions. The situation in Ukraine and its impact on freight traffic also were on the agenda.

4.2. Activities of the Management Board



In 2022, the Management Board met 4 times to handle the official agenda with decision points. For the first year, a monthly online meeting was organised, to discuss and exchange on non-decisional points and topics where an exchange among its members and partners was considered as useful.

In the light of the potential merger between RFCs Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Med, and to discuss topics of common interest, a common Management Board meeting was organised in Paris, on the 20th of April.

Also, the limited drop in traffic on RFC North Sea – Med, leading to a fifth year of decline in train numbers, drew the full attention of the Management Board, who asked the Permanent Team to further analyse the situation and come with proposals to reverse this negative trend. In that regard, a ‘Marketing Working Group’ was asked by the Management Board in 2022, to investigate the reasons behind this drop. The activities of the Marketing WG will take full force in 2023.

More details on the performance can be found in Chapter 5. Performance of the Corridor.



Deployment of ETCS on the Corridor

Sylvain Mosmann

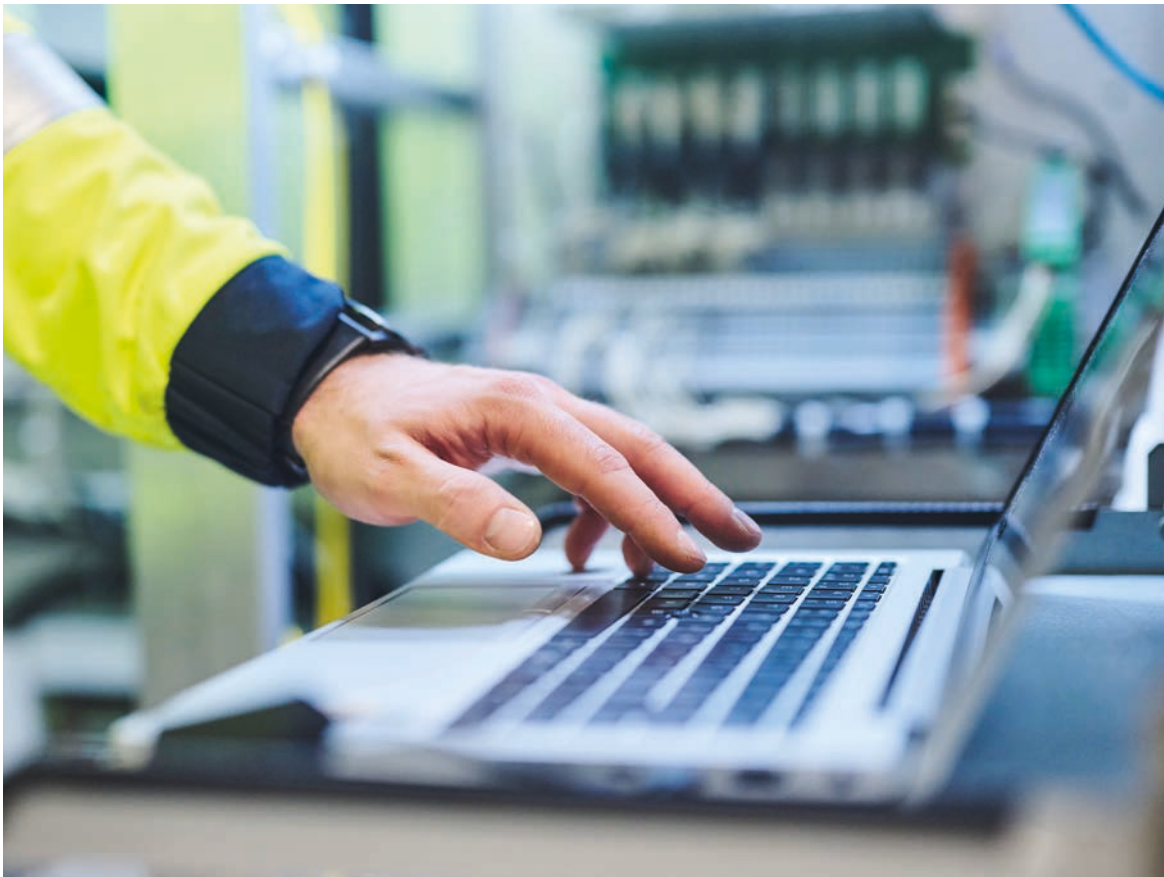
ERTMS technical advisor



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.

In 2022, the WG ERTMS resumed its activities; one meeting was organised on 25th of March and the following was discussed:

- State of play of the deployment per country;
- Speed limits on international traffic relative to the ETCS train categories
- CCS TSI discussion



4.3. Capacity and Temporary Capacity Restrictions

Capacity management

2022 started with the publication of the Pre-arranged Path catalogue for timetable (TT) 2023, and ended with the finalisation of the catalogue for TT2024.

The results of the allocation process for TT2023 (capacity KPIs) and the evolution over the years can be found in the Performance Report 2022 published on the website under the following link:

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

In 2022, the process of allocating Rolling Planning paths in the frame of the TTR pilot between Amsterdam and Brussels continued. 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.

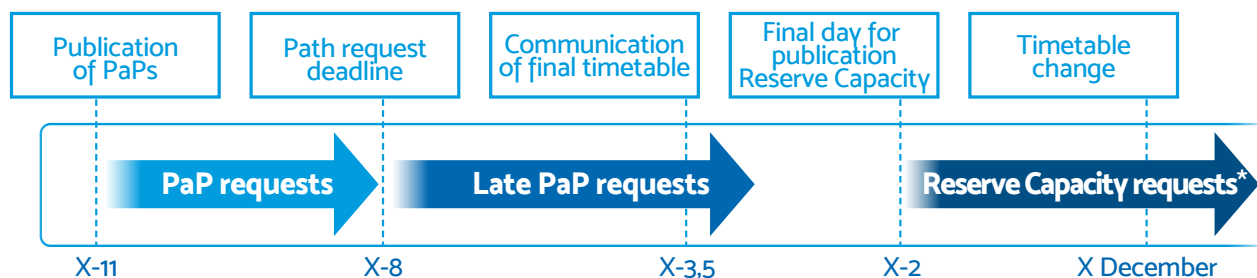
In 2022, the 'Path Alteration Project' was launched between Infrabel and SNCF Réseau, with involvement and cooperation of the RFC.

The pilot, that led to this project, was set up at the initiative of the Train Performance Management working group of the RFC, in which a representative of the RUs of the Corridor participates.

The analysis of a sick train between Antwerp (BE) and Hauts de France (FR) revealed that the process of coordinating works/paths on the border points between M-6 and D-7 could be improved.

Bilateral discussions were then started between Infrabel and SNCF Réseau to exchange information on the processes for adapting train paths, which led to the launch of this project in 2022.

Capacity allocation calendar in 2022



* continues in following year until 30 days before train run

Proof of Concept ‘Capacity visualisation study’

RFC North Sea - Med launched a tender in 2020 for a Proof of Concept (PoC) study on the visualisation of capacity.

As a reminder, the motivation for the launch of this study was to reflect on how to support the ambitious targets for modal shift fixed by the European Union and its Member States for 2030. 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 TCRs, 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 the 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.

The study resulted in a direct added value for the Corridor as it brought innovative insight into the core business activity of the RFC, namely offering capacity on its routes. It also formed a basis for further studies and growing insights.

The work done resulted in a continuation study launched in 2022, in a consortium with RNE, where the Corridor launched a tender for a MVP (Minimum Viable Product) continuation study of this capacity visualisation.

The aim is to ‘industrialise’ and ‘anchor’ this capacity visualisation approach into the set of tools that are provided by RNE to the Rail Freight Corridors.

The results of this continuation study are expected by the end of 2023.

Temporary Capacity Restrictions

Bi- and trilateral coordination to mitigate the impact of TCRs has taken place intensively. A TCR WG meeting was organised between Infrabel, ACF/CFL Infra, SNCF-Réseau and SBB Infra.

There is a high need for this as the number of TCRs will increase in the upcoming years. In 2022, the coordination of TCRs between RFC Rhine - Alpine and RFC North Sea – Mediterranean was started to offer better re-routing possibilities for upcoming projects in 2024 and 2025.

In 2022 the RAG approached the Corridor to support them in the preparation of a re-routing via France, due to a total closure of the principal line at Rastatt in 2024. DB Netz coordinated the timetable topics with SNCF Réseau.

The RFC and RUs with support from the ExBo focused on the operational aspects of this re-routing.

An overview of TCRs is published and updated on the Corridor website each semester

<https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/temporary-capacity-restrictions>

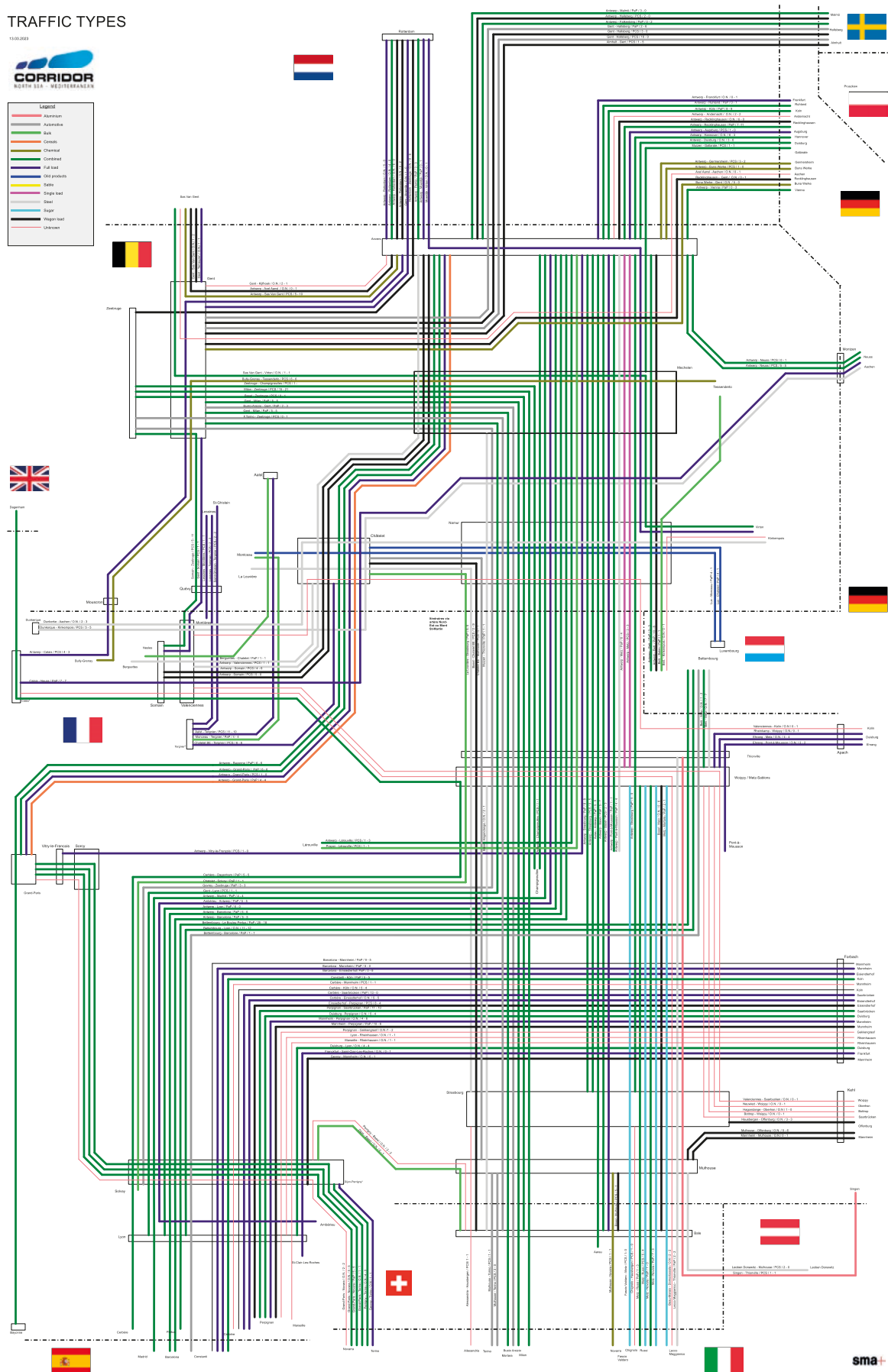
TRAFFIC TYPES

13.03.2023



Legend

Blue	Automobile
Green	Bus
Yellow	Truck
Orange	Chemical
Purple	Combined
Red	Full load
Light blue	Flat products
Dark blue	Ballast
Pink	Single load
Grey	Other
Black	Wagon load
White	Unknown



4.4. Train Performance and Traffic Management

Train Performance and Traffic 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. They met four times in 2022.

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.

The 'Quality Circle Operation' (QCO) continued in 2022, and 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 a local governance to ensure continuous improvement needed to drive change.

Seen the good results, the aim in 2023 is to extend the used methodology to other terminals on the RFC North Sea-Med network.

International Contingency Management

In 2022 no incidents occurred on RFC North Sea-Med that classified as an international contingency management (ICM) case.

However, the Network of Executive Boards of the RFCs started an initiative to assess best practices in handling of ICM cases, based on the ICM handbook. To do so, the NExBo asked to perform an analysis of previous ICM cases.

The ExBo and the NExBo will draw their final conclusions in 2023.

For 2023 the RFC team prepares the next simulation of the ICM processes.

<https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/traffic-management>

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 on the Corridor website. This document gives corridor-scale information such as TCRs, access conditions, capacity and traffic management on the Corridor.

A full harmonization among the Corridors of the CID was accomplished in the last years.

Moreover, the digitalisation project of the CID, called NCI portal (Network statement and Corridor Information) was fully implemented in 2022.

Customer Information Platform (CIP)

The Customer Information Platform (CIP) was further developed and improved in 2022 under the lead of RNE

The main achievements were:

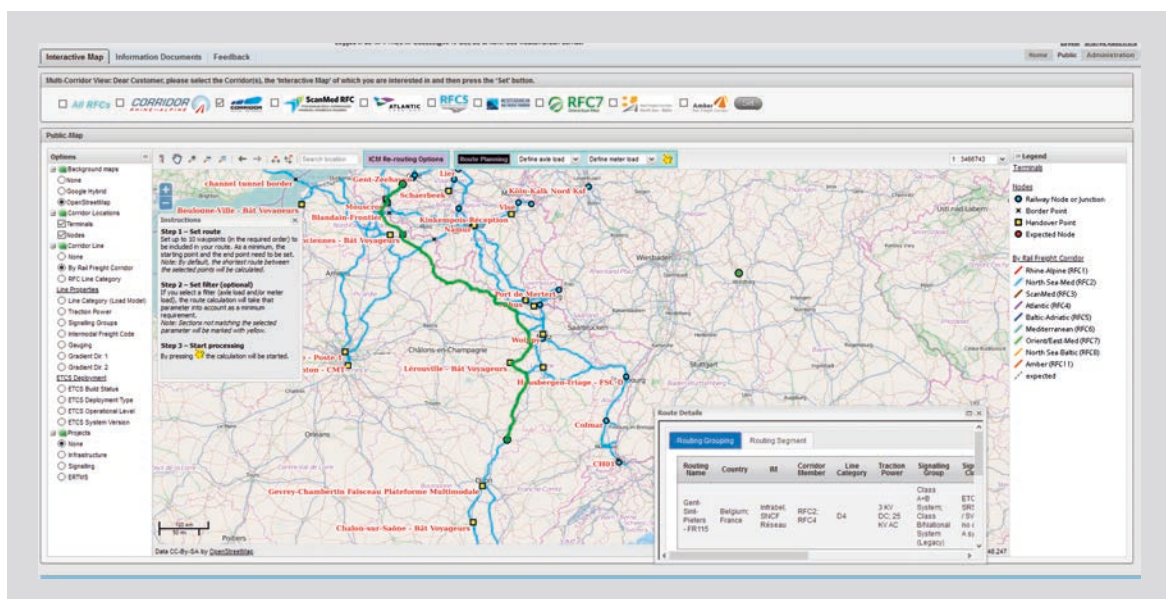
- Several developments to improve the user friendliness and an update of the graphical user interface.
- General improvements regarding completeness of information on properties and projects.
- Harmonisation of uploaded documents along all 11 RFCs.
- Start of the work on a common database for RNE applications called Railway Infrastructure System (RIS).



Nicolas Gatez
CIP Implementation
Manager

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 2023, mainly linked to the new RIS project steered by RNE.



5.

Performance of the Corridor and User Satisfaction Survey

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 management, operations and market development that are monitored by all RFCs according to the RNE guidelines on KPIs.

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

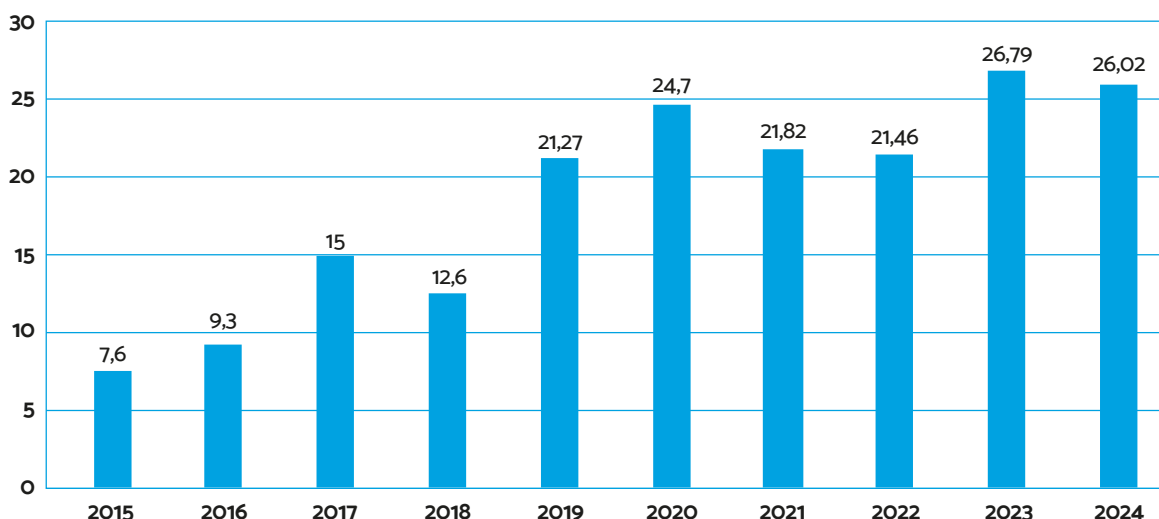
<https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/figures-performance-corridor>

Capacity Management

Volume of offered capacity (PaPs)

This graph displays the volume of PaPs that have been published by the RFC C OSS in January 2014 to 2023 for the timetables 2015 to 2024.

A total of **26,02 million KMs** were published as PaPs for TT2024 (-3% compared to TT2023)





Operations

Number of trains crossing a border along the RFC

For this KPI, all international freight trains that pass a border on the Corridor are taken into account.

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

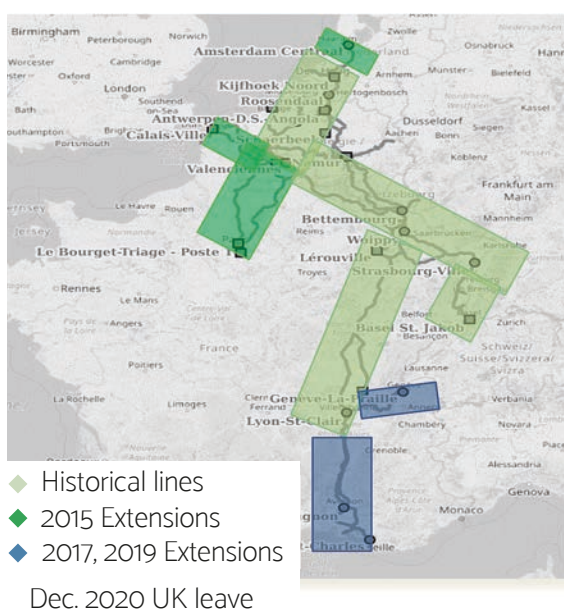
The graph on the opposite page shows the trend of the Corridor for the last five calendar years.

The information on the number of trains is provided by the IM's and is related to the border points on the Corridor.

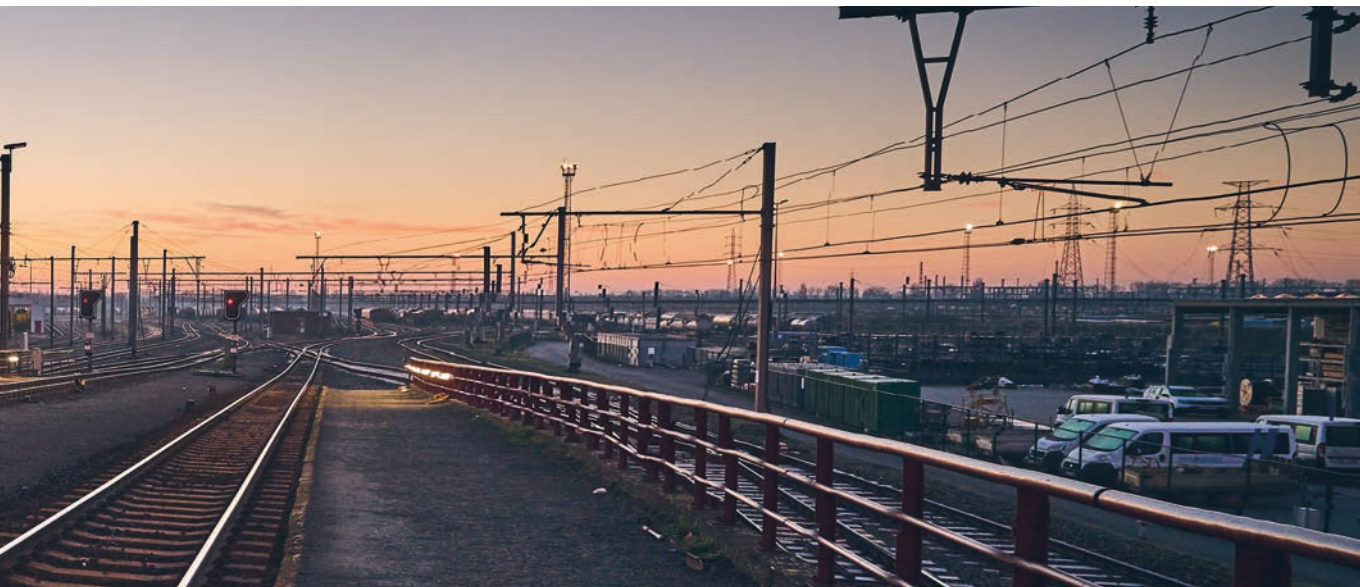
The train volumes on the corridor have been steadily declining since 2018.

In this context, a marketing working group has been set up at the request of the Management Board with the purpose to understand the reason of this decrease and explain the fall in corridor volume over the last years.

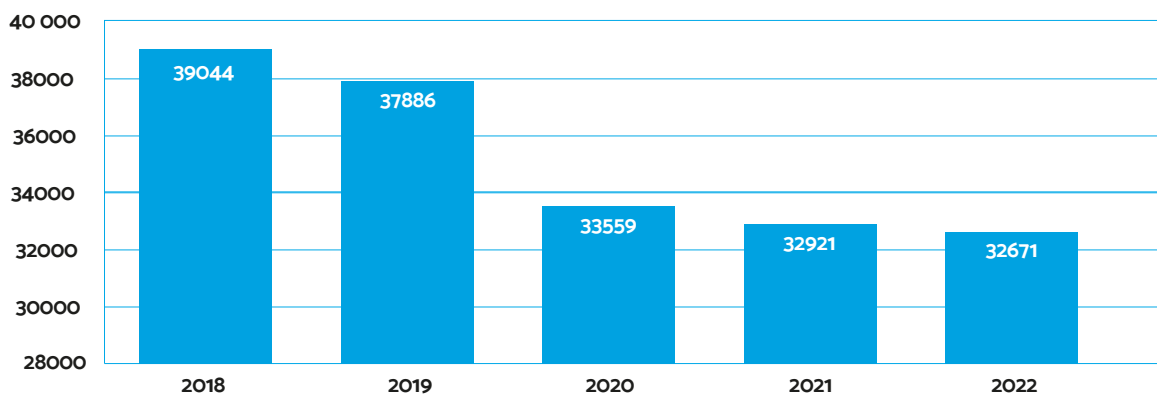
The annual number of trains crossing Aubange/ Mont St Martin, Baisieux/Blandain and Erquelinnes/ Jeumont decreased in 2022 mainly due the price of electricity in Belgium and also works (Athus Meuse) which incite the RU's to re-route their trains through the border Feignies/Quévry.



Geneva volumes counted since 2019

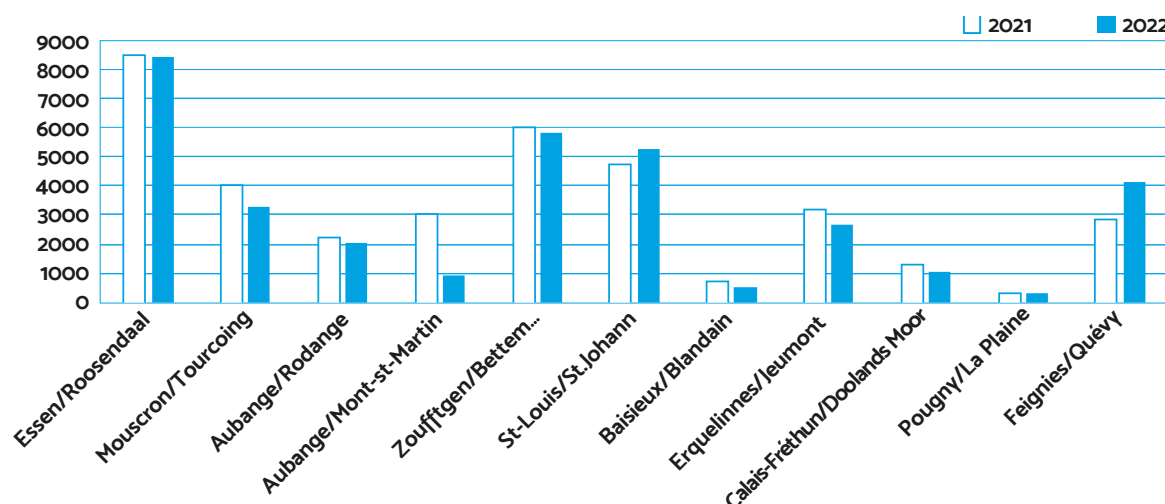


Annual number of trains 2018 - 2022



Variation	January 21 vs 22	February 21 vs 22	March 21 vs 22	April 21 vs 22	May 21 vs 22	June 21 vs 22	July 21 vs 22	August 21 vs 22	September 21 vs 22	October 21 vs 22	November 21 vs 22	December 21 vs 22	21 vs 22
2021 vs 2020													
Total	-0,5%	3,5%	-6%	-7%	18%	-6%	13%	-7%	4%	-9%	8%	-16%	-1%

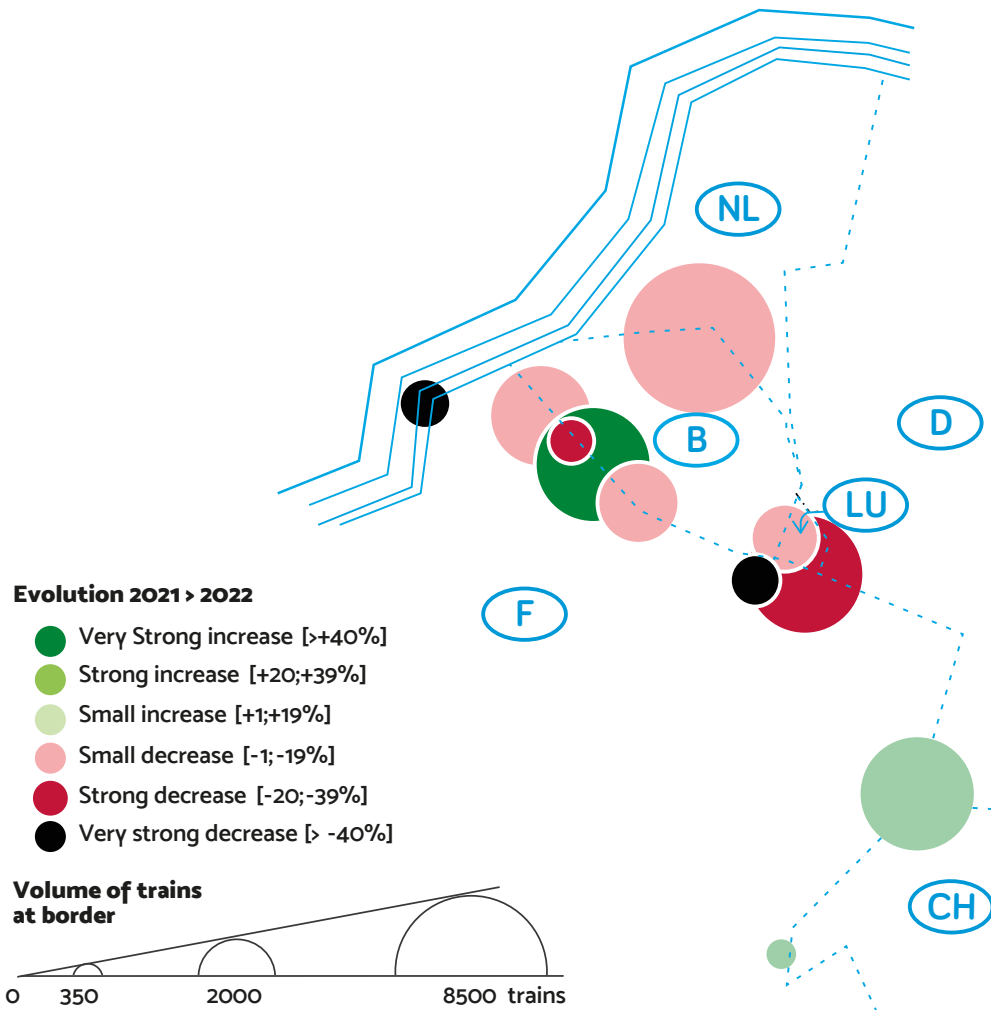
Number of trains per border



Border location names		Volume (Nb of trains) 2022	Share	Δ 22/21
ProRail	Infrabel			
Roosendaal Grens	Essen Grens	8465	24%	-1%
Infrabel	ACF / CFL			
Aubange frontière LU	Rodange frontière	2063	6%	-8%
Infrabel	SNCF Réseau			
Mouscron frontière	Tourcoing frontière	3290	9%	-17%
Aubange FR	Mont St Martin frontière	940	3%	-69%
Erquelines frontière	Jeumont frontière	2695	8%	-16%
Blandain frontière	Baisieux frontière	547	2%	-25%
Feignies	Quevy	4162	12%	+46%
ACF : CFL	SNCF Réseau			
Bettembourg frontière	Zoufftgen frontière	5842	17%	-26%
SNCF Réseau	SBB			
Bâle St.-Jean	Basel St. Johann	5288	15%	+11%
Pougny Chancy	La Plaine	364	1%	+13%
Channel Tunnel	SNCF Réseau			
Doolands Moor	Calais Frethun faisceau tunnel	1071	3%	-43%

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/Saint Louis border point.

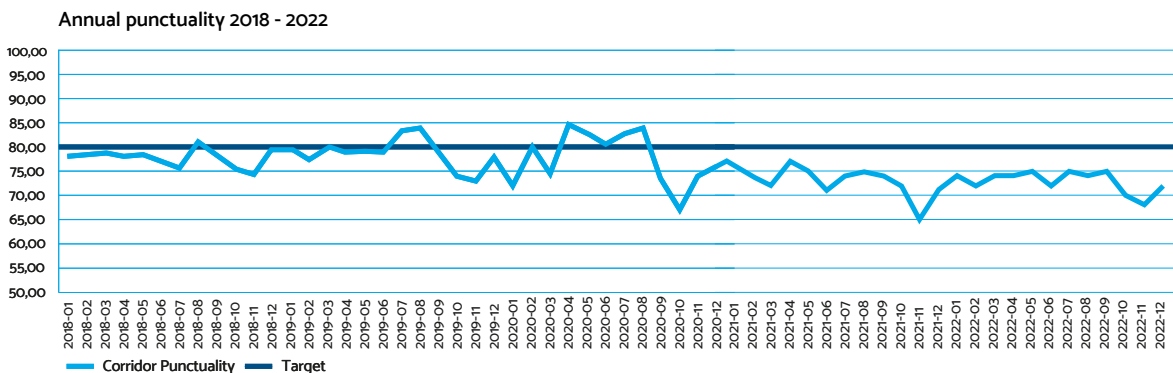
Number of trains per border



Punctuality

RFC North Sea – Med continues its efforts to reach the objective of 80% punctuality. For 2022, the global corridor punctuality is an xx % (30 minutes threshold).

Punctuality 2018-2022 (over 12 months)



5.2. User Satisfaction Survey 2022

The User Satisfaction Survey 2022 was prepared and conducted jointly with all eleven rail freight corridors. The survey was conducted between September and October 2022 and the results were published on the website.

In 2022 also, for the first time, the possibility was offered to the respondents to have an online interview instead of answering the online survey.

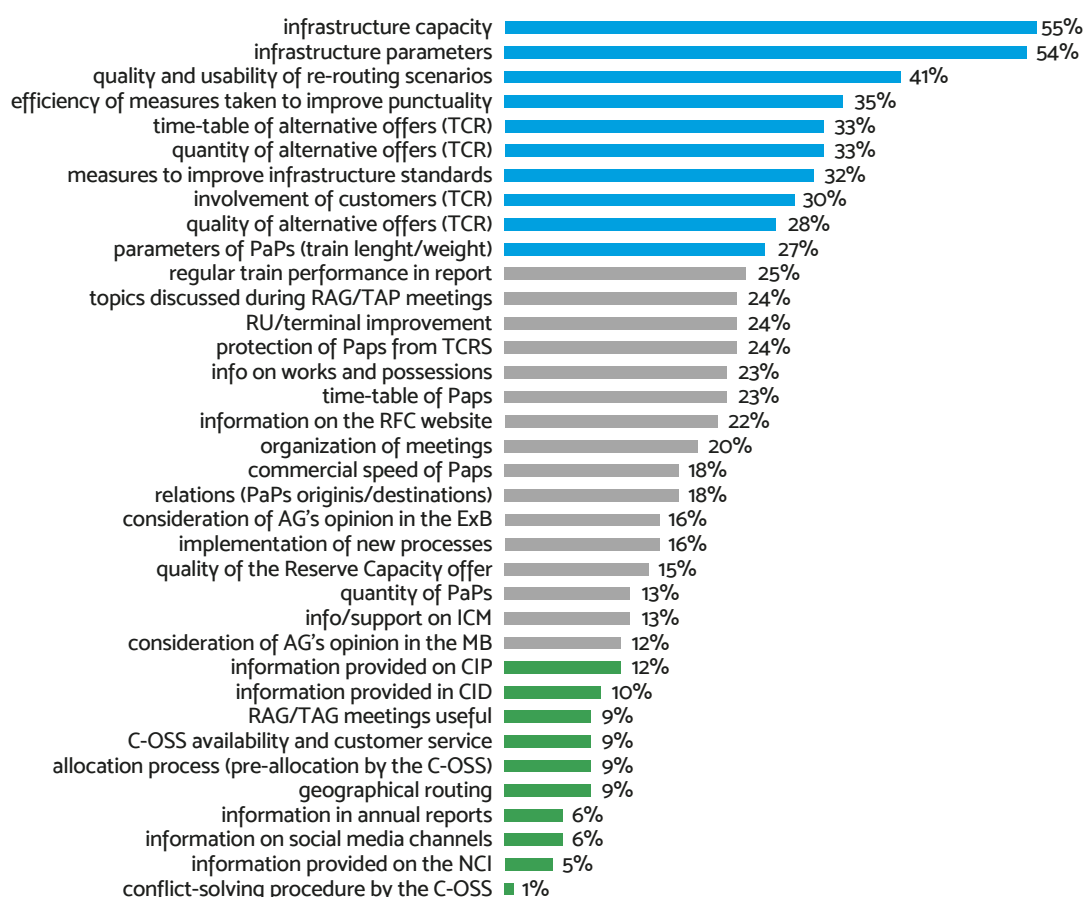
The overall satisfaction of users with RFC North Sea-Med stayed stable in 2022, at 90% of overall satisfaction.

The respondents expressed a wish to review the way of surveying. The dedicated working group will work on this request in 2023.

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_USS_2022_RFC2_NSM_Report.pdf

Top ten focus topics



FOCUS TOPICS

LESS URGENT

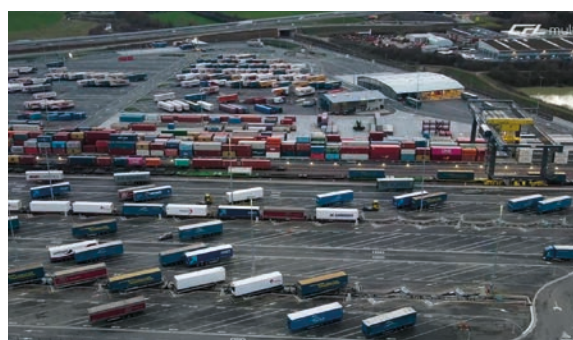
6. Events

Connecting Europe Days in Lyon

RFC North Sea-Med, together with all RFCs and RNE participated in the Connecting Europe Days (formerly TEN-T Days), that were organised by the European Commission and took place from 28th to 30th of June 2022 in Lyon. All RFCs shared a common stand in the exhibition hall. RFC North Sea-Med took the opportunity to promote the Corridor, in the frame of a round panel discussion on invitation by the CNC coordinator, where

the QCO Lyon-Bettembourg was presented, and got in contact with potential customers, investors, EU institutions and partners from other modes of transport and thus opening new possibilities for partnership and cooperation.

The presentation and promotional video can be consulted on the dedicated page on our website: <https://www.rfc-northsea-med.eu/en/page/lyon-bettembourg-qco>





7. Finance

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

The European Commission committed to a further financing of all RFCs in the framework of a 'Technical Assistance' financing under the CEF II Transport call 2021. The Grant Agreement was signed in 2022. This 'Technical Assistance' safeguards the financing of the functioning of the Corridor, and this retroactively from 2021 till 2024.

Moreover, in 2022, following projects of interest on our Corridor benefited of CEF Co-financing:

- Removal of 9 level crossings on the Comprehensive Network in Belgium
- ETCS Level 2 trackside deployment on 7 sections of the Core Network in Belgium
- Vosges mountains and Paris – Dijon rail freight routes: loading gauge clearance and bottlenecks removal
- Capacity increase, automation, digitalisation and decarbonisation to upgrade CFL terminals' platform in Bettembourg – Dudelange

Also in the frame of the 2021 and 2022 Military Mobility Calls IM projects on RFC North Sea-Med were granted EU co-financing.

Last but not least, under the umbrella of RNE as coordinator, a CEF II co-financing was granted in 2022 to the MVP projects (Minimum Viable Product), such as the TTR implementation and also the 'Capacity visualisation', where RFC North Sea -Med will take the lead.

We want to thank and express our gratitude for this co-financing to the European Commission, DG Move, and CINEA,



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Design: fabian@sanguinetti.be

ProRail

INFRABEL

SNCF
RÉSEAU

 **SBB CFF FFS**

 **ACF**

 **TVS
SAS
SAT**

CFL



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