

MEETING OF THE RAILWAY UNDERTAKING ADVISORY GROUP

23rd of November 2021, Online (Teams meeting)

Participants

Railway Undertakings and associations

Oelschläger, Dirk	DB Cargo
Coart, François	Europorte
Flesch, André	Hupac
Goethals, Lieven	Lineas (Chair of the RAG)
Corbeel, Nicolas	Lineas
Vantalon-Korovitch, Gaëlle	SNCF Fret
Overdijkink, Joost	UIC

Executive Board

Avaux, Caroline	SPF Mobilité & Transport, MoT Belgium
Kobler, Milena	Ministère de la Transition Écologique, MoT France
Da Silva, Virginie	Ministère de la Transition Écologique, MoT France

Regulatory Bodies

Panneels, Gretel	Belgian Regulatory Body, Coordinating RB
------------------	--

Management Board – IMs & ABs – Permanent Team

Schreiner, Britta	CFL IM (MB member) (partly – Morning part)
Van Den Heede, Gerda	Infrabel (Proxy MB member)
De Mol, Guus	ProRail (MB member)
Hamoniau, Claire	SNCF Réseau (MB member)
Maes, Cecilia	Infrabel (Dedicated Afternoon part)
Molenaer, Franky	Infrabel (Dedicated Afternoon part)
Monté, Koen	Infrabel (Dedicated Afternoon part)



Le Floc'h, Yann (YLF)
Menguy, Marie-Anne (MAM)
Quaeyhaegens, Jean (JQ)
Maeselle, Matthieu (MMA)

Permanent team – Managing Director
Permanent team – Operations & Investments Manager
Permanent team – Capacity Manager – C-OSS
Permanent team – Finance & Communication Manager

Welcome and expectations of the RAG

Y. Le Floc'h, Managing Director of the RFC NSM and L. Goethals, chair of the RAG, welcome the participants.

The agenda is proposed.

This RAG meeting is split in 2 parts:

- Morning session is organized as a regular RAG meeting.
- The afternoon session is organized as a dedicated workshop discussing a Rex on the ICM cases this summer.

The RAG members expressed their expectations, discussed during the pre-RAG meeting (see point 3).

Morning Session: Regular RAG

1. Welcome word by the Managing Director and Chair of the RAG

2. What's new on the corridor:

- No particular news was mentioned compared to the previous RAG meeting in March.

3. Expectations of the RAG:

The RAG members expressed their expectations, discussed during the pre-RAG meeting.

Related to that, RAG Chair L. Goethals summed up following points to be addressed in the morning session:

- Chair gave an update on the dedicated working group 'Long trains', mentioning the activity of the WG is for the moment at a low level due to the heavy workload at the operational departments of the RUs due to Covid related operational constraints. Goal is to resume the WG after the TT change and propose a first draft by the beginning of 2022;
- In that regard, RUs mention they are confronted with following operational constraints due to Covid:
 - o General resource problems due to outfall and quarantines;
 - o Very stringent lack of train drivers due to this in particular;
- Also, it was mentioned that RUs, in particular those who are in a retrofit process of locos running on the Corridor, are confronted with difficulties and delays related to the certification, leading to a lack of (certified) ETCS locos.

4. State of play essential elements of the next timetables (by JQ, permanent team):

- State of play TT 2022:
 - o Allocation process went better than 2021 (difficult due to lockdown and implementation of SIPH by SNCF R);
 - o Only few delays were encountered this time, nevertheless, we see a slight decrease in the number of requests;
 - o Following figures were presented:
 - Volume of offered capacity:
 - TT2021 21,7 million KM

- TT2022 21,4 million KM (-1.4%)
 - Volume of pre-booked capacity:
 - TT2021 12,15 million KM
 - TT2022 10,6 million KM (-14,6%)
 - Number of dossiers:
 - TT2021 181 dossiers
 - TT2022 169 dossiers (-7%)
 - Asked was to the RU's if they have additional comments on the 2022 allocation process, no particular additional comments were formulated;
 - Regarding the Rolling planning, the permanent team proposed a dedicated RAG workshop beginning of 2022, the proposal was welcomed by the participating RU's.
- State of play TT 2023:
- Only a very small increase of the capacity needs announcement was formulated by the RU's compared to TT 2022;
 - No major changes in the catalogue are expected;
 - Publication of TT 2023 is foreseen in due time on 10th of January 2022;
 - A technical/commercial meeting is organized jointly with RFC 4 & 6 by February. The concerned RU's and contact persons have received an invitation.
 - The PCS Training organized with RNE & the C-OSS Community is organized February 14-18. The invitations have been sent.
- State of play TT 2024:
- In general, the permanent team expect to have full benefice of the TCR coordination process among the IM's, started in 2020. This coordination process was welcomed by the RU's, mentioning that nevertheless the efforts in that regard must continue;
 - Concerning the RFC RALP summer closure due to TCR Rhine Valley:
 - Re-routing options were identified: feedback from RUs expected by DB Netz beginning of January;
 - Set-up of a shuttle service via Hausbergen under discussion among the RU's. D. Oelschläger of DB Cargo gave an update of the discussions to the audience. Mr. Oelschläger mentioned it will be challenging to have enough rolling stock (mainly thermic locos) and train drivers skilled with the required competences to operate this shuttle service. F. Coart of Europorte kindly proposed to investigate internally if Europorte could put at disposal thermic traction locos of Europorte to support this shuttle service. This was welcomed by all participating RU's. Mr. Coart will stay in touch directly with Mr. Oelschläger to further discuss on the topic.
 - Mr. Overdijkink of UIC as a conclusion on this topic mentioned that a pooling system of train drivers is under discussion among the RU's.

5. Path Alteration Pilot:

The permanent team proposed a Path Alteration Pilot in close cooperation and with participation of the concerned IM's. The idea of holding a Path Alteration Pilot between Belgium & France comes from the TPM (Train Performance Management) Working Group. One ill train has been followed: Antwerp – Mouscron/Tourcoing – Dourges.

The Geographical scope of this pilot is: Main border Mouscron / Tourcoing with alternative border Blandain / Baisieux.

During this TPM WG we have noticed that the RUs are facing several difficulties for planning & adapting trains on different networks: meaning, inconsistencies at the border.

A kick-off meeting has been held on October 18.

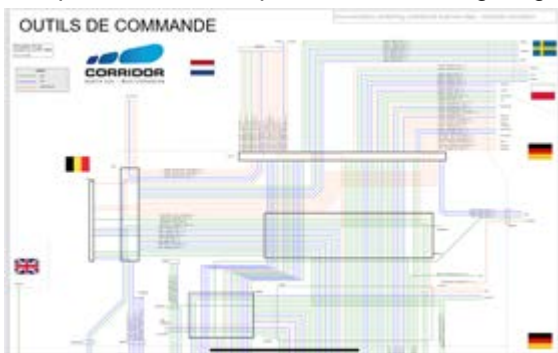
The goals of this Pilot are:

- Avoid TCRs on a main line & the usual diversionary line at the same time, as well as improve the short-term train path allocation process;
- Discuss the gap between (as an IM) only respecting the Network Statement & how the customer feels:
 - o Capacity allocation annual order: with or without TCR variants, with or without pre-constructed capacity;
 - o Ad-hoc requests, path alterations...
- Better mutual knowledge of each other's working methods of respective SNCF-R & INFRABEL teams.

The permanent team is currently coordinating different proposals between the participating IM's & RFC NSM. Once interesting proposals identified, the permanent team will invite the RUs to discuss next possible steps.

6. Representation of the RFC train portfolio:

- The permanent team presented following diagram, representing the O/D's of freight trains along the RFC:



- Important here is to underline that today the ordering process of train paths is via 3 processes: 1. PCS/PaP's, 2. PCS/Ad-Hoc, 3. PCS/National tools;
- The RU's will be asked by the RAG chair if they agree to share this document in an anonymised way, and maybe via a specific RAG WS to present it.

7. Lyon-Bettembourg Quality Circle:

- Reminder: The permanent team launched in 2019 a quality circle, monitoring traffic between the port of Lyon and the terminal of Bettembourg (see presentations and state of play previous RAG meetings);
- Important work has already been done on the subject: daily measure of the punctuality, analysis of the performance all along the route, mapping of the departure process, implementation of a local governance with all stakeholders (terminals, shunting operators, traffic control, RU's and forwarders);
- In the future, this work could be connected to RCDM, Q-Eleta and ETM;
- If the RU's are interested, the permanent team can foresee a dedicated RAG WS on the subject (1h).

8. Investments: Presentation of the French 'Plan de relance Fret':

- The French MoT (by M. Kobler) presented a synthesis of the French rail freight plan (Plan de relance Fret);
- [Click here to consult the presentation;](#)
- After the presentation, the participating RU's stressed and repeated their concerns and the importance of the upgrade of the Vosges tunnels to P400 loading gauge. They stressed the importance to have the investment works in the Vosges tunnels realised as soon as possible, as this is crucial to meet the ambitions of 2030 regarding (intermodal) freight traffic realised;

- SNCF Réseau mentioned they intend to ask for EU funding regarding the studies foreseen for the upgrade of the Vosges tunnels.

9. **Open Points and AOB:**

- Short Reminder of the Rail Facilities Portal (potential short demo in tool itself);
- CEF 2 Call: it was mentioned that the permanent team is at disposal for a support letter, all requests can be sent to MMA;
- The permanent team has done some technical field tours (e.g. Dunkirk, Bettembourg, Marseille) the last year. If RU's are organising this kind of field tours within their organisation, the permanent team would be pleased to join in order to better understand the operational challenges faced by RU's.

Afternoon Session: dedicated WS Rex ICM's

(Infrabel representatives C. Maes, F. Molenaer and K. Monté joined the dedicated afternoon session).

This summer, two ICM cases occurred shortly one after another.

First, there was the ICM case in Rumigny: on 16th of June SNCF Réseau has faced a major incident, a collision between a truck and a freight train with dangerous goods at a level crossing. The French "Artère Nord Est" has been totally closed on two tracks.

This was followed, from 16th of July on, by severe and exceptional floods in Belgium, leading to several total line closures on the Belgian rail network. Seen the very exceptional situation, impacting the traffic on all RFC's crossing Belgium, Infrabel managed the ICM on its network.

A presentation of the timeline was given by the permanent team, completed by the Infrabel representatives regarding the exceptional floods in Belgium. [Click here to see the presentation.](#)

This presentation was followed by a Tour de table:

- Regarding the Rumigny ICM case, all participants welcomed the good communication towards the RU's from SNCF Réseau. Daily 'SONAR' meetings helped in the communication and coordination process;
- Lineas representative N. Corbeel, mentioned the importance of TCR reallocation during this period, and the exceptional re-routing via Paris and Châlon worked out well, given the situation;
- All participating RU's acknowledged the exceptional situation where Infrabel was confronted with in regard of the severe floods in Belgium, especially in the southern part of the country, impacting the main routes on RFC NSM as the 'Athus-Meuse', and welcomed the efforts done by all Infrabel employees working at the recovery of the impacted infrastructure;
- The participating RU's welcomed the efforts of SNCF Réseau to strengthen its efforts after the Belgian floods to reopen as soon as possible the 'Artère Nord Est'.

After the RAG meeting, Sibelit representative A. Jacques (excuses for the meeting), liked to stress the fact that the coordination and communication process in this exceptional cases went good, but remarked that this is also desirable in a normal and non-crisis process.

Also, Infrabel representative F. Molenaer volunteered to further discuss the proposal for short-term coordination between IM's in case of ICM.