

Vienna Declaration Progress on boosting rail freight

Statement of the Austrian Presidency
as follow-up of the Ministerial Rotterdam Declaration

6 December 2018



Seizing the opportunity of the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Austria elaborates this statement to follow up the dynamic of the 2016 Ministerial Rotterdam Declaration (RD) "Rail Freight Corridors to boost international freight", taking particularly account of the provision stating that *"The Ministers will regularly monitor the effects of this Declaration on Rail Freight Corridors to boost international rail freight in Europe, in particular in the coming two years."*

Under these auspices Austria proposes, in consultation with EU Member States participating in rail freight corridors plus Norway and Switzerland, an evaluation of the objectives and activities decided in the RD, promoting the first achievements accomplished since 2016 and invites the Member States, European Commission (EC) and sector stakeholders to work hand in hand to face and solve the challenges of the international rail freight transport.

Considering

- The Ministerial Rotterdam Declaration "Rail Freight Corridors to boost international freight" from 21 June 2016;
- The Railway sector statement "Boosting international rail freight" from 20 May 2016;
- The report of the European Commission on the application of Regulation (EU) 913/2010 COM(2018) 189 final;
- The establishment of the Network of Executive Boards of the EU Rail Freight Corridors, the Sector Statement Group and the cooperation with the European Commission;
- The stability of priorities of the improvement program for international rail freight;
- The consequences of the Rastatt incident in 2017 underlining the importance of achieving an harmonizing and interoperable European Rail network, and the related Ministers declaration of the Rhine Alpine and North Sea Mediterranean rail freight corridors from 23 May 2018;
- The lability of the European rail freight market but as well its important market potential concerning EU internal market and the upcoming railway freight transport with Far East;
- The need to make rail freight an attractive and reliable transport mode for the EU's industry and making EU's transport system sustainable.

Austria emphasizes the importance of a close collaboration between the countries involved in rail freight corridors (RFC) and the relevant stakeholders and therefore:

1. Welcomes the Policy Analysis and main results of RD;
2. Acknowledges the Sector high-level statement plus the comprehensive progress report from the sector statement group;
3. Acknowledges the statement of CEO Task Force of the High Level Freight Meeting of CER/UIC “30 by 2030 – Rail Freight strategy to boost modal shift”;
4. Confirms the continued need of a follow-up of RD in close cooperation with EC and stakeholders and agrees to monitor its effects;
5. Stresses the importance to continue to work together between the rail freight corridors in a Network of Executive Boards ;
6. Underlines the importance of improving the competitiveness of international rail freight and thereby supporting it.

Austria, in consultation with EU Member States participating in rail freight corridors plus Norway and Switzerland, welcomes the continuous work by the sector stakeholders and takes note of the following initiatives which support the objectives and activities as set out in the RD and in particular

- (1) Supports the objective set by the project of Timetable redesign, the implementation timeline, the relating pilots foreseen for 2019/2020 and the preparatory work at national level;
- (2) Underlines the need to analyse further this project and to enhance cooperation between EC and the Member States to prepare the framework conditions to allow its implementation by 2024;
- (3) Welcomes the ongoing sector’s work to strengthen the cooperation between the C-OSS’s for capacity allocation;
- (4) Commits to support the National regulatory conditions to coordinate infrastructure works in line with renewed Annex VII from Directive 2012/34/EU which takes effect from December 2018 onwards;

- (5) Welcomes the sector's work on ICT and other developments to support the capacity allocation with view of sector's ambition to substantially increase international capacity allocated by the European process operated by the collective C-OSS's ;
- (6) Cooperates with the European Agency for Railways in making the 4th railway package work and in solving issues identified by the stakeholders jointly with the European Commission and Member States;
- (7) Encourages the connection of terminals to the rail freight corridors and the information systems for Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) and at a European regulatory framework indicated by the TSI TAF that will match needs of the business sector including terminals and railway customers for the exchange of data on ETA by 2020;
- (8) Supports for each rail freight corridor, in consultation with stakeholders, the identification and implementation in the most cost-efficient way of the TEN-T parameters for the rail freight corridors, in between with the Member States concerned and the EU Coordinators;
- (9) Works together on a concrete and timely ERTMS implementation in each rail freight corridor on the basis of the 2017 European Deployment Plan and the derived National Implementation Plans;
- (10) Welcomes the sector's continuous work regarding the Key Performance Indicators for the rail freight corridors, notably publishing the results in accordance with Article 19 of the Regulation (EU) 913/2010;
- (11) Supports each rail freight corridors in making its operations more robust in cases of mayor disturbances by applying the guideline on contingency management and asking the freight operating companies to ensure aligned contingency planning;
- (12) Encourages and supports the use of and sharing of best practices by asking the Network of Executive Boards of the EU Rail Freight Corridors to regularly publish empirical examples, which shows innovative business cases, where rail freight improve service or gains market share. This could include cases where services are redesigned to better meet the needs of the users/market or enable more efficient working practices;
- (13) Recognizes the need of further work to develop procedure for solving cross-borders issues such as waiting times, and encourage initiatives both at EU level and bilaterally between Member States.

Therefore Austria strongly encourages the Member States, the European Commission and the Sector to continue the work mentioned above. Austria underlines the importance of further coordination and monitoring of the process. As a path forward Austria would highlight the following steps:

- (1) To continue the cooperation at Network of Executive Boards
- (2) To strengthen the efforts of monitoring concrete success in the rail sector by straight implementation of a KPI based monitoring system
- (3) To implement a periodic monitoring of the Rotterdam Declaration, preferably within 2 years period.

Annex

Main results of the cooperation between Member States, as follow-up of the Ministerial Rotterdam Declaration

1. Member States strengthened their cooperation by setting up in April 2017 a permanent Network of Executive Boards of the EU Rail Freight Corridors (NexBo) which coordinates activities with European Commission;
2. The NexBo has issued recommendations on:
 - a) Update of harmonized text of Framework for Capacity Allocation (FCA) for the rail freight corridors (December 2016). A further update of the harmonized text of FCA is foreseen (December 2018) to facilitate the pilot projects for Time Table Redesign;
 - b) Exchange of data concerning Estimated Time of Arrival in the logistic chain (February 2018);
 - c) Harmonised set of Key Performance Indicators (February 2018);
3. The NexBo started up common analysis on:
 - a) Common approach regarding implementation of TEN T parameters such as 740m long train length on the rail freight corridors;
 - b) Further development of policy and market oriented KPIs;
4. NexBo supporting the work of the sector statement group
5. At individual RFC level, several key initiatives were taken in the follow-up of the RD, such as:
 - a) Cooperation with European TEN-T coordinators (RFC Orient / East-Mediterranean) and with European ERTMS coordinators (RFC North Sea / Mediterranean);
 - b) Representatives of the European Coordinators (TEN-T CNC and ERTMS) are invited to the NexBo meetings to enhance coordination between the TEN-T Core network corridors' initiatives and the role of RFCs;

- c) The adoption of the Ministers' declaration of the Rhine Alpine and North Sea Mediterranean RFCs from 23 May 2018 on contingency management and taking further the RD commitments;
 - d) The adoption of the Joint Ministerial Declaration (8 Ministers of Transport of AT, BG, CZ, DE, GR, HU, RO,SK) on effective improvement to eliminate bottlenecks and facilitate international traffic on the Orient / East-Mediterranean RFC, from 21 June 2016 and the related Action programme to achieve a 2 hours goal until 2018;
 - e) Improved customer orientation through regular strategic dialogue with stakeholders, such as "Operations" working group at RFC Scandinavian-Mediterranean (with final customers) and similar workshops at RFC Rhine-Alpine (July 2017), at RFC Czech-Slovak as well as at RFC Orient/East-Med;
 - f) Offer of Short term capacity (RFC Baltic Adriatic, RFC Mediterranean);
 - g) Performance of RFC User satisfaction surveys at all RFCs (incl. the Atlantic Rail Freight Corridor Observatory);
 - h) Conduct of an Operational bottleneck analysis (RFC Baltic-Adriatic, RFC North Seam-Mediterranean, RFC OEM);
 - i) Conduct of Interconnections working group between FR and ES under both Atlantic and Mediterranean RFCs;
 - j) Implementing a Train Performance Management project identifying reasons for delay (RFC ATL, RFC MED, RFC NSB);
 - k) Conduct of Interoperability improvement workshops (Train length 740m, Structure/Loading gauge (RFC NSM, RFC ATL);
 - l) English language training for operational control centre staff (RFC ATL);
 - m) Extensions of RFCs (RFC MED to Croatia, RFC NSB to Medyka (Poland), RFC OEM to Germany);
 - n) Last-mile study on improvement of Terminal accessibility (RFC MED);
6. At global RFC level, 11 RFC's are operational in 2018, compared to 9 in 2016 by the time of RD, stating the positive dynamic raised by RFC
7. At European level several legislative developments took place, in line with the overall objectives of RD, such as:
- a) Revision of Annex VII 2012/34/EU to ensure timely coordination of works on the infrastructure;
 - b) Adoption of implementing act on access to Services with solid obligations to ensure exchange of ETA data between railway undertakings, infrastructure managers and terminals;
 - c) Adoption of the European Deployment Plan ERTMS 2017/6/EU;

8. At European level several initiatives were set up reinforcing the follow-up of RD and the essential role of RFCs such as:

- a) Program Support Actions providing EU funding for the rail freight corridors were decided by European Commission in 2017;
- b) The report of the European Commission on the application of Regulation (EU) 913/2010 COM (2018) 189 final, noting RD is giving the development of the rail freight corridor a new momentum;
- c) An ERTMS action plan was adopted in November 2017 recognizing the role of RFCs;
- d) In April 2018 the European Coordinator launched the ERTMS Third Work Plan following consultation with the Member States. The ERTMS Third Work Plan further highlights the role of RFCs;
- e) European Commission initiative to structure work on removing cross border bottlenecks by setting up the issue log and identifying 3 key priority issues for follow-up while engaging the ERA.

The overall conclusion is that the objectives and activities [A – D] as identified in the Rotterdam Ministerial Declaration are well underway and have led to positive effects.

However, improving the performance and interoperability of rail freight corridors especially in terms of creating a more market orientated approach remains a strategic objective, needing further involvement of stakeholders and clients in the sector, including the infrastructure managers.

As noted in the Rotterdam Ministerial Declaration "... Still a substantial decisive part of the success of the Rail Freight Corridors lies in the hands of the sector itself."

Therefore, Austria observes the support of the Member states regarding the continuous work made by the sector stakeholders, considering the objectives and activities as identified in the Rotterdam Ministerial Declaration, and their encouragement to set high and concerted ambitions in this regard.