

Joint TAG-RAG meeting of Atlantic & Mediterranean RFC

Minutes

23 November 2023

Seville – Port Authority, Edificio Galia Puerto, C. José Delgado Brackenbury, 11, 41011 Sevilla

Introduction of the afternoon session

Manuel Besteiro welcomed the participants.

1. Round table « Ongoing UE Regulation proposals (TEN-T + Capacity)

Ignacio Canela, Engineer at the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (Spain), explained that he is currently in the team of the Spanish Presidency of the Council, participating in the TEN-T Regulation negotiations. The Spanish Presidency started the negotiations since the month of July. Negotiations are complicated since certain decisions can imply huge investments for the future. Everybody agrees on the target to have a better network and better railway connections to the ports, but all this costs money. In the view of the Spanish Presidency, it is important to look for a realistic outcome and something that Member States can undertake according to the deadlines defined in the Regulation.

He recalled the discussions at the Railway motorway WG of the day before in Algeciras about the P400 parameter. In the initial EC proposal, there was a mention of P400, and the Council in the amendment changed it to 4 m semitrailer and 27 centimetres. The parliament is also insisting on Class B system decommissioning. During the first three months of the Spanish Presidency mostly the governance part was discussed, and now they're analysing the requirements for the infrastructure. He asked the participants to share their concerns and views about the proposal. Operational requirements are also a point of discussion (max dwelling time for cross-border operation), the Council approach is that this is not a requirement related to the infrastructure, but relating to operations and this requirement should be included within art. 65 related to the amendment of the Rail Freight Corridor Regulation. He said that the Commission is pressing to have the Regulation ready by the end of the year, the Council is not pressed, and he is sceptical that the discussions will be closed by the end of the year. The discussion was opened.

Claire Hamoniau: When will the negotiations about article 65 start? Some ministries have doubts about the existence of the article, knowing that in 2029 RFCs will disappear.

Ignacio Canela: In my view, there are not many changes in the governance of the Rail Freight Corridors. The TEN-T regulation will align the two structures, Core Network Corridors and Rail Freight Corridors. As far as they understood art. 65 only adapts the RFC regulation to the new TEN-T Regulation governance. There will still be a Management Board and an Executive Board, and the TEN-T corridor coordinator will be able to participate. In terms of governance, there will be no changes, by now, because we don't know what will happen to the rail Capacity Regulation

Andrea Penso: The big change introduced by the new TEN-T proposal is a more formal role and representation of the so-called "operational stakeholders" defined in the new Capacity regulation, for instance, RU Advisory Group to have a formal role in acknowledging the investment plan and the idea of merging into it also the passenger transport.

Ignacio Canela: Requirements for passengers' lines and for freight lines are sensitively distinct. I don't think this will change so much by now.

Andrea Penso: We need to work on that to promote the good aspects that have been working in the current organisation in the new framework.

Raffaele Zurlo: asked the Railway Undertakings what they would expect from these two new Regulations to improve the current situation.

Andrea Penso: what we expect is to carry on the good things we have been doing so far; the main aspect of the Capacity regulation is that it introduces a suitable framework to implement the TTR planning process; a point that the RUs promoted a lot. From the operational point of view, PaPs are not needed anymore, but what is important from RFCs is the promotion of the international perspective on rail transport and the exchange between different stakeholders: RUs, Infrastructure managers and terminal operators; this increased the mutual understanding and a change of mind. Interoperability and removal of barriers activities were performed within WGs coordinated by RFCs, and this activity is very worthy of being kept on. To stick to the Capacity regulation, a representation and consultation of operational stakeholders will be needed for ICM management, TCR management or even the socioeconomic benefit of the offer request. Currently, no structure is available for that, and leaving it up to national decisions won't be the best choice.

Ignacio Canela explained that the process for the ordinary legislative procedure is always the same.

- 1.- Proposal by the Commission.
- 2.- The Council studies the proposal
- 3.- The Parliament studies the proposal

The Parliament and the Council are co-legislators, so both must approve the legislation. They can propose amendments, and then the triologue is started. A four-column document with the opinions of the different bodies and the compromise solution, this is where the TEN-T Regulation is now. Once an agreement is achieved, the Regulation will go in first lecture to the Parliament and, if approved, will go to the Council for approval.

For the Capacity Regulation, there is only the EC proposal.

Also, the connections to the ports and terminal are discussed. The main point is if to apply the same requirement as for the main lines (ERTMS, 740 m...).

The representative invited all the participants to address them with concerns and comments if necessary.

Luis Nunez: has some doubts about the representation of the ports that at the end are the infrastructure managers in the Ports areas.

Raffaele Zurlo: What would be the role of the New European Transport Corridors (ETC), and what are the ETCs going to be? At the moment, the TEN-T corridors do not have operating structures. Will it be a merge between RFCs and CNCs?

Ignacio Canela: TEN-T corridors are multimodal and about infrastructure. What we are talking here is different. The EC idea is that the bridge to the next step.

In the end, the new TEN-T regulation is trying to have a coherent approach for the Infrastructure and the operational part.

Mr Ignacio Canela left his contacts so that whoever wants to address his opinion or remarks can do it by sending an e-mail to: icanela@mitma.es

2. RAG pre-meetings outcomes and new topics

Mediterranean RFC

Silvia De Rocchi, RAG spokesperson

She understands that we are not going to put P400 everywhere, but it is important to understand and to anticipate the market needs.

- 1) West - Fréjus Closure

It is a disaster for freight transport. She thanked the Med RFC for sending a letter to Prefecture de Savoie to know more about the timeline.

Customers are pushing on railway undertakings. The traffic is completely blocked, and no detailed explanation has been provided; now, the expectation is that the stop will last 18 months. The costs for this closure are really high (details are available in the presentation). What can be done for the sector?

Economic compensation x € per train.km deviated?

A clear understanding of the situation?

A clear commitment to reopen the line?

1a) On top of that, there is the partial closure of the Gotthard, and there are works scheduled on the Arona-Verbania line. The RUs propose to postpone the works and discuss if a collective re-routing concept can be envisaged on the Swiss re-routing to reduce the costs.

1b) Possibility to speed up works for the Lyon-Torino.

Speed up planned works during the closure period.

Management of safety certificate for Italian RUs up to Modane Fournaux.

2) Spain

- Need to lower the language requirements at the FR/ES borders (Hendaye/Irun – Cerbère/Portbou)
- Set up a WG to define migration strategy for traffic from Iberian to standard gauge
- Long duration infra works (>6 months) need for minimizing the impact.

3) East

- Use of Villa Opicina as a border-line with simplified common operating rules
- Poor coordination of works between MSs, in mid-October 30 trains were blocked between HR and HU.

Raffaele Zurlo: on the Frejus closure: the latest official forecast we received was 2032 for the completion of the Lyon-Torino. Another meeting will be organised on this topic during next year, but the completion will never be before 2032. So, this cannot be considered a solution to alleviate the Fréjus problem. For the rest of the problems, we will consider your points and provide feedback.

Manuel Besteiro: on language requirements: he explained that the concept of the B1 derogation is proposing an alternative solution to the B1 level, but it shall be equivalent. At the moment, there was a request from the French side to add a second person in the cabin who couldn't make the interpretation. From summer till now three RUs have asked a request of derogation to the B1 level. Solution about B1 level at the border

He proposed to have a second workshop similar to the one organised in the past, not just dealing with the infrastructure parameter, but also including some route possibilities and discussion about migration strategy.

Claire Hamoniau on the Frejus tunnel closure SNCF Réseau understands that the situation is very hard and gave the latest information about the current works which are being done and more information will be given in one of the next ICM meetings. They are currently preparing a report that could help to elaborate on a clear forecast.

Christian Ottman added some comments related to the safety certificate in Modane. DB Cargo added that there are some signalling specificities in Modane Fournaux which makes it more difficult to extend the safety certificate, but any Italian RU can add just Modane Fournaux to its Italian single safety certificate.

Atlantic RFC

The RAG speaker of RFC Atlantic, Gaelle Vantalon, changed her job and cannot be the RAG speaker anymore. There is one candidate, Maria Valdes, from Renfe. Claire Hamoniau explained that before electing her, she will send an e-mail to the whole Advisory Group to see if there are other candidates and then we will proceed with the nomination. Maria Valdes introduces herself; she has been working for 20 years in railways and now she is in planning international trains and she proposes to be the representative for Railway Undertakings.

3. TAG pre-meetings outcomes and new topics

Mediterranean RFC

Jordi Torrent, TAG spokesperson

Separation ports and terminals, not the same needs

He remarks that it's convenient to separate ports and terminals because sometimes the needs, the requests and evolution differs.

Participation from other countries

He is thankful from the presence of the Hungary representation, but he regrets the difficult to find representatives of Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary are often not presents. He encourages the important terminals to take part in the meetings organised.

Recent disruptions in the Mediterranean Corridor

It has been a very difficult year for ports and terminals.

- Works in Spain
- Strikes in France
- Terminal Saint Charles containers in Perpignan lost most of 50% of its activity
- Rockslide Frejus tunnel
- Planned closing of Montblanc tunnel
- Incident new Gothard tunnel (CH)

Emission trading system

This new directive will force vessels, regardless of their flag, sailing to, from or berthed in EU ports to pay a fee due to greenhouse gas emissions. This will make these vessels move away from the EU as a destination and choose nearby ports such as those in Morocco, mainly Tangier.

Last week, eight countries (Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, and Greece) wrote a letter to the Commission asking to be aware of this issue.

Presentation of the interoperability milestone

First train Spain-France with the same locomotive (November 2023). Largest train Spain-France ever of 725 m

- Barcelona Hutchison Best
- Toulouse Fenouillet
- Lyon – Loire sur Rhône

It's very important to have this interoperability because is the most expensive section in the Mediterranean Corridor.

New Terminals in project or in construction

- Spain(4) : Vicalvaro; La Langosta....
- France (2): Sete; Port of Lyon
- Italy (3): Milano; Brescia; Piacenza

Atlantic RFC

Luis Nuñez – TAG spokesperson

No updated traffic figures since last meeting.

They are concerned about the new capacity directive, the TEN-T Directive revision and the new Multiannual Program which might be affected by the upcoming European Elections.

Multiannual Plan

For of the new multiannual plan, they have two suggestions:

- Establish a mechanism for private terminals to obtain public funding for developments and new terminals, allowing transshipment from lorries to rail;

- Railway undertakings should also have access to these “next generation” funds: At the moment, CEF funding cannot be used for rolling stock modernisation.

Impacts of the works

Another issue is measures to be taken to compensate the traffic loss that will occur when works like Algeciras-Bobadilla start, as shippers will turn to other solutions. Infrastructure managers should reflect on how to minimise consequences.

Port of Huelva – Beltran Sanz Jaime

Presentation - Project Motorways

The initiative is based directly on our strategy in terms of intermodality and synchronomodality that are basically based on 4 pillars.

- In terms of railway facilities and services with more than 58 trains/ week all the year, with more than 40 kilometres in our inner port and a strong investment plan in this in the renewable trucks and facilities inside the port.

- we based our strategy in adding value in the in the activities related with the containers and with road traffic to give them more facilities in terms of logistics.

- A development of more presence in locations in our hinterland so we have a dry port in Sevilla (Majarabique Terminal) that connects in synchronomodality with our maritime south Wharf terminal

- Other issues of logistics zones

Traffic: 2200 trains in 2019, nowadays 2000 trains and in the next year we're going to reach the level of the previous traffics.

28-30% are based on the containers, general cargo trains.

The Port of Huelva is directly connected to Sevilla with three trains per week and with Madrid in the same number. The rolling motorways is going to be based on Huelva, Madrid, Zaragoza but our intention is to attend the demands of our hinterland, based on exporters to UK and to the north of Europe and. We need to connect as soon as possible with the border in France through Barcelona and Irun

Le Boulou-Calais, for example, is a very well-known rolling motorway that is used by some cargo owners from Huelva and from Irun.

Presentation of the market study

Our strategy is based on this rolling motorways initiative. The port of Huelva has the main ro-ro traffic with Canary Islands in Spain with more over 30,000 tracks now accompanied per year. This type of cargo is very properly to be used in the rolling motorways because it is easily to connect to Madrid. The Huelva’s region and the South of Portugal, Algarve are very strong exported areas that allows to start rotations of this. To resume, 300000 semitrailers move from Huelva to the North of Europe (France, Holland and UK)

Railway infrastructure

Extension of the current Railway Terminal – Engineering completed

Electrified traction

Resiliency guaranteed Huelva-Zafra-Mérida-Madrid

Construction of two sidings 11M€ (first in tendering process)

All means of transport integrated and synchronized

4. State of play of capacity allocation

Atlantic Corridor

Felix Bartolome C-OSS

KPI Volume of capacity

The capacity offers and the capacity requests evolve positively.

40 requests were received in 2023. There are still some coordination problems at the borders which in some cases are still being solved for some days.

Capacity for 2025

Any entity is able to apply for capacity as long as they fulfil the conditions in the network statement of the country and also in the CID.

We are offering trainings to the applicants so that they can familiarise themselves with the process of requesting paths. The training days will be performed together with the RFC 2 and 6 on the 6th and 7th of February.

The capacity offers for timetable 2025 will be published in the web page of Atlantic Corridor on the second Monday of January.

Mediterranean Corridor**Stéphane Dastot C-OSS**

Good evolution since several years (see presentation)

Deadline respect

88 dossiers requested (April)

Respect deadline:

- Draft offer (03/07) 86%
- Final offer (21/08) 78%
- All the dossiers were validated finally by DB Netz on 13/09

Troubles in quality

- France – Italy: 7% days missing (due to TCRs)
- Western part: 6% days missing

Situation during the last three timetable

Few conflicts so slightly difference between requested and pre-booked

We have a big increase of requests for timetable 2024 because we have a more efficient offer (the offer was the same as last year in kilometres).

The evolution between the capacity allocation and the works

Timetable 2025

- with TCR, more impact in Slovenia,
- Modane, total closure during more than one year and when the line will be reopened the flow will be changed totally and a lot of traffic might be lost.

Consultation of RUs on PaP cancellation

An email was sent by both corridors to the Railway Advisory Group for consultation about the respect of the requirements outlined in Art 14.8. of Regulation 913/2010 by the Infrastructure Managers.

The article states that a train path allocated to a freight operation cannot be cancelled less than 2 months before its scheduled time in the timetable (unless it is due to force majeure or urgent and unforeseeable safety critical work), if the applicant concerned does not give its approval for such cancellation. In such cases, the infrastructure manager must propose an alternative train path of equivalent quality and reliability, which the applicant can accept or reject.

The Management boards believe that all infrastructure managers comply with this rule based on their network statements or contracts signed with customers. According to the launched consultation, Railway Undertakings are asked to provide specific instances where these requirements could not be met, including information such as the number of trains cancelled, train number identification, and cancellation timetables.

5. Temporary Capacity Restrictions**Mediterranean Corridor****Stéphane Dastot, C-OSS**

The C-OSS manager gave a quick overview of the main works along the corridor line in a visual way.

Hungary

Increase in the level of TCRs with more total closure, however, a lot of re-routing possibilities are available.

Croatia
No change. Huge works for doubling the tracks between Zagreb-Gyekenyes, daily closure will continue.

Slovenia
No change in 2024, but high impact in 2025.

Italy
Increase in the level of TCRs with more total closure.

France
The situation is uncertain, but due to the Modane closure the attempt is to improve and anticipate the TCRs during the closure. Hopefully there will be less TCRs after the reopening.

Spain
Increase in the level with more total closure
The C-OSS managers asked the audience whether there are requests or comments.

Atlantic corridor

Jose Antonio Grau, ADIF
He presents the organisation for the coordination of temporary capacity restrictions.

IP-ADIF
Hold 1 monthly meeting since May where they develop the agreements on border work periods that improve coordination between Infrastructure Managers. In addition, there are two biannual meetings (next in May and November 2024) with the aims to coordinate TCR's in order to affect traffic as little as possible.

SNCF Réseau-ADIF
Hold two biannual meetings (next in May and November 2024) with the aims to coordinate TCR's in order to affect traffic as little as possible.

SNCF Réseau – DB Netz – CFL – SBB-I – Infrabel
Hold two to four meetings per year on March, June, September, November. In 2023 start of coordination on timetable 2026 TCR's.
The information of the 2026 TCR was provided to the RUs this week during a two days' meeting. On the first day, the IMs coordinated the works and on the second day, exchanges took place with the RUs and RFCs to provide information on planning and coordination and answer questions. The next step is the consultation on TCRs by the IMs.

6. Cross border projects

Cross border Perpignan Faisceau international – Barcelona (Mediterranean corridor)

Stephane Dastot
LFP tunnel has been open during the weekends for traffic since the start of timetable 2023 (Sat/Sun and Sun/Mon). Starting from April also ADIF have also been opened the line on weekend nights. There are also new rules on train parking times in Perpignan for the coming year (e.g. parking time limited to 5 hours).

For next year the idea is to study whether it is possible to open a third night during the week. This is a preparation to the next opening of terminals and new accessible areas (La Llagosta, Tarragona, Valencia).
The next meeting is scheduled for early 2024.

Cross border Irun-Hendaye (Atlantic Corridor)

Maria Álvarez Cuadrado
Around 3 meetings take place per year. The last one was on 26 October.
They are working on four axes:

- Train numbering
- Information & capacity
- Safety qualification
- Global objective of a single complex

The success of these meetings is due to the dialogue between the stakeholders, the information on the work, the short-term results, and the high level of cooperation.

Cross-border project Portugal-Spain (Atlantic Corridor)

In these two borders they are working on the coordination between the PCC and the H24 based on the sharing of information, the coordination of last-minute trains, the coordination in the verification as well as the identification of the necessary improvements.

Cross border Forbach – Sarrebruck (Atlantic Corridor)

Claire Hamoniau

One meeting is held every two months, due to lack of time, more information will be given at next meeting.

7. Information on specific sessions

ERTMS training

Raffaele Zurlo recalled that the Mediterranean RFC, next year, will organise meetings on the developments of the infrastructure, especially for the new line Lyon-Torino and for the Spanish network developments. Similar events have already been organised in the past. Additionally, he presented the training program about ERTMS-ETCS, led by the ERTMS leader of the RFC; the next meeting will be on the 17th January 2024. All stakeholders are invited. Two further seminars will be organised about track and power systems.

Rail-CDM Project

Claire Hamoniau informs that this project aims at improving the rail transport logistic chain by improving communication at the junction of a terminal and the railway network or between 2 terminals.

This project comes from the aviation (Air-CDM). Thanks to this project, the aviation could improve the quality of the plane run at the airport and until take-off.

RNE would like to implement Rail-CDM by means of pilots.

A workshop will soon be organised by both corridors and RNE to present this project

Claire Hamoniau closes the meeting and thanks again the Port of Seville for having hosted this event.