



Corridor Rotterdam - Genoa

Railway Companies' Position on European Freight Corridors

Using the Example of Corridor Rotterdam-Genoa

Title photos
Left top: SBB
Left bottom: BLS
Right top: DB
Right bottom: TX Logistik

1 Introduction

The European Commission has set up many activities concerning rail freight in the last years. The most recent one is Regulation 913/2010 which tries to define a European rail network for competitive freight. The overall aim is to strengthen rail freight transport against other modes. But what are the key success factors to shift more goods by rail? How can we really improve rail freight quality? What is the adequate level of political intervention? And how can politicians and corridor organisations support rail freight companies to improve the performance of rail freight and to better meet the customer requirements of customers?

Who could better answer these questions than the railway undertakings themselves. That is the reason why the four competing railway undertakings SBB Cargo, TX Logistik, BLS Cargo and DB Schenker Rail decided to work out together the railway undertakings' requirements on European freight corridors.

As there are already manifold papers on rail freight corridors, we decided to place particular emphasis on practice oriented suggestions for improvements. For our analysis we have chosen the corridor Rotterdam - Genoa since the corridor is one of the most important freight corridors in Europe. The relevance of this corridor has been underlined by the European Commission itself via the selection of Rotterdam - Genoa in several legislations. The corridor is amongst others known as ERTMS Corridor A as well as Freight Regulation Corridor 1.



The Corridor Rotterdam - Genoa has many natural distinctions, which makes it predestined for the railway undertakings analysis:

- The corridor is characterized by strong competitive pressure (intermodal and intramodal).
- It is marked by disproportional growth rates.
- Due to immense growth rates the corridor will be faced by numerous infrastructure bottlenecks.
- The prospering harbours Rotterdam and Antwerp are linked to the corridor.
- It includes the first freight relevant ERTMS-lines (Betuweline, Lötschberg and in near future Gotthard).
- With Betuweline it covers a dedicated freight line.
- A non-EU country (Switzerland) has to be crossed, which leads to custom-related questions.
- The location through densely populated regions confronts the railway undertakings with the question of noise reduction.

2 Definition of Essential Fields of Action

During the analysis of the essential fields of action we identified various topics, which could lead to an improvement of international rail freight on the corridor Rotterdam – Genoa. The most important points are:

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| <p>The requirements of the rail freight companies have to be considered in the realisation of EU regulation 913/2010. From the rail freight companies' point of view, the regulation can only lead to improvements of rail freight transport, if besides establishing a user-friendly organisation of the corridors, the topics capacity and interoperability are strongly promoted.</p> | | |
| <p>(a) Capacity</p> <p>Rail freight transport on the European corridors will increase mainly on the European Freight Corridors, like Corridor A.</p> <p>Therefore we claim</p> <p>(1) An elimination of the most relevant bottlenecks on the corridors (esp. A) by implementing local measures, which have relatively big impacts.</p> <p>(2) An increase of the capacity by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ enhanced prioritising of freight transport compared to today, ■ an extensive operating harmonization, and ■ introducing a market-driven level of harmonisation of train paths. | <p>(b) Organisation of the Corridors</p> <p>The realisation of EU regulation 913/2010 must lead to actual noticeable simplifications and improvements of processes and quality of train paths, as well as in added services for rail freight transport.</p> <p>This means for the railroad companies in particular:</p> <p>(1) Quick and transnational complete planning of the train paths respecting also national presettings,</p> <p>(2) Planning of the train paths with minimal operating stops, and</p> <p>Professional and anticipatory planning of train path adaptations due to construction sites.</p> | <p>(c) Interoperability</p> <p>Operating of the corridors will only be improved, if the operating rules for all railroad companies on the corridor are harmonized and mutually accepted. The RUs expect this harmonization to generate very substantial effects - higher than, for example, a full ETCS coverage of the corridor.</p> |

It should be noted, that the different fields can not be considered in isolation from each other. Various topics influence others and are not clearly classifiable. However we decided to cluster the identified topics to reduce the complexity for interested readers.

We - the four railway undertakings on Corridor A - call on the responsible parties as government and infrastructure managers to take our requirements into account. This will be essential to reach a sustainable modal shift from road to rail as postulated in the white paper.

3 Railway Undertakings Requirements in Detail

(a) Capacity

| Topic | Position of the four railways |
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| Are standardised operating / dispatching rules effective and are aimed at a flexible utilisation of capacity? | Homogeneous dispatching rules, which are aimed at a dynamic-adaptive utilisation of capacity in the case of delayed trains: active attempt of the infrastructure managers to short-term dispatch the train. Negative example: If an RU has to wait for a new train path just at a delay of 5 minutes, this affects and damages the whole following run. |
| Will the corridor as a whole offer equal minimum train parameters (particularly train length)? | The standard parameter, particularly 740m total train length , should be possible to be run continuously on the whole corridor . (The railroad companies jointly presented this position at the corridor workshop ARA-Genoa on 18.5.2011.) Further on, we ask for a long-term, step-by-step upgrade of the corridor infrastructure, in order to allow a train length of 1.500m („double trains,“). This demand should be considered from now on with each new local infrastructure project that is started, at least on the stretch Rotterdam-Basel. Standard profile minimum G1; perspective (whenever infrastructure is adapted) G2 . Axle load D4 today - forecast E4/E5. |
| Which local bottlenecks should be removed on the corridor(s)? | There are several local construction measures on the corridor, which increase its capacity with a high return on investment by removing the tightest bottlenecks. Among these are the following local bottlenecks: node Oberhausen (West), Köln, Basel, Domodossola, Chiasso, Milan |
| Where are bottlenecks on defined lines ? When will the third track Emmerich-Oberhausen be built? | The largest German corridor A project at hand is the third track Emmerich-Oberhausen , which will have to be introduced in the mid-term future in order to accommodate the expected freight traffic increases on the corridor. Further important bottlenecks are: line: Offenburg - Basel, Basel - Olten, Bern - Thun, Brig - Domo, Domo - Novara via Borgomanero, Bellinzona - Gallarate, Chiasso - Milano |

(b) Organisation of the Corridors

| Topic | Position of the four railways |
|--|--|
| Should path prices be harmonized? | Path prices must be attractive to be competitive against other transport modes. It would be appreciated if elements of price systems could be harmonized step by step between infrastructure providers. |
| Which planning and operating incentives do the train path cancellation rules offer? | The path price systems on the corridor must not have negative effects between the railroad companies because of contrary incentives . E. g. cancellation rules should give the incentive to cancel a train path such that the infrastructure managers can use it short-term in operations. Especially on highly frequented corridors like Rotterdam - Genoa capacity should not expire unused because it is not worth to release it therefore the cancellation cost must be much lower than the train path price. |
| Are technical transport requirements (in German: „BZA“) contracted centrally, quickly and market-driven by the corridor management? | Standardised and market-driven technical transport requirement rules (in German: „BZA“) which e.g. offer equal expiration dates , a „ permanent option “, a quick issuing process , an active substitution by the infrastructure manager in case of a change of infrastructure changes, no exclusion of certain kinds of trains (e. g. short-term trains) and do not have double billing of a train path as a consequence (e. g. paying for a special train path additionally to a regular train path). |
| Which parameters do standard catalogue train paths have? | The parameters of the standard corridor paths have to be unified and continuous across borders and have to cover as many types of trains as possible without having a too low performance level. The infrastructure managers have to start qualified investigations (DB Netze already in progress) to reach an adequate optimum for the transportation market demand of the railroad companies (not an optimum primary for theoretic capacity utilisation of the network – possibly remoteness from the market occurs). Additionally the demand of individual train paths has to be considered adequately. Known personnel changes, locomotive changes and system changes have to be considered. |
| Are train path frame contracts foreseen for the corridor? | At least existing national frame contracts have to be considered when constructing and allocating catalogue train paths . |
| Are there „ program train paths “ on the corridor – besides of regular and special train paths? | „ Program paths “ in the sense of being regularly available for „ program runs “ and to be activated with short lead time (e. g. one week) should be offered on the corridor. Only by doing so e. g. the frequent program runs for various big sectors can continue to be offered to the market (competitiveness of the carrier „rail“). |
| Are Pathfinder or national systems offered for the corridor to coordinate and order train paths? | Both alternatively is necessary. Pathfinder (new: PCS) as unique solution is only possible after the establishment of the necessary interfaces in the systems of DBSR and other railroad companies. All train path orders at the infrastructure manager – independent of the system – also must be processable in national systems between the infrastructure manager and the railroad company. |

| Topic | Position of the four railways |
|---|---|
| Is there a reliable co-ordination of construction disturbances between the infrastructure managers at an early stage? | The infrastructure managers on the corridor have to coordinate their construction works actively and sufficiently early , such that no bottlenecks occur at the same time on different alternative routes. Therefore DB Netze has proposed to RNE a process between X-26 months and X-17 months. Additionally a „construct in the wind shadow/ slipstream of other construction works“-policy should be used, to reduce multiple effects on trains caused by different construction works. |
| Will the planning of construction works be coordinated with the railway companies by the corridor management already before the annual timetable order in April of the previous year? | On the corridor an early and continuous, train-specific planning of the operational consequences of construction works with international effects has to be ensured. The railroad companies have to be involved. The FTE as representative of the railroad companies has developed a concept, which was passed at the meeting on 25th May. This concept should be the basis for the discussion. (Analogue Prozess Plan by DB Netze.) |
| Will the planning of construction works be coordinated actively with the railroad companies by the corridor management during the year with approx. two months in advance to the construction project? | We claim this explicitly. Therefore the following points are important: an active role of the infrastructure managers, reliable information at an early stage, full coordination among the infrastructure managers and afterwards consolidated coordination with the railroad companies. |
| Will there be a single joint „Eurocontrol“-function to operate corridor trains in daily business without barriers? | A kind of „Eurocontrol“-functionality should be established among the infrastructure operators on the corridor – potentially even just virtual. The functional result for the railway undertakings of such a „one face to operations“ is to be assigned available capacity objectively and overarching over the whole train run on the corridor. Process breaks or hurdles at network frontiers shall thus be eliminated in daily dispatching of cross-European trains. |
| How will the RUs become well integrated in the strategic development process of the corridor and its management? | It is crucial that RUs are very well integrated in the strategic development process of the corridor and its management concepts. Only by ensuring this tight integration of the infrastructure users, development of efficiency, innovations and real steps forward for the rail freight market can be assured. (See also article in CER-Monitor 33: "Decisions on freight corridors need agreement between RUs and IMs at the highest level".) |

(c) Interoperability

| Topic | Position of the four railways |
|---|---|
| Which simplification of the operating rules / „cross-acceptance" is intended? | <p>Reciprocal acceptance of – or better: agreement on – the lowest passable standard on the whole corridor regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tail signals, – braking calculations, – operating documents (e.g. braking sheet, wagon list, hazardous goods information), – train formation rules (e.g. safety buffer wagons, „long loco“), – additional technical features of the locomotive (e. g. rear mirror), – (cross-acceptance of) runs to the first foreign station according to the EU-guideline for interoperability – cross-acceptance of the train driver training at different railroad companies on the same network (today each railroad company which deploys a certain train driver has to individually train, test and control him!) – the training effort for a train driver on the corridor should be kept to as low a standard as possible from a safety point of view (today there are significant differences between the national standards). – a single (corridor A: German) or at most two (corridor A: additional English) operating language(s) has/have to be enough for the train driver on a corridor. |
| Is continuous operations data available for the whole corridor? | Continuous train run data (current location), deviation data, reasons for deviations (with standardised coding) . Simply available via one system (TIS former EOPT). At the same time, additional bureaucracy through inefficient incentive systems must be avoided (e.g. „European Performance Regime“). |
| Which ETCS-standard is introduced on the corridor? | Wherever ETCS is introduced on the corridor(s), it must be one standardised ETCS-system version – there should be no more isolated applications. Systems/versions, which differ from the standard, have to be fully state-subsidised for the railway companies. |
| Is the wagon data continuously managed by the infrastructure managers of the corridor? | While Prorail, SBB Infra and RFI request wagon identification data for each train, until now DB Netze does not do so. Therefore the railroad companies have to re-enter this data into the corresponding national system before entering the network of an infrastructure manager. This data should be exchanged directly by the infrastructure managers of a collectively managed corridor. |

| Topic | Position of the four railways |
|---|---|
| Will there be a unified and simple customs process for the whole corridor? | A unified and simple customs procedure including Switzerland transit and respecting railway operations particularities is essential in order to avoid/reduce high administrative costs for all RUs. (See as an additional information RU/CER's letter to DG TAXUD from 02/2011.) |

4 Conclusion

With Regulation 913/2010 the European Commission intends many improvements for rail freight transport. From now on it is in the hands of the European infrastructure managers to improve the framework conditions for rail freight by implementing the Regulation as it is intended by the European Commission. From our point of view the implementation can only succeed if railway undertakings clearly formulate their requirements to be met by the new corridor organisations and strongly advocate these requirements. Therefore we made a first attempt with our paper.

The infrastructure managers should take into account the railway undertakings' requirements during the implementation process and all work should be focussed on the customer interests. Only by a constant exchange of information a user-friendly approach will be achieved. We have worked out many fields of action, which we will be happy to discuss with politicians, corridor organisations and infrastructure managers.

From the four rail freight companies' point of view, Regulation 913/2010 can only lead to improvements of rail freight transport, if besides establishing a user-friendly organisation of the corridors, the topics capacity and interoperability are strongly promoted. The three topics can not be addressed in isolation from each other.

Perhaps other railway undertakings and corridors will follow our example? For the benefit of all involved the framework conditions between the different corridors should be harmonized at most. Otherwise international rail freight has to overcome even more obstacles in future and this is clearly not the intention of Regulation 913/2010.