



Rail Freight Corridor
North Sea – Baltic



Annual Report 2022



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List of Abbreviations

AB – Allocation Body

AG – Advisory Group

CCS - Common Components System

CCS – Control Command Signalling

CEF – Connecting Europe Facility

CID – Corridor Information Document

CINEA – European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

CIP – Customer Information Platform

CIS - Charging Information System

CNC – Core Network Corridor

C-OSS – Corridor One-Stop-Shop

CRD - Central Reference File Database

DAC - Digital Automatic Coupling

DG MOVE - Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

EC – European Commission

EEIG – European Economic Interest Grouping (EZIG in Polish)

ENE - Energy

ENKO - German Energiekorridore (Energy Corridors)

ERTMS - European Rail Traffic Management System

ETA - Estimated time of arrival

ETCS - European Train Control System

EU – European Union

ExBo – Executive Board

FCA – Framework for Capacity Allocation

GSM-R - Global System for Mobile Communications – Railway

HaPs - Harmonized PaPs

ICM – International Contingency Management

IM – Infrastructure Manager

IRG-Rail – Independent Regulators’ Group - Rail

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

MB – Management Board

MoT – Ministry responsible for transport

NCI - Network and Corridor Information Platform

NExBo – Network of Executive Boards of RFCs

PaP – Pre-arranged Path

PCS – Path Coordination System

PIM – Project Implementation Manager

PMO – Project Management Office

QCO – Quality Circle Operation

RAG – Railway undertaking Advisory Group

RB – Regulatory Body

RC – Reserve Capacity

RFC – Rail Freight Corridor

RFC NS-B - Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic

RFC OEM – Rail Freight Corridor Orient/East-Med

RFP - Rail Facilities Portal

RIS - Railway Infrastructure System

RINF - Register of Infrastructure

RNE – RailNetEurope

RRF - Recovery and Resilience Facility

RU – Railway Undertaking

SERAC – Single European Railway Area Committee

TAG – Terminal Advisory Group

TCR - Temporary Capacity Restriction

TEN-T - Trans-European Transport Network

TIS – Train Information System

TT – Time Table

TTR – Timetabling and Capacity Redesign

USS - User Satisfaction Survey

UIRR – International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport

WG – Working Group

FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

Rail Freight Corridor North Sea - Baltic has been part of the European rail network of corridors for eight years now. Every year was bringing challenges but also opportunities to the Management Board and all stakeholders of the Corridor.

In 2022, the armed conflict in Ukraine endangered the safety and life of many people, and its effects are felt outside the occupied territory. The blockade of Ukrainian Black Sea ports by Russia resulted in severe challenges on the Ukrainian economy and has significant impact on rail freight transport in the European Union. In May 2022, the European Commission adopted a Communication setting up an action plan for EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes to facilitate Ukraine's agricultural export and bilateral trade with the EU in order to support Ukraine's economy and economic recovery, as well as to contribute to stabilizing world food markets and improving global food security. The Communication highlights the essential role of rail transport in transporting those products.

Taking into account that Poland is a direct neighbour of Ukraine and three other RFC countries Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have also access to the Baltic Sea ports, RFC NS-B among other corridors was used for re-routing of Ukrainian exports and imports, which led to an increase in traffic, especially between Ukraine and Poland. On the other hand the ban on Russia and Belarus, led to a dramatic drop in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania (on the 1520mm network). The ensuing energy crisis led some countries to introduce priority rules for critical transport resources.

In 2022, the European Commission decided to continue its support of the Corridor activities under the CEF II programme, by means of a "Technical Assistance" financing for the years 2022-2024.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all involved persons from the Railway undertaking Advisory Group, the Terminal Advisory Group, the Working Groups of our Corridor, the Project Management Office, RNE, the European Commission, the Executive and the Management Board for the work done and the contributions given to our Corridor in 2022 and sincerely hope for their continued support in the future.



Oliver Sellnick

Chairman of the Management Board



Katarzyna Wachowicz

Managing Director

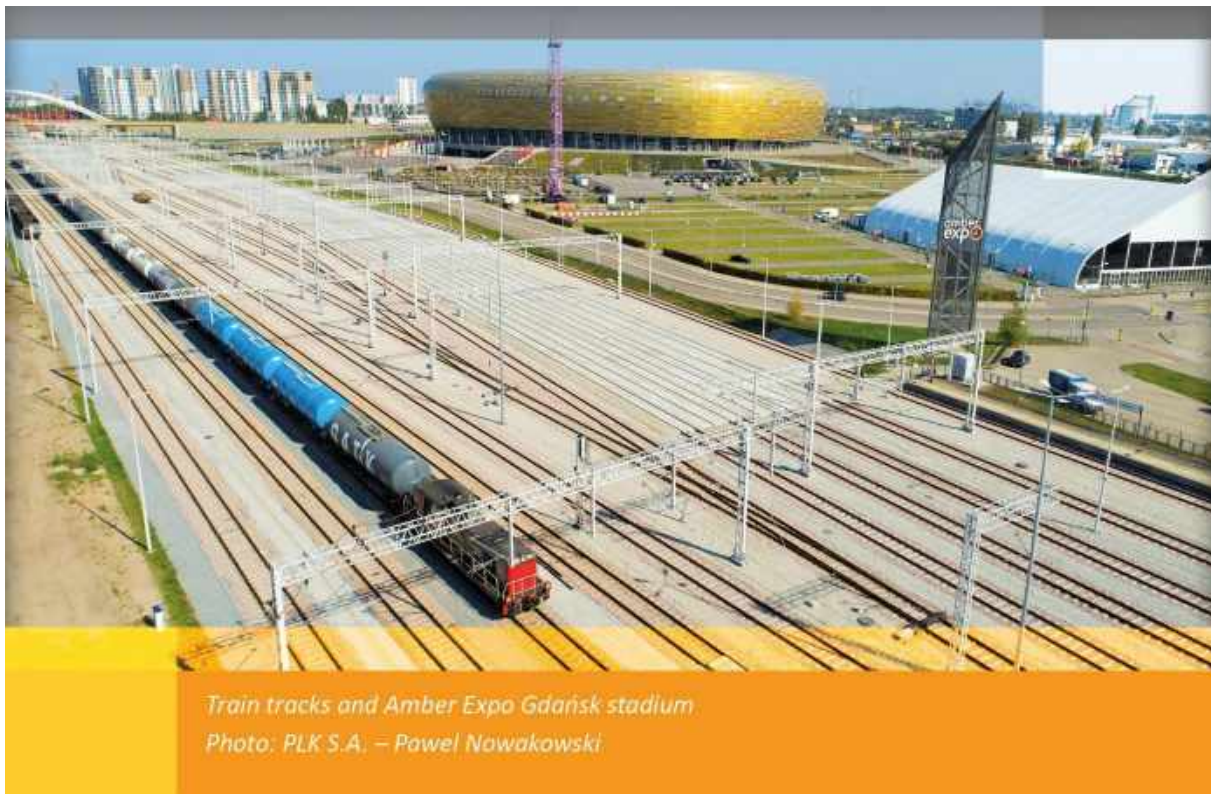
INTRODUCTION

The annual report 2022 of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic (RFC NS-B) provides Corridor stakeholders with general information on activities relevant to the Corridor in the past year. The RFC NS-B runs through 8 Member States of the European Union (EU): starting in the North Sea ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven and Hamburg spreading into central Germany through Aachen – Hannover/Magdeburg/Berlin to Warsaw and the Polish-Belarus border in Terespol. A branch leads from Magdeburg to Prague via Falkenberg and Dresden. In Falkenberg starts the Southern branch in Poland to Wrocław and Katowice. Another branch leaves from Poznań to Kaunas and to Riga and Tallinn. In January 2022, the Corridor was officially extended to the Polish-Ukraine border at Medyka and to the ports of Gent (Terneuzen) and Zeebrugge.

RFC NS-B current routes comprise:

- 5 253 km of principal lines,
- 2 552 km of diversionary lines,
- 891 km of connecting lines,
- 960 km of expected principal and expected diversionary lines,
- 256 terminals
- 13 seaports: Port of Antwerp-Bruges¹, North Sea Port², Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Riga, Ventspils, Liepāja, Paldiski, Muuga and Sillamäe.

More detailed information on the Corridor's routing and its development can be found on the [Corridor's website](#) and in the [Customer Information Platform \(CIP\)](#).



*Train tracks and Amber Expo Gdańsk stadium
Photo: PLK S.A. – Paweł Nowakowski*

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 The ports of Gent and Terneuzen are merged into North Sea Port.

1. GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of RFC NS-B is divided into three levels: the Executive Board (ExBo), the Management Board (MB) and the Advisory Groups (AG). They are working together to develop and expand the rail freight corridor. The ExBo is composed of representatives of Ministries in charge of rail transport of the cooperating countries and is responsible for defining the general goals of the Corridor. The Management Board consists of representatives of cooperating Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body and serves as the decision-making body of the Corridor. The Advisory Groups, consisting of Railway undertakings and interested applicants and Terminal owners/operators, issue opinions on any proposal by the Management Board, which has direct consequences for them or issue own-initiative opinions, which shall be taken into account by the Management Board. The governance structure of the Corridor is illustrated in the organigram below.



1.1 EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of RFC NS-B, as referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 913/2010, was established on the 20th of March 2012 by a Mission Statement. Its existence has been recognized by a Joint Declaration of Intent “Regarding the Establishment of the Executive Board of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic”, adopted by all ministries of the Corridor on the 22nd of November 2019 integrating the representatives of the ministry of transport from Latvia and Estonia in the Executive Board and replacing the Agreement regarding the Executive Board of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic adopted on 8 October 2014.

The Executive Board takes its decisions on the basis of mutual consent. The Executive Board takes decisions, which are provided for by the Regulation; these decisions are legally binding and directly applicable. They are signed by all the members of the Executive Board and shall be published.

The Executive Board is composed of the following representatives of authorities of the Member States concerned:

Full representatives of the Executive Board:

- Pierre Bodiaux, for the Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport, Kingdom of Belgium
- Jindřich Kušnir, for the Ministry of Transport, Czech Republic
- Indrek Laineveer, for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Republic of Estonia;

- Axel Hansmeier, for the Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport, Federal Republic of Germany;
- Patriks Markēvičs, for the Ministry of Transport, Republic of Latvia;
- Loreta Maskaliovienė, for the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Republic of Lithuania;
- Ebru van Schie - Akdağ, for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- Jakub Kapturzak, for the Ministry of Infrastructure, Republic of Poland;

Stand-in representatives of the Executive Board:

- Caroline Avaux, for the Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport, Kingdom of Belgium
- Lukáš Soukup, for the Ministry of Transport, Czech Republic
- Anne Kemmler, for the Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport, Federal Republic of Germany
- Vidmantas Tamulis, for the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Republic of Lithuania
- Marcel Tijs, for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Bartłomiej Siudak, for the Ministry of Infrastructure, Republic of Poland



STAND-IN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



1.1.1 Key activities of the Executive Board

The ExBo met 4 times in 2022:

- March 2022 – online;
- June 2022 – Gdańsk (PL)
- October 2022 – Rostock (DE)
- December 2022 – Brussels (BE).

The general responsibility of the Executive Board is to implement the Regulation. It was chaired in 2022 by the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure. The physical meetings have resumed after the pandemic period, when all meetings were held online. In the following paragraphs the key activities of the ExBo in 2022 are described.

a) TEN-T Regulation revision

The ExBo expressed its regret, that simultaneously with the new proposed TEN-T Regulation a revision of the Regulation concerning rail freight corridors has not been proposed. The global overview of the upcoming competences and the related governance to be established at RFC level is then difficult to assess.

The members of the ExBo presented different views towards several new parameters referring to the TEN-T infrastructure. In general, there was a positive view on the TEN-T revision. In the beginning of the first work on the TEN-T Regulation, many countries opposed to the P400 and the 160 km/h requirement for passenger traffic. Finally, it was possible to distinct the following views:

- The Baltic countries present the view, that the migration of the whole 1520mm network to 1435mm should not be executed without a proper analysis and migration plan, and the 1520mm network in these countries for the moment should remain as isolated networks, and the 1435mm standard will be provided by Rail Baltica.
- Poland presented a positive view towards the extension of the TEN-T network to Ukraine, as did other ExBo members.
- The Netherlands expressed doubts about the 22.5 t axle load also being applicable to the comprehensive network and the speed of 160 km/h for passenger trains, also due to the characteristics of the rail network in the Netherlands, like the stability of the soil.
- Even if there is a general support to the extension of the Corridor to Ukraine, some concerns were raised on the financing and how to write an implementation plan considering the challenges posed to the Ukrainian infrastructure and their integration with the European standard gauge.

Referring to Regulation 913/2010, the ExBo was informed, that this regulation will be supplemented with provisions referring to improve the modal shift, which will include passenger transport.

b) Digital automatic coupling

The members of the ExBo expressed the importance of Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC), but also indicated doubts related to the high costs of its implementation, especially in case of a “big bang” migration scenario. It was agreed to discuss the development of the DAC topic on every single ExBo meeting (after finalisation of the EY DAC study and obtaining the results of the Horizon Europe agenda).

c) Military mobility

The ExBo members emphasised the importance of Military Mobility. The results of the 1st Military Mobility call 2021 under CEF II were announced in May 2022. Several projects on the RFC lines were selected a.o. related to 740m trains (e.g. in Montzen (BE) and Germany).

The 2nd call which was also launched in May, was moved forward because of the war in Ukraine. Several members presented their projects regarding Military Mobility they submitted under the 2nd call for proposals: Belgium informed about their planned submission regarding the electrification of some tracks in the port of Antwerp. Germany planned several projects, one related to RFC NS-Baltic and 740m trains. Latvia informed about the completion of the 2nd call, the funds from which would be earmarked for design works in Rail Baltica, Estonia presented investments on the section Tartu – state border with Latvia, in Lithuania the new 1435mm railway line in Palemonas station has been completed and modernisation of traffic management systems of the railway section Palemonas – Mockava (Lithuanian state border with Poland) is foreseen, but did not receive the funding in the 2nd CEF call. The results of the 2nd call were announced in December 2022.

d) Luxembourgian application for Corridor extension

The ExBo agreed, that the application submitted by Luxembourg was not complete; it lacked a sufficient feasibility study. On top of that, the ExBo wanted to wait for the opinion of the European Commission, on whether it would allow Luxembourg into the Corridor or if changes to the new map were still possible. The ExBo also agreed to ask the MB and the RAG for their opinion. After receiving those opinions, the ExBo would send a formal letter to Luxembourg presenting all acquired opinions

and asking whether Luxembourg still maintains its position. Moreover, with the revision of the TEN-T Regulation, there are some amendments to the lines that are part of the TEN-T network, including the lines concerning Luxembourg.

The MB explained that any discussion about an integration of Luxembourg would have to be part of the currently ongoing TEN-T revision. With the intention of reducing duplications, the EC was re-adjusting scope and routing of RFCs in dialogue with Member States. In any case, the MB has not been able to identify traffic flows suggesting an urgent need for the inclusion of Luxembourg in RFC NS-B.

e) Impact of the war in Ukraine on RFC NS-B

The European Commission adopted a Communication setting up an action plan for EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes³. The ExBo members emphasised the importance of rail freight traffic on RFC NS-B for ensuring transportation of critical commodities – agricultural products from Ukraine and energy resources. Some Member States implemented special measures for higher priority of the traffic (e.g. Germany, the so called “ENKO” regulation), so far only on national level. Better coordination at the international level can be examined.

f) Other topics

- The ExBo stated that the RFC NS-B Implementation Plan will have to be updated to add the objectives referred to within the Technical Assistance.
- Workshops on the C-OSS, the performance of the Corridor and improving the cooperation between ExBo and MB will take place within 2 years.
BE and NL proposed to organise the above mentioned workshops, which were agreed to be discussed after submitting more detailed proposals by those two countries.
- Pre-booking results TT 2023: the ExBo members appreciated the results of the PaP offer, especially more interest from new customers.
- The situation on some parts (CZ/DE border) must be improved; the ExBo hopes that the specially established working group (QCO) will bring solutions.
- Exchange on the Performance of the Corridor and objectives: the ExBo proposed to prepare in coordination with the office an information on the most important parameters, as it seems to be the most critical point for the customers. Belgium prepared a proposal on suggested objectives. The ExBo is waiting for targets and periods that are due to be presented by the MB in March 2023.
- The ExBo agreed, that in 2023 the chair will be held by Latvia.

1.1.2 Cooperation at EU level

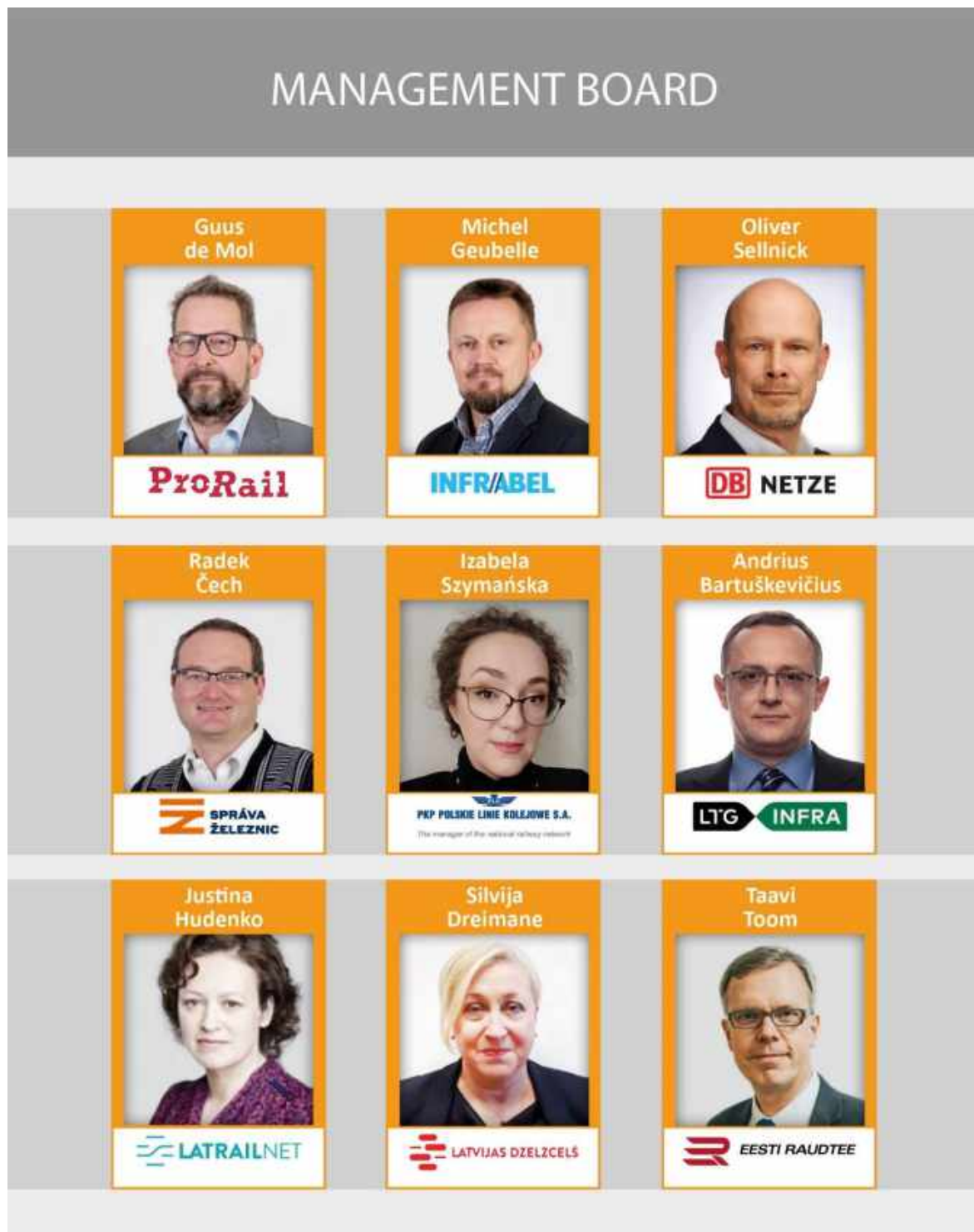
In December 2022 a meeting between the ExBo, the MB and Catherine Trautmann, the European Coordinator of the TEN-T Core Network Corridor North Sea – Baltic was organised. The coordinator explained the role of corridors as the tool leading to the greening of transport. She emphasised the importance of multimodality, migration of broad gauge to the European one and the transporting of military equipment via railways. She stressed the importance of the migration, but reassured that due to financial struggles, Member States could extend its implementation until 2050.

The Executive Board also participated in meetings of the Network of Executive Boards of RFCs in June and November 2022.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0217&from=EN>

1.2 MANAGEMENT BOARD

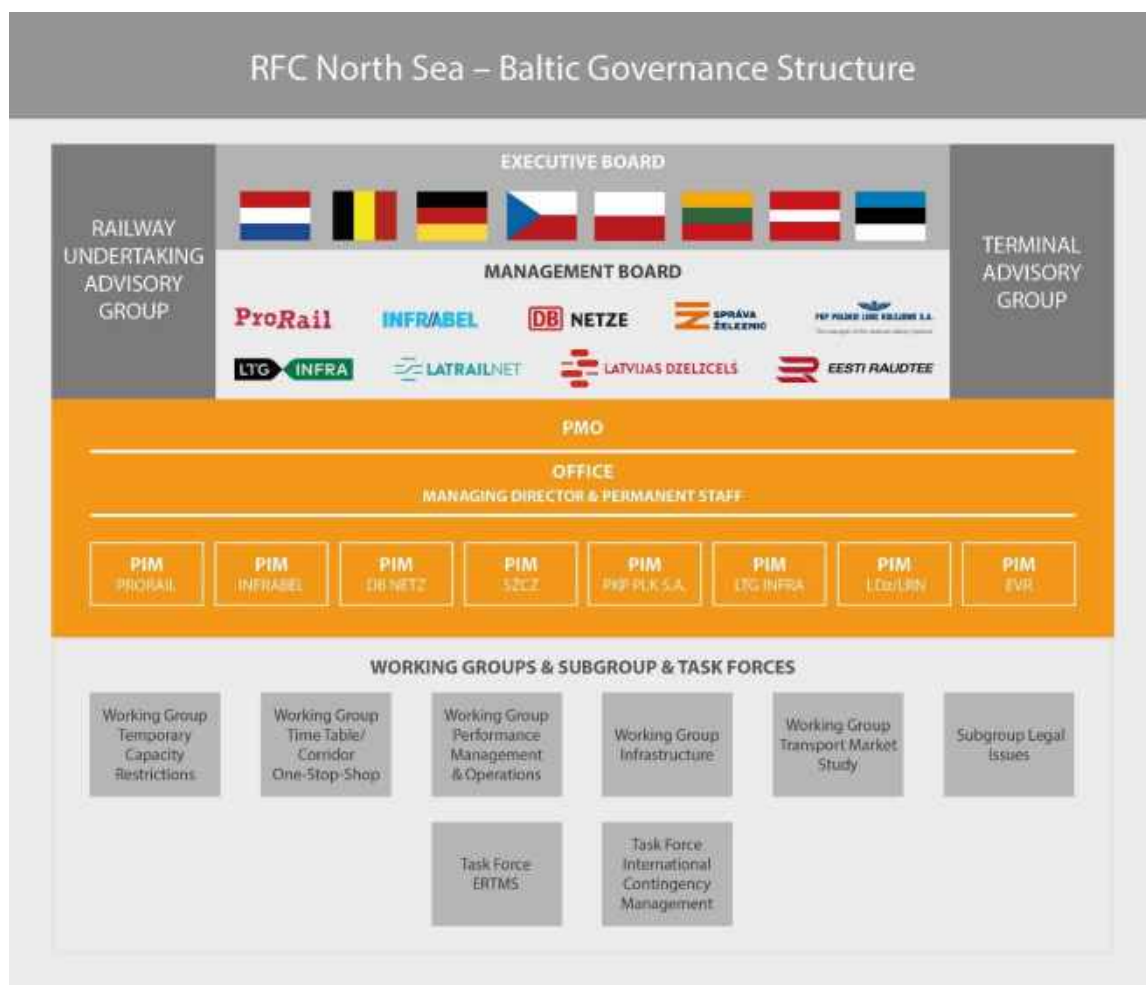
In 2022, the Management Board (MB) chaired by Mr. Oliver Sellnick from DB Netz AG held five online meetings and three physical meetings. The activities of the Management Board, carried out in 2022, are further described in chapters 2-4. Since 2016, the MB has the legal form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). It is composed of the following Members representing the Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body of the eight countries of the Corridor.



The Management Board is supported by the Project Implementation Managers (PIMs) and the RFC Office with its permanent staff and Managing Director, Weronika Karbowski, who was temporarily replaced by Katarzyna Wachowicz from November 2022.



In 2022, six online and two physical meetings of the Project Management Office (PMO) took place. The below organigram illustrates the structure of the Project Management Office and the different working groups:



1.3 ADVISORY GROUPS

Each Advisory Group serves as a platform to facilitate the exchange of information, finding solutions and mutual understanding in a non-discriminatory way. As advisory body, each group issues opinions on decisions by the Management Board, which have direct consequences to its members or issues own-initiative recommendations, which shall be taken into account by the MB.



Each AG is chaired by a Speaker, who acts as the contact person between the MB and the AG members. In 2022, the TAG was chaired by Mr. Erik Nieuwenhuis from the BTT Rail Terminal Rzepin Spółka z o.o. and the RAG by Mr. Paweł Wiechoczek from DB Cargo Polska. The Management Board of RFC North Sea – Baltic would like to thank the Speakers for their commitment and cooperation.

Two Advisory Group meetings were held in 2022 with representatives of Railway Undertakings, Terminals, Infrastructure Managers, Ministries, Regulatory Bodies, DG MOVE and invited guests:

- 17st of March 2022 – online meeting
- 12th of October 2022 in Rostock.

Both meetings were attended by more than 40 participants each. During the first RAG/TAG meeting the impact of the war in Ukraine was discussed. The topic was continued during the second meeting including the ExBo Member presentation regarding the Solidarity Lanes with Ukraine. During the first meeting the C-OSS Manager informed participants about the offer published in January 2022, pointing out improvements in the offer. Continuing the discussion, during the second AG meeting the C-OSS Manager presented the latest results of the PaP allocation including next steps to be taken. Participants were also presented with the state of play regarding the border crossing projects, focusing on the Quality Circle Operation programme in Bad Bentheim, Frankfurt (Oder) Oderbrücke – Rzepin border crossing and Montzen - Aachen. Additionally the Performance Management on RFC North Sea - Baltic was presented including the WG's major tasks, KPIs and the statistics of KPIs 2021 in comparison to 2020 and 2019. Data quality improved in 2020 and 2021 compared to 2019 as figures are more reliable.

During the meeting in Rostock TCRs on the Corridor were presented including information about main TCRs on the Corridor for next TTs and presentation of the coordination groups established by IMs on the Corridor lines.

2. MAIN ACTIVITIES

2.1 EXTENSION TO MEDYKA, ZEEBRUGGE AND GENT (TERNEUZEN)

The European Commission issued its Implementing Decision (EU) 2020/2168 on the compliance of the request of RFC NS-B to extend the Corridor to Medyka and to the Belgian and Dutch ports of Gent (Terneuzen) and Zeebrugge at the end of 2020. On 10th of January 2022 the update of the Implementation Plan and the capacity offer were published. From this date on, the Corridor is officially extended to Medyka (Poland) and the ports of Gent and Zeebrugge (Belgium) as a principal line and to the port of Terneuzen (The Netherlands) as a connecting line⁴. More information can be found in the Implementation Plan which was updated and consulted with the RAG/TAG members and other stakeholders and approved by the ExBo.



⁴ Connecting lines are not shown on the schematic map. For all lines of the Corridor, see Corridor Information Platform ([CIP](#)) or the Corridor's [website](#)

2.2 CORRIDOR ONE-STOP-SHOP AND CORRIDOR OFFER

The Corridor One-Stop-Shop (C-OSS) is the joint body of the IMs/Allocation Body (AB) involved in RFC NS-B and the single point of access providing the Corridor capacity products to all rail freight applicants. After the leave of Felicia Riedl, Anna Difliff took over as the new C-OSS Manager on September 1st, 2022. Gaston-Leonardo Ried was bridging the gap as interim C-OSS from April to September 2022.



RFC NS-B is highly committed to offer capacity products that comply with the market demand and the expectations of applicants regardless if they are RU or non-RU applicants.

To achieve the aim to be a customer- and service-oriented Corridor with fitting capacity products, the applicants are asked for direct and indirect feedback that supports the C-OSS Manager to shape the capacity portfolio constantly.

To intensify the close cooperation with applicants and improve the capacity offer, the C-OSS Manager participated in the:

- online Forum Train Europe Conferences B and D
- RailNetEurope (RNE) working group for the further development of the Path Coordination System (PCS) with applicants' involvement
- C-OSS Community working group.

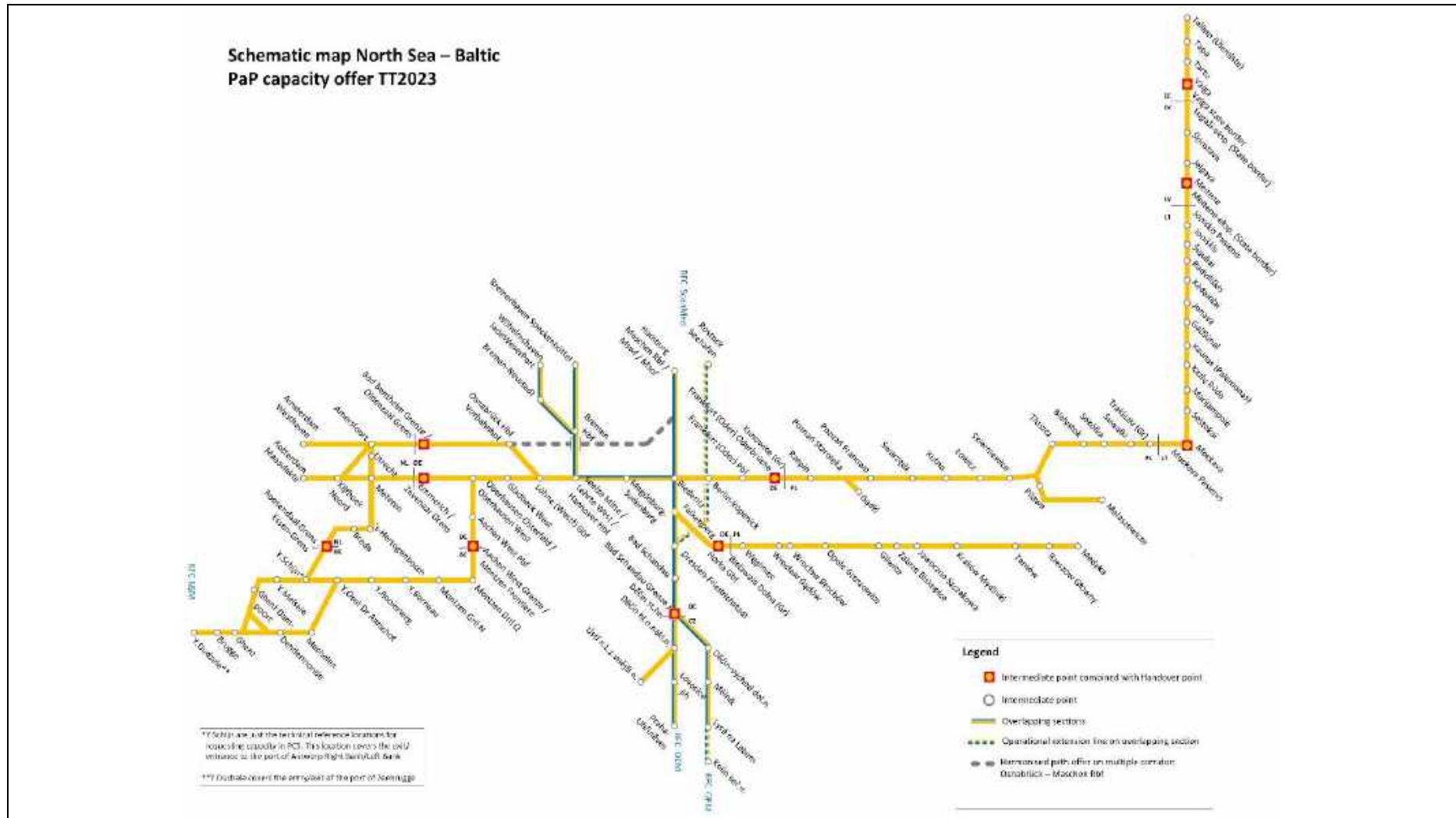
Besides that, the C-OSS participated in several RNE meetings to advice on international processes and working methods in cooperation with applicants and IMs.

Moreover, the C-OSS Manager was acting as the leader of the RFC NS-B working group TT/C-OSS. Based on the knowledge of national developments in rail freight transport and deep understanding of the market needs, this working group is deriving essential insights for capacity-related issues and further developments of the Corridor.

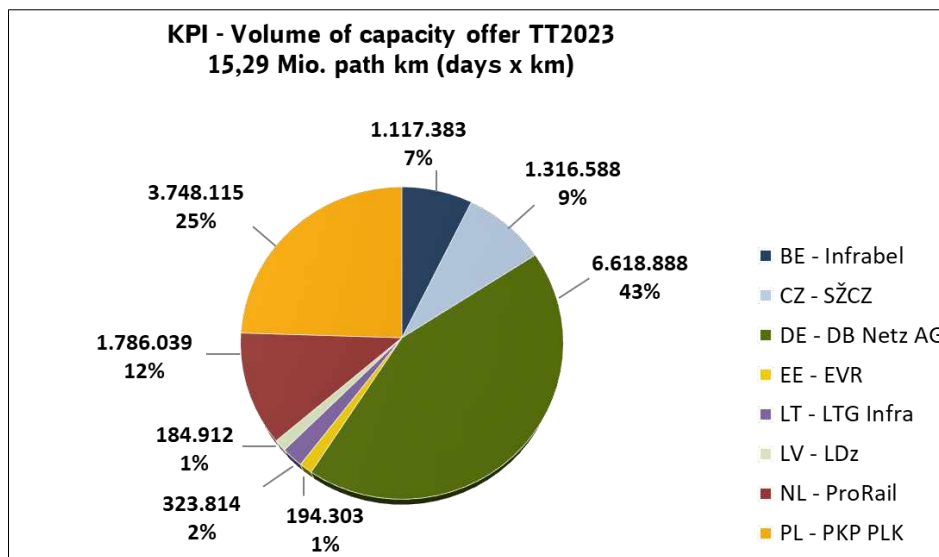
Throughout customer events and individual meetings organized by the C-OSS, applicants were trained in using the Path Coordination System (PCS), the ordering system to request international paths in one step and in a single operation.

2.2.1 Pre-arranged Paths

The 2023 timetable catalogue of Pre-arranged Paths (PaPs) was published on the 10th of January 2022 for the sections indicated in the schematic map below



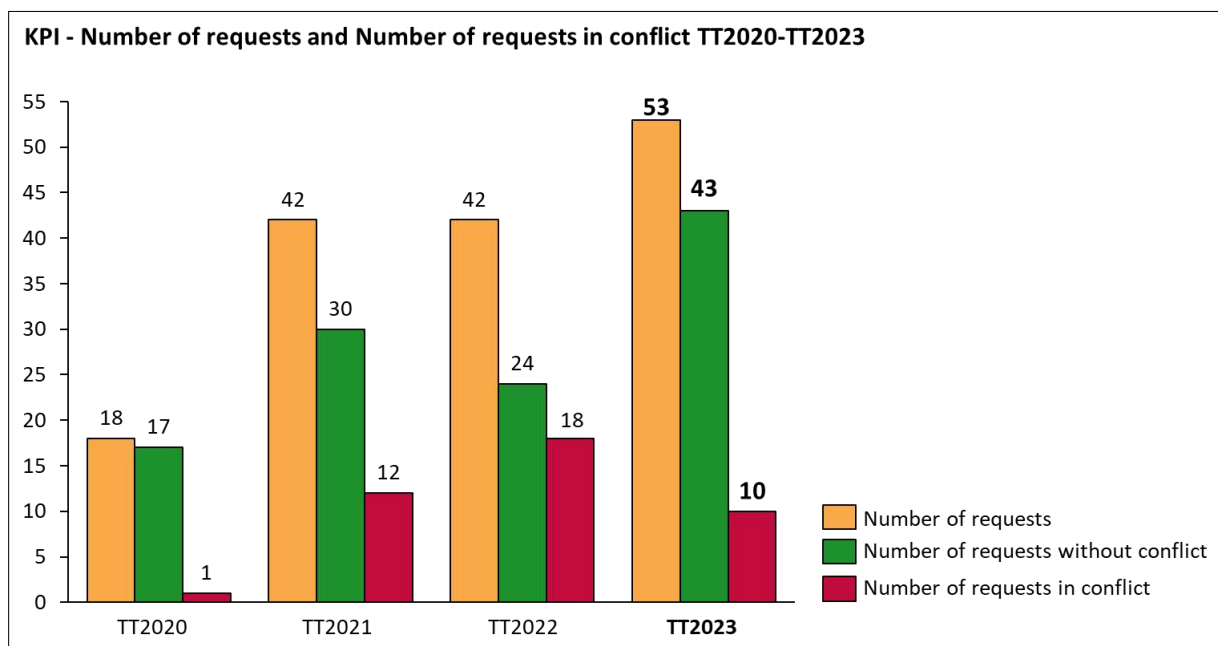
The PaP capacity offer TT2023 has been increased for the extended routes in Belgium/the Netherlands as well as Poland and slightly decreased for certain sections that were not ordered by applicants in the previous timetable period. Overall, the volume of the PaP capacity offer on RFC NS-B stayed stable for (TT) 2023.



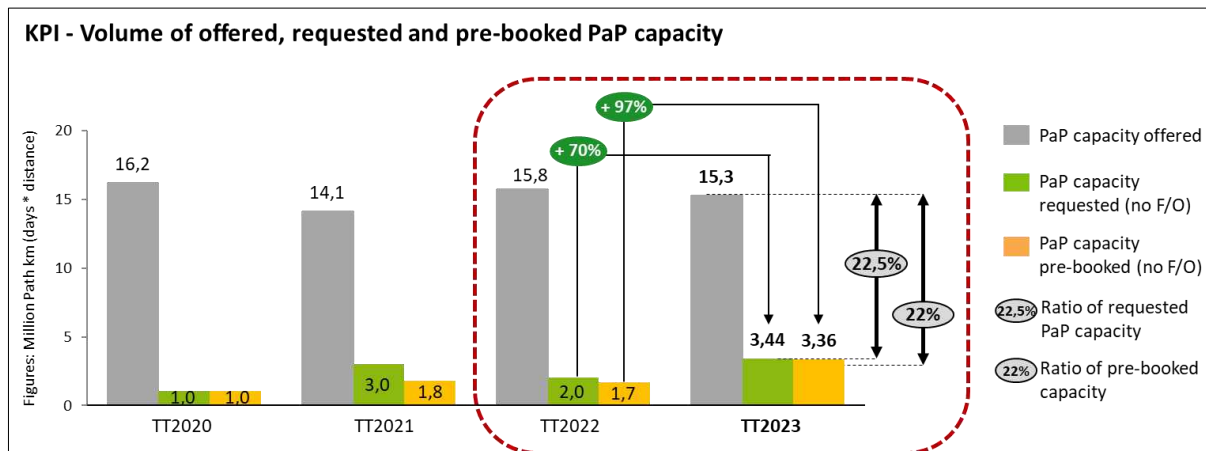
15.29 million path km were constructed as PaPs and offered to the European applicants to request for their individual international traffics until the 11th of April 2022 for TT2023.

Allocation of PaPs for TT2023

Eight applicants were involved in requesting paths for international freight traffic along the Corridor. All requests were placed in time in PCS. The graph below presents the comparison of the number of requests, where the RFC NS-B C-OSS was in the lead and the number of conflicts, which could all be solved.



The graph below presents the comparison of the volume of PaP capacity offered, requested and pre-booked, where the C-OSS Manager of RFC NS-B was in the lead.



Looking at the results more in detail, the PaP capacity requested increased by 70% in comparison to TT2022 and the pre-booking volume of the PaP capacity increased by 97%. The ratio of PaP capacity offered to PaP capacity requested (Ratio of requested PaP capacity) reached 22,5% and the ratio of PaP capacity offered to PaP capacity pre-booked (Ratio of pre-booked PaP capacity) resulted in 22%. The Ratio of pre-booked capacity is a new KPI published for TT2023 which was requested by the RNE/RFC High Level Group. It was developed in order to display in a transparent manner the relation between the two mandatory KPIs required pursuant to the Framework for Capacity Allocation (FCA) which are the “Volume of Offered Capacity (PaPs)” and the “Volume of Pre-booked Capacity”. As of TT2024, the KPI Ratio of pre-booked PaP capacity will be published officially.

In general, the PaP capacity offer TT2023 was designed more efficiently with PaP times matching to the individual international traffic concepts of applicants, increased parameters for PaPs between CZ and DE, as well as long-distance PaPs more likely fitted to the customer needs from the wish list.

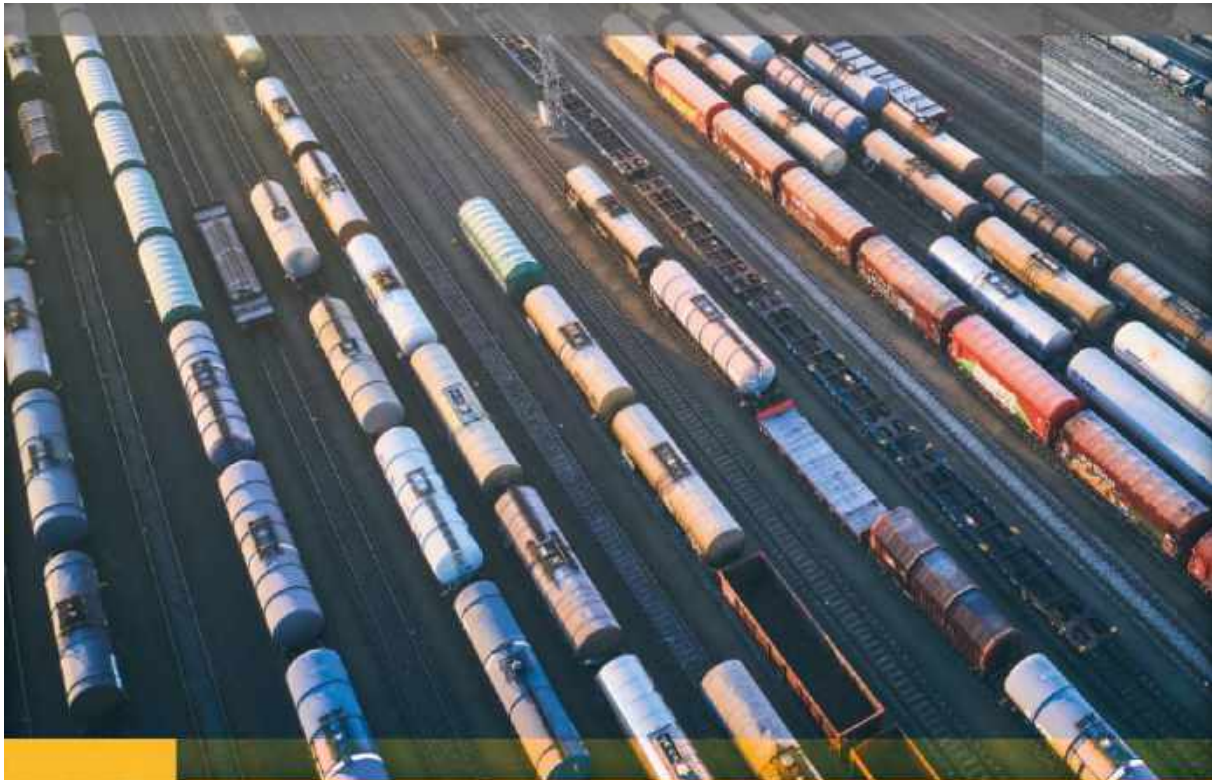
Due to ongoing TCR harmonisations, 22 dossiers out of 41 were published with a delay to final offer, which was also criticized in the USS 2022. However, all requests reached the active timetable on time to conclude the contracts for the train run starting with the timetable change on 11th December 2022. In order to avoid such delay in the next timetable phase, the RFC will encourage earlier alignment of TCRs between IMs.

2.2.2 Reserve Capacity

Reserve Capacity (RC) on RFC NS-B is the capacity product for the running timetable to provide applicants with an internationally harmonized path offer for new traffic needs during the year. RC is offered as a guaranteed contingent of “capacity slots” for international freight paths per day, direction and section on RFC NS-B lines. For TT2022, RFC NS-B offered 4.9 million path kilometres and one slot per day and direction. The capacity contingent of RC is allocated on the “first come, first served” principle. The TT2022 catalogue for the RC slots was published on the 11th of October 2021. RC was not requested for TT2022.

2.2.3 Cooperation with other Corridors

The extension of RFC Orient/East-Med (RFC OEM) to Germany in 2018 as required by the amended Regulation (EU) 913/2010 led to long overlapping sections with RFC NS-B. To optimize the usage of the scarce capacity in the bottleneck sections and to avoid negative competition between the corridors, a collaborative model was chosen to regulate the workflow of both C-OSS Managers. The C-OSS of RFC NS-B oversees the capacity offer north of Prague and Kolín, while the C-OSS of RFC OEM manages the capacity offer south of Prague and Kolín including the section Prague and Kolín. To enable this solution, an operational extension to Rostock and Kolín has been implemented. Besides that, a PaP offer in cooperation with RFC Scan-Med has been developed, which is reflected by the offer of Harmonized PaPs (HaPs).



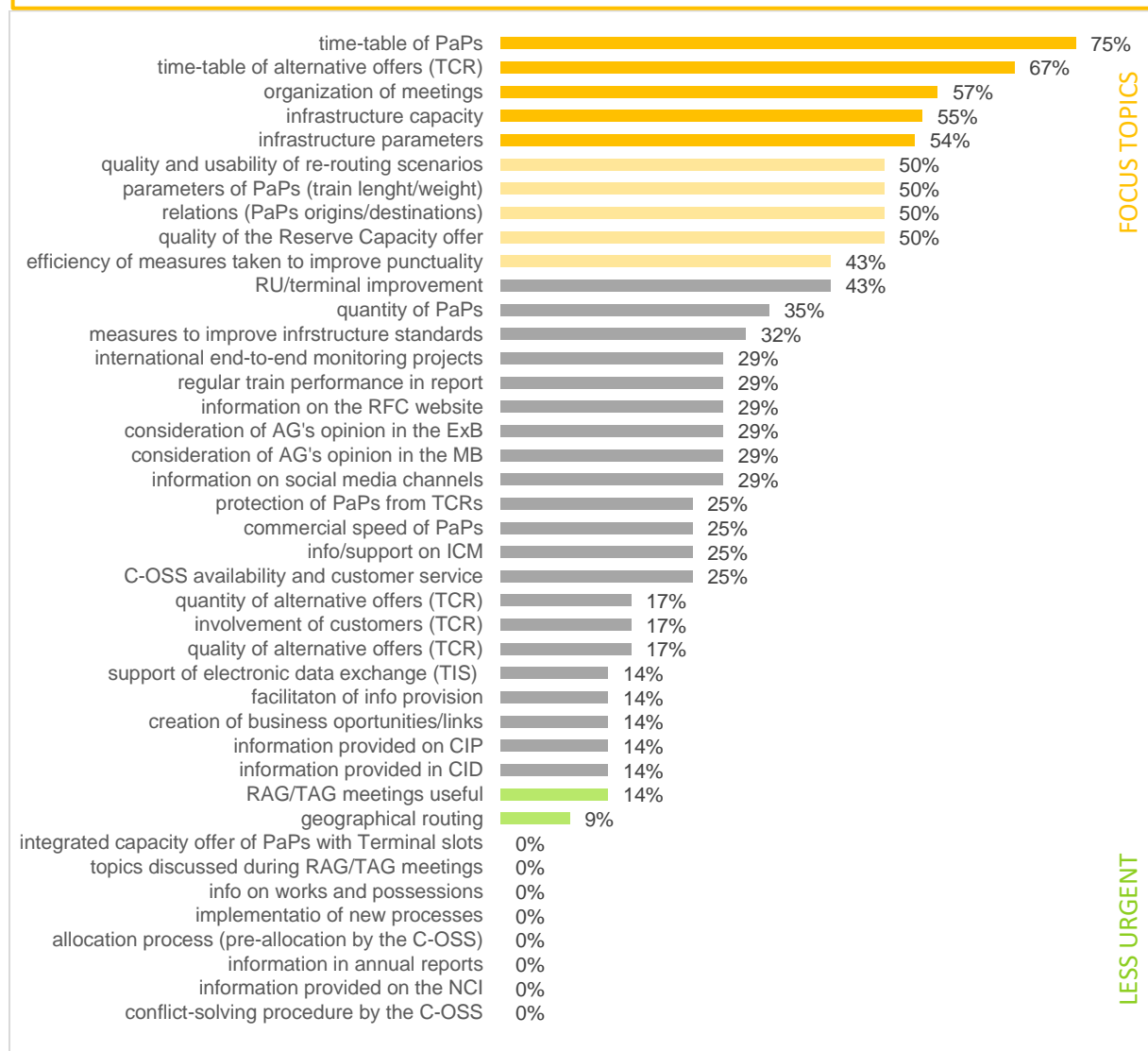
*Marshalling yard in the port area of Antwerp
Photo: Infrabel – Benjamin Brolet*

2.3 USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

In 2022, for the seventh time in a row, the Corridor conducted a User Satisfaction Survey (USS) under the RailNetEurope umbrella. Based on the feedback given in the past years by the participants, the survey was improved and questions were adapted to focus on concrete proposals for improvement. For the first time participants could also choose to be directly interviewed. Out of 39 invitations sent by and on behalf of RFC NS-B, 7 respondents took part in the survey. The MB appreciates all the efforts participants put into completing the survey. The customers were satisfied the most with the C-OSS Manager performance on allocation process (pre-allocation by the C-OSS) and conflict-solving procedure by the C-OSS. The information on works and possessions, information in annual reports and information provided on the NCI were also appreciated.

The topics RFC NS-B should put more focus on were the timetable of PaPs, relations (PaPs origin/destinations), parameters of PaPs (train length/weight) and quality of the Reserve Capacity offer (see graph below). In 2022, RFC NS-B continued to work on providing stability and reliability in the capacity offer in case of TCRs in the PaP offer, but the efforts will continue. The USS 2022 participants also suggested that organization of the RAG/TAG meetings could be improved. Therefore, the MB decided to increase the involvement of terminals in the corridor work and international initiatives, organize more common meetings with other corridors to drive joint initiatives and to organize short online meetings focused on a specific topic.

Summary of the USS 2022 – wish for improvement



2.4 CORRIDOR PERFORMANCE

According to Article 19 (2) of the Regulation, the MB of RFC NS-B monitors the performance of rail freight services on the freight corridor and publishes the results of this monitoring once a year.

In 2022, the Performance Report of RFC NS-B for the year 2021 was published on the Corridor's website: <http://rfc8.eu/customer/corridor-performance/>.

The results for the year 2022 will be published in the first half of 2023, but some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are already included here. Basis is the commonly agreed KPIs as described in the RNE KPI Guidelines, where the KPIs are divided in 3 categories: Operations, Capacity Management and Market Development.

Operations

Under this category, two KPIs are published here:

- 1) Number of trains crossing a border along the RFC
- 2) Punctuality (at origin / destination).

The KPI "Number of trains crossing a border along the RFC" displays the number of international trains running on RFC NS-B infrastructure, crossing at least one border on the Corridor, and passing at least one pair of points defined in the basic point list of RFC NS-B. The information used for the KPI is data first obtained from the Train Information System (TIS) that is then stored and processed at the RNE data warehouse for reporting use. In 2022, RNE refined their reporting tools, which now provides more accurate figures, but at the same time makes a comparison with the figures from previous years more difficult. To be able to compare the figures of 2022 with those of 2021 it was decided to re-run the figures for 2021 based on the same methodology for 2022. However due to technical reasons it's not possible to re-run the years before 2021.

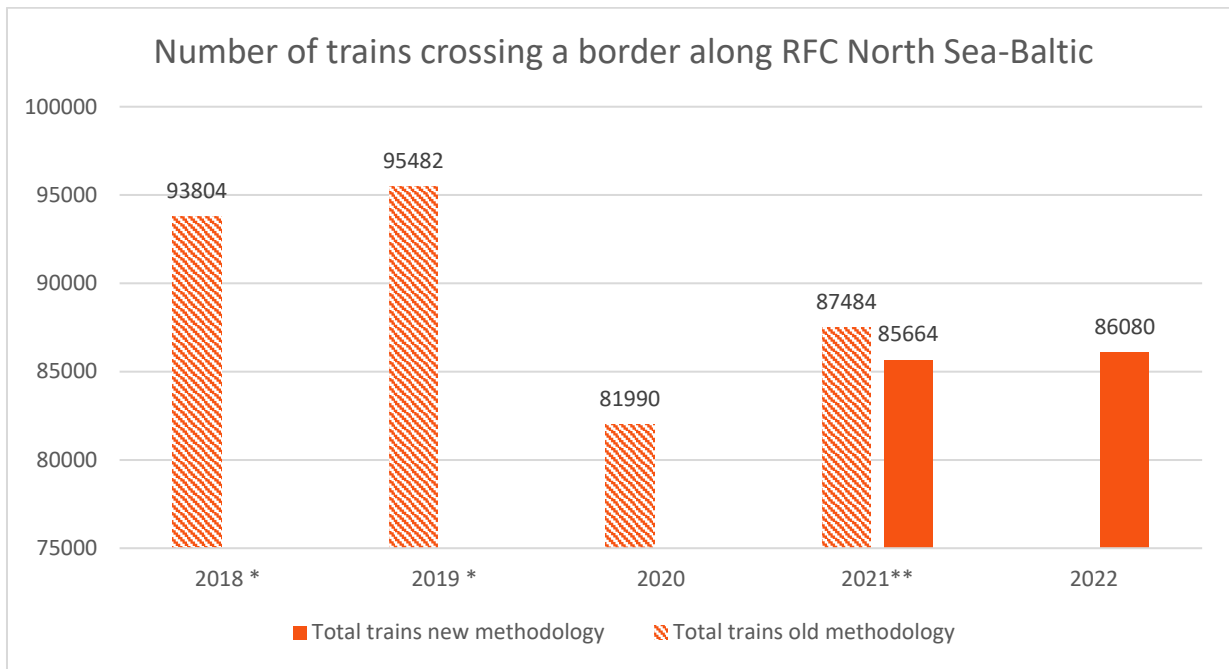
Since Estonia and Latvia, who joined the Corridor starting from TT 2021, were not yet using TIS in 2022, their international trains are not included in the figures. This also applies for Lithuania and their border crossings with Latvia.

In the graph presented on page 24 the different figures are shown for the last five years, the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 are shown with figures calculated using the old methodology; these figures were also published. For 2021, there are two figures that show the difference using the old methodology compared to the new one and the old 2021 figures were also published. **The total amount of trains in 2022 was 86.080.**

There is a slight increase in the number of trains compared to 2021. The Corridor traffic is stable despite the impact of the conflict in Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis. A side effect of this is an increase in coal transport from the Netherlands to Germany and Poland.

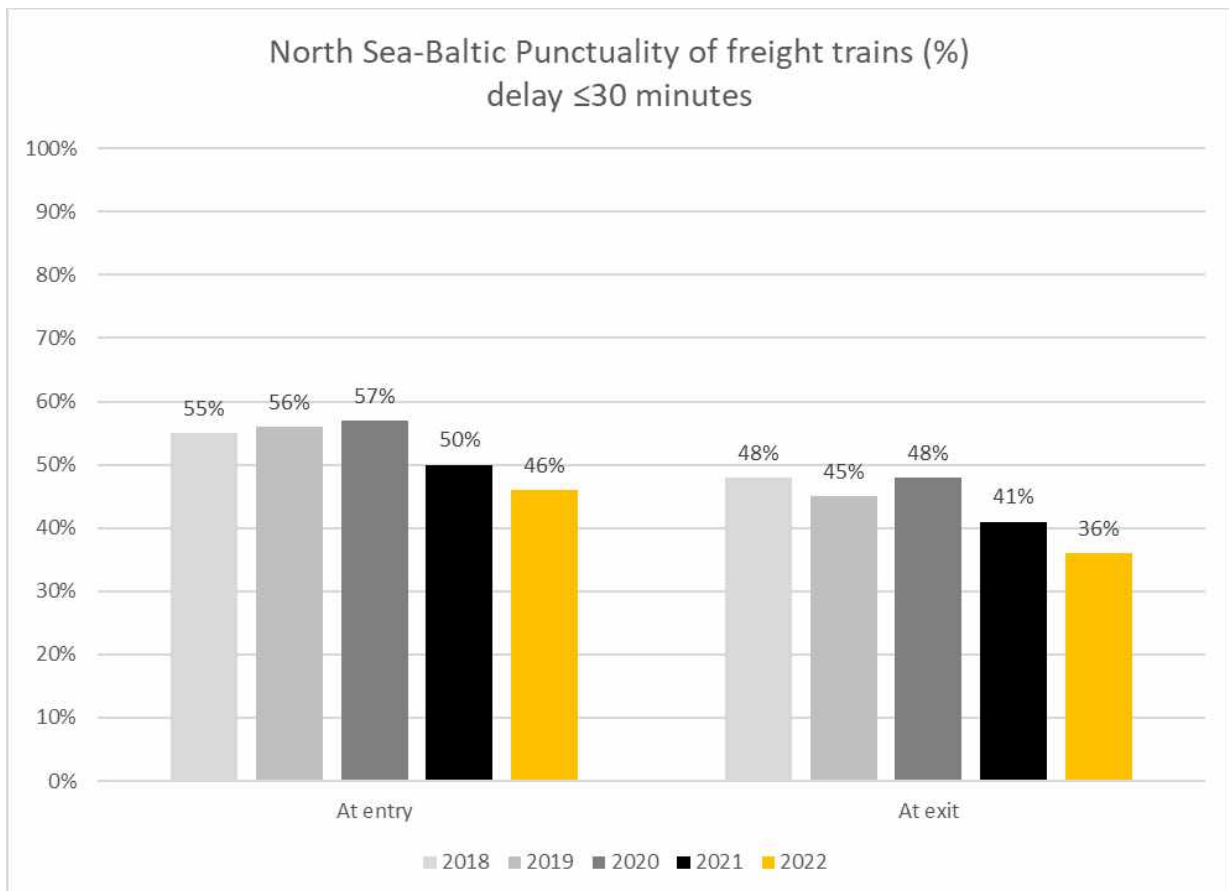
There was a negative impact on the traffic in the first 3 months of the year, mainly in February. The drop in the number of trains was due to several causes, i.e. storms, the effect of Covid in China on the production and supply chain and the start of the conflict in Ukraine. The sanctions against Russia and Belarus led to a huge drop in traffic in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (1520mm network). For the Baltic States however this is not visible in the graph as these figures are not available in TIS.

Another impact on the number of trains were the numerous TCRs on the Corridor with the subsequent re-routings.



* 2018 and 2019 figures are based on timetable year (mid Dec-mid Dec). Figures from 2020 onwards are based on calendar year

** From 2021 the figures no longer include trains from Venlo-Kaldenkirchen as these no longer belong to RFC North Sea-Baltic



The second KPI as shown in the graph on page 24, represents the average punctuality of trains running on the Corridor at entry and exit of the Corridor (or departure/arrival if this is a point on the Corridor). Calculation is based on the data from the Train Information System. The 2021 punctuality figures are the same with the old and the new methodology and 2021 and 2022 data shown in the graph is based on the new methodology. Punctuality for 2022 at entry is 46% and at exit 36%.

The 2022 punctuality figures are reflecting a further decrease in departure punctuality compared to 2021. Low entry punctuality results in a low exit punctuality.

More detailed information regarding the delay reasons specifically on each IM's network can be found here below in "General comments on punctuality".

RFC NS-B also publishes [Monthly Punctuality Reports](#) on the Corridor's website where information on the punctuality development is provided for a period of 12 months accompanied by the amount of delay minutes and distribution of delays. These reports are the basis for possible bilateral discussions with the customers on the measures needed for the improvement of the performance.

General comments on punctuality

The information on punctuality in the countries along the Corridor is given per IM in geographical order beginning from the West of the Corridor.

The Netherlands

Punctuality on the ProRail network is for direction West-East higher in 2022 than in 2021 although in this direction ProRail had on-going punctuality issues in the Rotterdam harbour. For the direction East-West the punctuality is lower in 2022 than 2021 but delays in this direction are mainly caused by the previous delays imported from the neighbouring IM.

During 2022, there were some longer periods of total closure of the German railway between Emmerich and Oberhausen. During these timeframes freight trains from and to Germany had to run via the border stations Oldenzaal (Bentheimroute) and Venlo (Brabantroute). These are both routes with not only freight traffic but also with dense passenger traffic. Punctuality of the freight trains running via these routes is always lower than on the Betuweroute (for freight dedicated). These re-routings furthermore cause regular capacity problems in the yard Venlo and the German yard Viersen, where trains in the direction Ruhr Area need to turn direction.

During the year, there were also some infrastructural disruptions on the Rotterdam Harbourline and the Betuweroute affecting the punctuality on RFC NS-B. Especially the problems with the constructional safety of the Suurhoffbrug on the Rotterdam Harbourline affected the punctuality. Due to this problem, only one train at a time was allowed on the bridge from June 2022 onwards. Since July 2022, this measure is only applicable in special situations (heavy wind or low temperatures) or for heavy trains (coal and ore).

Belgium

Most delays on the Infrabel network were caused by single incidents, delays from the neighbouring IM (Germany), exceptional weather and cable theft. Despite measures to prevent theft the latter still is a big problem.

Punctuality figures were the most influenced by the following:

- Two incidents with brake related breakdowns
- One incident concerning a person working for a subcontractor
- One incident during exceptional weather conditions (storm Eunice)
- During works in the station of Gent-Sint-Pieters a bombshell from World War I was found
- Two cases of cable theft
- A derailment of a freight wagon in Bressoux.

Germany

In 2022, there was in general an exceptional high amount of construction and maintenance works on the whole network which caused several delays. Regarding the traffic on RFC NS-B, several disruptions had an influence on the punctuality of the trains: There was a storm in February, two derailments of freight trains in Frankfurt (Oder) Oderbrücke in March and May, strikes in the North Sea harbours in June and July, a failure of GSM-R in October and a train collision in Leiferde in November. The last case was aggravated by the closure of the alternative re-routing line between Magdeburg and Braunschweig due to maintenance works. Furthermore, there were constant maintenance works and several total closures on the line through the Elbe Valley to the Czech Republic.

Czech Republic

The punctuality in 2022 was mainly influenced by capacity restrictions because of the reconstruction works on the network, especially the very limited capacity due to works in the Elbe Valley during the year. Another main delay reason is formation of trains by railway undertakings (late train ready message at origin, handover at origin, loading problems, late loading). Less significant reasons affecting the punctuality on the Corridor are capacity restrictions due to maintenance works, bad weather conditions, infrastructure failures and rolling stock problems.

Poland

There were no specific delays concerning the freight traffic in 2022 on the railway lines of RFC NS-B. The average punctuality of freight trains was at the same level as in previous years. The main delay reasons for international freight traffic at PKP PLK S.A network were related to occupancy of station tracks, rolling stock transfer to another train, rolling stock failure and late notification of readiness for departure. PKP PLK S.A. as an infrastructure manager was responsible for rather minor delays, mainly related to emergency closure of route or station tracks.

Lithuania

Overall, the punctuality of the traffic has increased, and the time of delay has decreased. Most of these changes can be attributed to the relatively typical weather conditions – the summer period had some isolated days or part of days when the weather conditions have caused bad driving conditions. However, the overall number of instances when the weather was extreme have decreased compared to the year before (2021). Even though the impact has decreased, summertime and extreme weather still have a relatively high impact on the overall punctuality figures. Talking about the borders:

Turmantas - Kurčums had the least activity and had quite low punctuality because of the works that were carried out. Joniškis – Meitenė usually had two trains a day and had very high punctuality. Trakiszi and Mockava had the highest number of trains throughout the year concerning the Lithuanian borders. The highest number of issues with punctuality can be attributed to the summer period.

Latvia

Most of the sections on the Latvian railway have good capacity; also, there were no big problems with punctuality. Some sections on the network have the trains running on actual time (dispatchers command) and this allows them to run without delay. At the Latvian railway sections in 2022 there were no accidents that impacted the train traffic. However, this does not mean that there are no train delays on the Latvian railway at all. There are not many, but the Lugazi-Valga section usually has a few delays per month, some of these are due to locomotive malfunction, some due to slow driving and in November and December heavy snowfall on some days affected the punctuality. At Joniškis – Meitenė the trains run mostly on ad-hoc basis and there were only 2 or 3 trains a day and at Turmantas – Kurčums the route is only used as a diversionary route during the construction works at the Lithuanian railway side.

Estonia

In 2022, there was a considerable decrease (by more than 50%) of freight traffic on the Estonian railway network due to international sanctions on Russia and Belarus. Also, at the Valga-Lugazi border station there was far less traffic: in average 1.3 train pairs crossed the border every day compared to 2.3 train pairs per day a year ago. Overall, there are no big problems with punctuality as most of the sections and border stations have plenty of capacity for freight trains. The biggest cause of delay on the Valga-Lugazi border was due to breakdowns of vehicles. The second major reason for delays was problems with control devices. Also, heavy snowfall at the end of 2022 caused delays in both freight and passenger train traffic. Freight trains can be late because the passenger trains always have priority in the traffic. Despite the issues mentioned, the overall number of late trains is less than 10% and in general the punctuality at the Valga-Lugazi border is very good.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT

RFC NS-B participated in one real ICM incident that took place in 2022. Due to a train collision of two freight trains between Meinersen and Leiferde (nearby Gifhorn) on the route between Hannover and Wolfsburg on November 17 an ICM case has been declared by DB Netz for RFC NS-B and RFC OEM as the affected area is on both corridors. The accident train was carrying tank wagons with propane gas; 4 wagons and the loco derailed.

Two re-routings were possible for this situation:

- Hannover – Göttingen – Nordhausen - Halle - Magdeburg
- Hannover – Bebra – Erfurt – Halle - Magdeburg.

Due to the closure of the line Braunschweig - Weddel/Magdeburg because of construction works (until 10.12.2022), re-routings via Hannover – Stendal and Uelzen - Stendal were not possible (it was used as a main re-routing option for passenger trains). Long-running East-West freight traffic from/to/via the Ruhr-Area was re-routed via Hannover-Göttingen-Halle or via Bebra-Erfurt.

The line was re-opened for freight transport on 09.12.2022 and for passenger transport on 11.12.2022. There was a speed restriction of 140 km/h until the 14.12.2022 and the construction works from Braunschweig - Wolfsburg were prolonged until 16.12.2022.

The NExBo Task Force proposed to conduct several case studies on the Rail Freight Corridors to support the in-depth analysis of the legal framework in regard to the capacity allocation rules foreseen in the ICM handbook in case of international disruptions.

Those case studies will help the NExBo members to gain experience and additional insight in the topic.

Therefore, RFC NS-B made in 2022 a common analysis of past incidents on overlapping sections with RFC Rhine-Alpine for NL, BE and DE:

- The flooding in western and central Europe
- The rockslide in Kestert.

For the remaining part of the Corridor, RFC NS-B made a third analysis for the Bad Schandau – Děčín incident.



*Electrification works near Genk-Goederen
Photo: Infrabel – Benjamin Brolet*

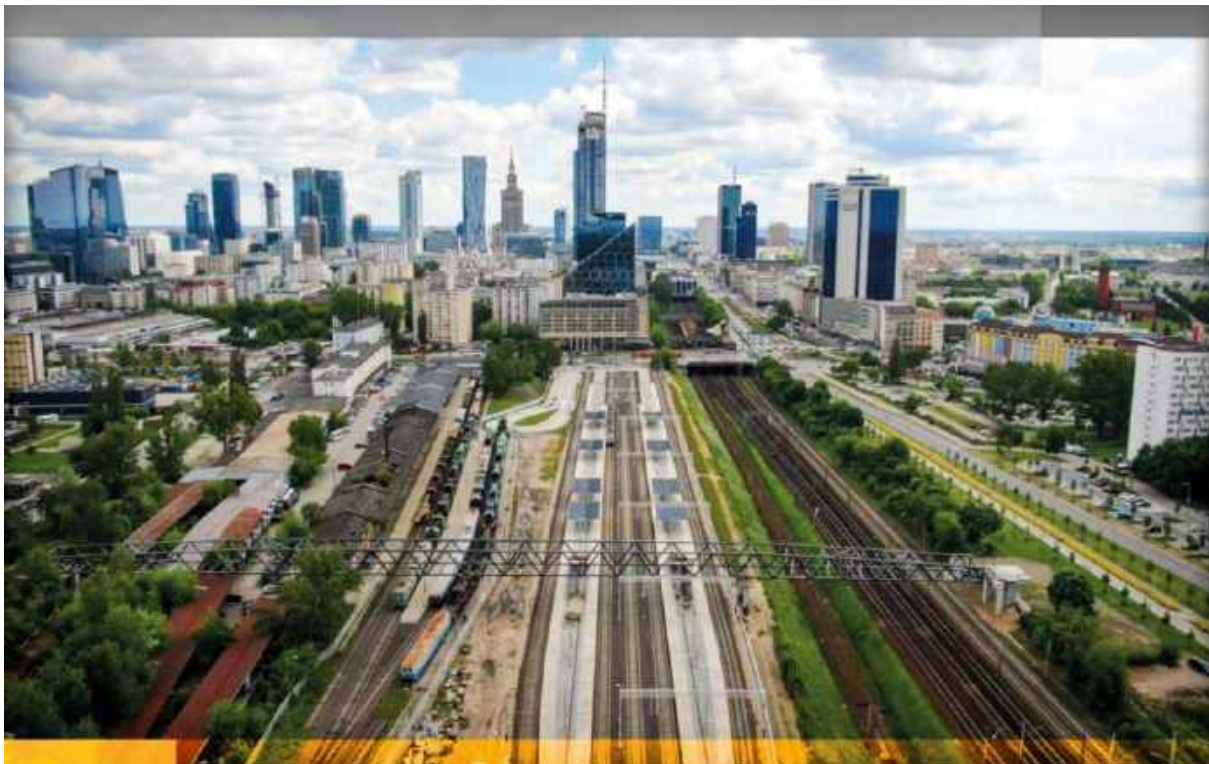
2.6 CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS

RFC NS-B continued the work on the cross-border improvements through the Quality Circle Operation project for the Frankfurt (Oder) Oderbrücke, Bad Bentheim, Montzen-Aachen and Bad Schandau – Děčín borders, implementing several measures in 2022. Task force members meet regularly every month to improve the communication at the border Frankfurt Oder and monitor the implementation of the check-in process of the advance train information to the dispatcher at border stations. This process has been consulted with all stakeholders involved. During QCO meetings, solutions are defined as QCO gives a platform to stakeholders to discuss and work on the problems. Additionally QCO workshops were organized in 2022, where the action lists to be worked on were developed including presentation and implementation of dwell time monitoring.

2.7 SOLIDARITY LANES

In the frame of the Solidarity Lanes concept of the European Commission, discussions on the Corridor started in 2022 on the initiative of the Chairman of the RFC NS-B Management Board, Oliver Sellnick. Subsequently RNE took over the coordination and in July 2022 organised the kick-off meeting with RFC Network and the representatives of the IMs and RUs. Participants discussed the state of play, challenges in transporting goods out of Ukraine and measures RFCs can take in order to streamline the process. The concept of Solidarity Lanes was presented by the European Commission in “An action plan for EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes to facilitate Ukraine's agricultural export and bilateral trade with the EU” published on 12th of May 2022. The RFCs wanted to provide as much support as possible, therefore IMs from countries bordering Ukraine were asked to provide data on actual traffic volumes at border sections, which has proven to be a useful tool for monitoring purposes for all interested parties and the European Commission. Based on this information we can now track changes on a monthly basis, observe trends and identify key areas in need of improvement. RFC NS-B cooperates with PKP PLK S.A. on providing the data for border crossings that are part of the Corridor, in particular Medyka – Mostiska border crossing.

The ExBo was also informed about investment measures on the Polish-Ukrainian border and about the constant growth of carried loads from Ukraine to the EU (in September 2022 cargo flows were significantly higher than in March 2022). The ExBo expressed the expectation that there needs to be a constant flow in order to carry out investments in terminals. Market parties/stakeholders will not invest if there is no certainty about the continuity of the flows from and to Ukraine.



*Warszawa central railway station
Photo: PLK S.A.*

2.8 EVENTS

2.8.1 Connecting Europe Days 2022

RFC NS-B together with all RFCs and RNE participated in the Connecting Europe Days, which took place from 28th to 30th of June 2022 in Lyon. All RFCs shared a common stand in the exhibition hall. For RFC NS-B it was a great opportunity to promote the Corridor and get in contact with potential customers, investors, EU institutions and partners from other modes of transport and thus opening new possibilities for partnership and cooperation.

Additionally during the conference CNC Coordinator, Ms Trautmann organised a session of the CNC North Sea-Baltic, in which focus was on the situation in Ukraine and the proposal to extend the CNC to this country.



2.8.2 Customer Conference of DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A.

The Customer Conference of DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A. took place on the 12th – 13th of October in Rostock. During the conference among others, information regarding DB Netz AG and PKP PLK S.A. projects, the implementation of the European Train Control System (ETCS) and the local border agreement Frankfurt Oder - Rzepin were presented.

At the RFC NS-B stand, participants of the conference had the opportunity to obtain detailed information regarding the Corridor offer.



3. EUROPEAN FUNDING

The general objective of the RFC NS-B project is to promote an effective implementation of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 by supporting infrastructure managers and allocation bodies.

In 2022, the EEIG signed a new grant agreement under the CEF II programme – Technical Assistance for the years 2022-2024. The grant supports the functioning of the Corridor and the corridor one-stop-shop.

4. COOPERATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 RAILNETEUROPE

RFC NS-B is an associate member of RNE and continued to cooperate closely with other RFCs in view of the harmonization and development of services under the RNE umbrella. RFC NS-B applies RNE services and guidelines as well as the RNE IT tools: PCS, TIS, CIP, Network and Corridor Information Platform (NCI) and Charging Information System (CIS).

In 2022, RFC NS-B representatives participated in two RNE General Assembly meetings and two RFC/RNE High Level Meetings. RFC NS-B was also actively engaged in a number of RNE initiatives:

- Further harmonisation and digitalization of the Customer Information Document (CID);
- Further development of PCS;
- Improvement of traffic and train performance management;
- Participation and coordination of the USS;

- Further development of CIP and the CIP strategy;
- Development and improvement of the NCI;
- Participation in the RNE/RFC KPI Coordination Working Group (WG).

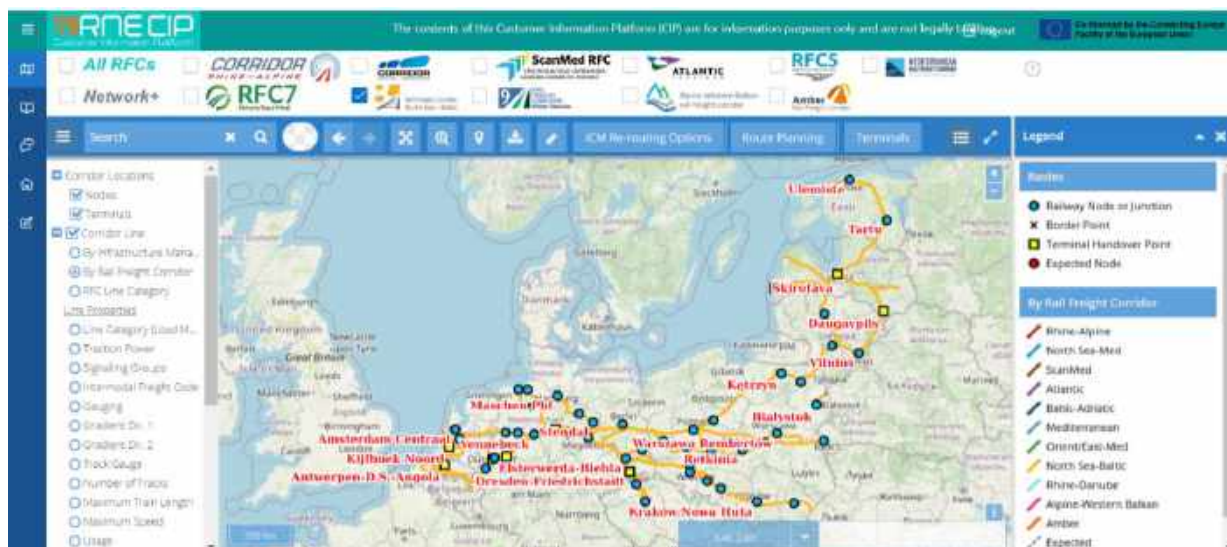
4.1.1 Customer Information Platform

The Customer Information Platform is an interactive, Internet-based tool, which provides customers and users of the Corridor with information on railway infrastructure in 26 European countries, covering the complete network of all 11 RFCs. In 2022, RNE continued work on the development of the Digital Railway Infrastructure System (RIS) (see chapter 4.1.2); therefore, it was decided to freeze bigger CIP developments with regard to this project.

However, as in previous years RFC NS-B together with other RFCs under coordination of RNE was working on the development of the existing and new functionalities in CIP. Among others, user friendly 'read only access' for public users to the list of terminals was finalized in CIP. The RFCs worked on CIP and RINF (Register of Infrastructure) parameters alignment - the study was developed in order to proceed further. Additionally the CIP document structure was improved in order to be more user friendly. The stepwise extension of CIP content towards the entire network of individual IMs started and will continue. The extension to Medyka and the ports of Gent and Zeebrugge data was included in CIP.

In 2022, the CIP User Satisfaction Survey was conducted online again; over 30 respondents participated in the survey. The results will enable RNE along with the RFCs to further improve CIP.

More information regarding CIP can be found on [RNE CIP information subpage](#).



4.1.2 Railway Infrastructure System project

In 2022, RNE started developing the Railway Infrastructure System (RIS) in order to substitute several existing systems (Common Components System (CCS), Central Reference File Database (CRD), Geo

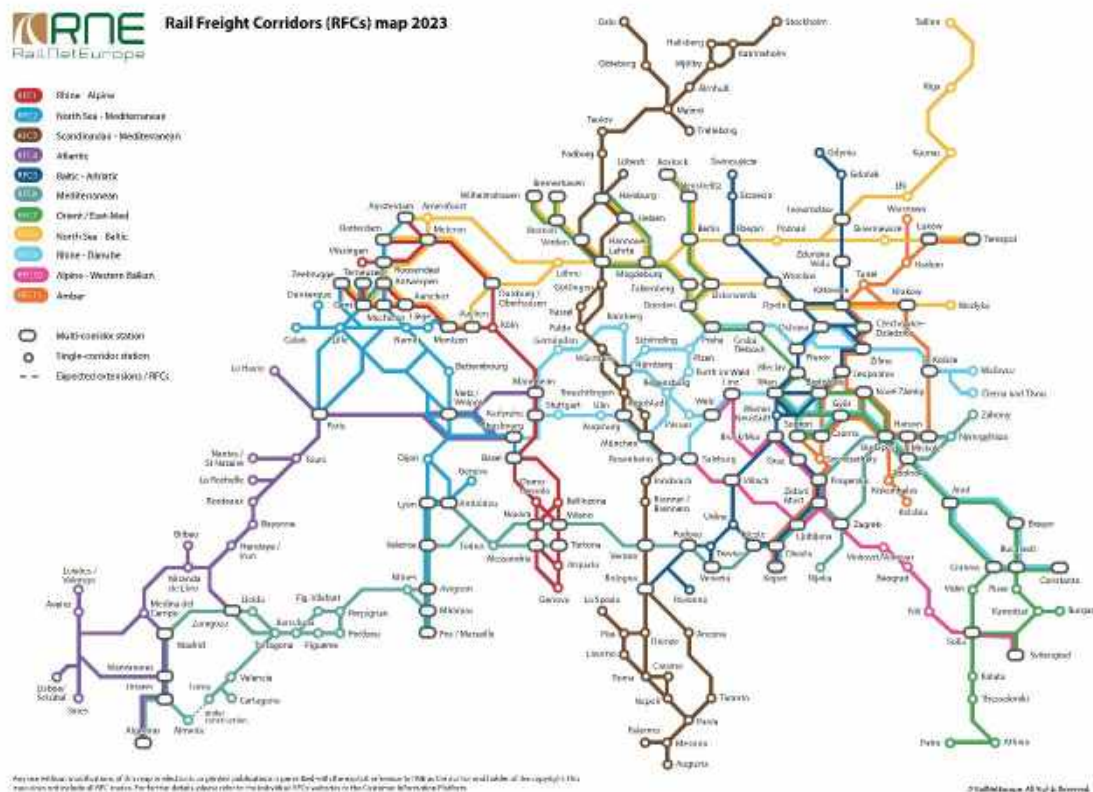
Editor, CIP, Rail Facilities Portal (RFP)) by merging their data and functionality into one consistent entity, lowering operational and managing costs. It is foreseen that RIS will be operational in the third quarter of 2023.

4.1.3 Network and Corridor Information Platform (NCI)

In 2022, the work continued on the [Network and Corridor Information \(NCI\) Platform](#), which is a digital solution to provide information on Network Statements and Corridor Information Documents. Further improvements of the platform are foreseen in 2023.

4.2 RFC 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 RNE as successor of Susanne Kopfer. In 2022, six online and one physical RFC Network meetings were organized in which RFC NS-B participated. Among the topics, which RFCs worked on were the CEF II Call and Technical Assistance, the 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. In 2022, the RFC Network continued to work on joint RFC Network projects to be performed in the coming years with the support of EU funding. RFC NS-B representatives have been involved in the elaboration of several projects, among others the European TMS Project and the User Satisfaction Survey. In cooperation with other involved Corridors, RFC NS-B will work in 2023 on further development of the CEF II Technical Assistance project.



4.2.1 RFC Network RNE sessions

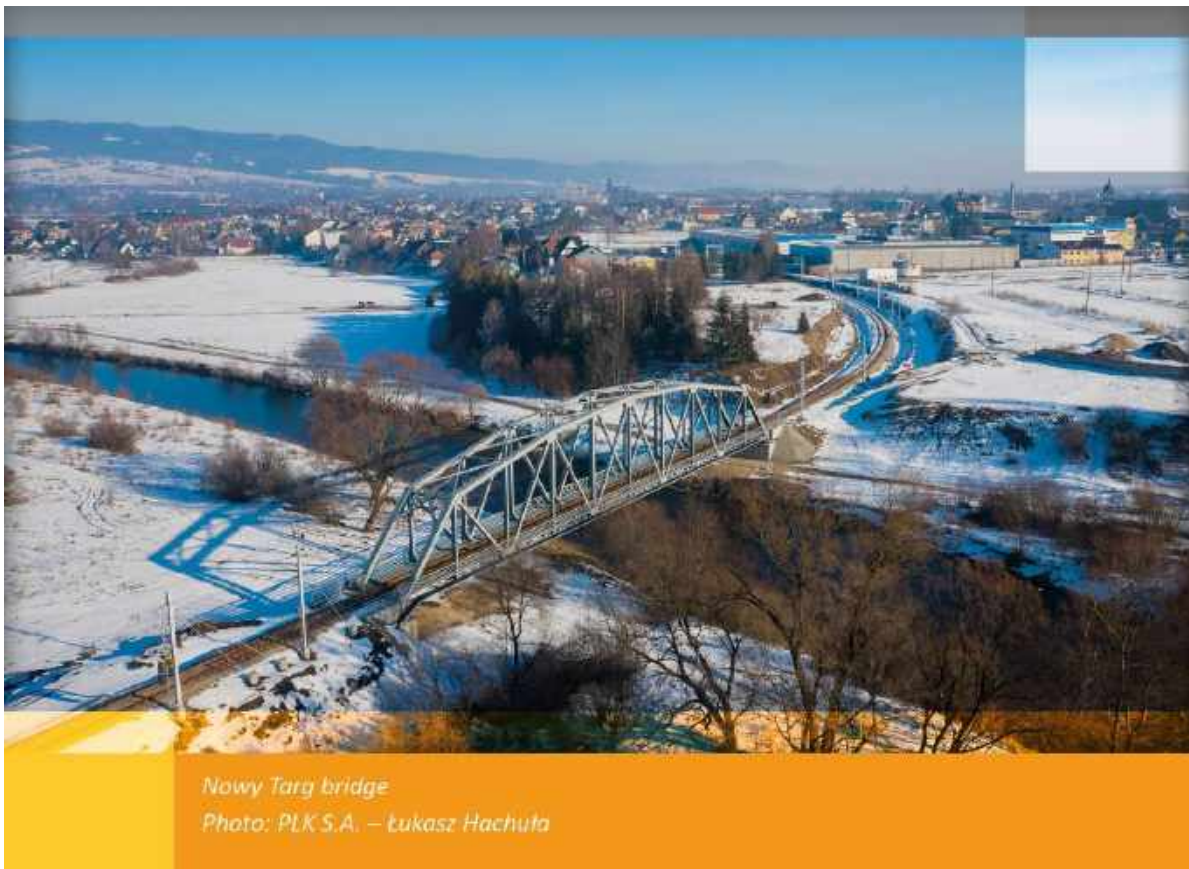
In 2022, the RFC Network in cooperation with RNE organized four RFC Network / RNE sessions:

- 1st Session 20th January: TTR (Timetable Redesign) IT landscape and PCS (Path Coordination System)
- 2nd Session 3rd March: Train Information System (TIS) and Digital train 2.0, ETA (estimated time of arrival)
- 3rd Session 28th April: RNE Digital Roadmap & Digital Rail Infrastructure System, Customer Information Platform and Rail Facilities Portal & Network and Corridor Information
- 4th Session 22nd June (hosted by RNE&UIRR): Rail Facilities Portal and Future of Railway Infrastructure System.

All sessions were held via MS Teams in an interactive way, giving participants the possibility to ask questions and participate in discussions. There was a great interest in these events in 2022, therefore the RFC Network decided to continue and organize sessions also in 2023. All sessions are available on [RFC Network YouTube channel](#).

4.3 DG MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

The European Commission organises the Single European Railway Area Committee (SERAC) Working Group on Rail Freight Corridors, which aims at facilitating the exchange of views with all ministries, infrastructure managers and other stakeholders involved in all RFCs. The main focus of DG Mobility and Transport was on the accompanying impact assessment and the proposal of the revision of the Regulation 913/2010.



4.4 NORTH SEA-BALTIC CORE NETWORK CORRIDOR

RFC NS-B continued to work with its corresponding North Sea-Baltic Core Network Corridor (CNC) in the framework of the model for cooperation between Rail Freight Corridors and TEN-T Core Network

Corridors. This model ensures the achievement of the objectives of both the RFCs and CNCs and avoiding duplication of work through effective exchanges of information and consultations.

The North Sea-Baltic CNC Forum meeting took place on 29th of September 2022. The main subjects discussed were the NSB Project Implementation Report, planning of infrastructure: synergies of transport and electricity infrastructure, the use of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) for transport projects and financing (update on the CEF Call).

In October 2022, the 5th Work Plan of the European Coordinator of the North Sea – Baltic Core Network Corridor was approved and published.

Additionally on the 14th of December the RFC NS-B Executive Board and Management Board meeting with CNC Coordinator Ms Trautmann took place in Brussels. During the meeting among others Solidarity Lanes, Amber train and the revision of the TEN-T Regulation were discussed (more information can be found in chapter 1.1 EXECUTIVE BOARD).



4.4.1 Rail Baltica project implementation

In 2022, the Rail Baltica project has advanced further into the construction phase:

- construction works were ongoing and tenders for further large-scale construction works were in process in all three Baltic States;
- design & build procurements were launched for the deployment of ENE and CCS subsystems for the entire Rail Baltica railway line;
- design of local facilities (stations, terminals, depots) have steadily progressed with some facilities advancing into the construction phase;
- preparatory works for regional stations were ongoing in all three Baltic States;

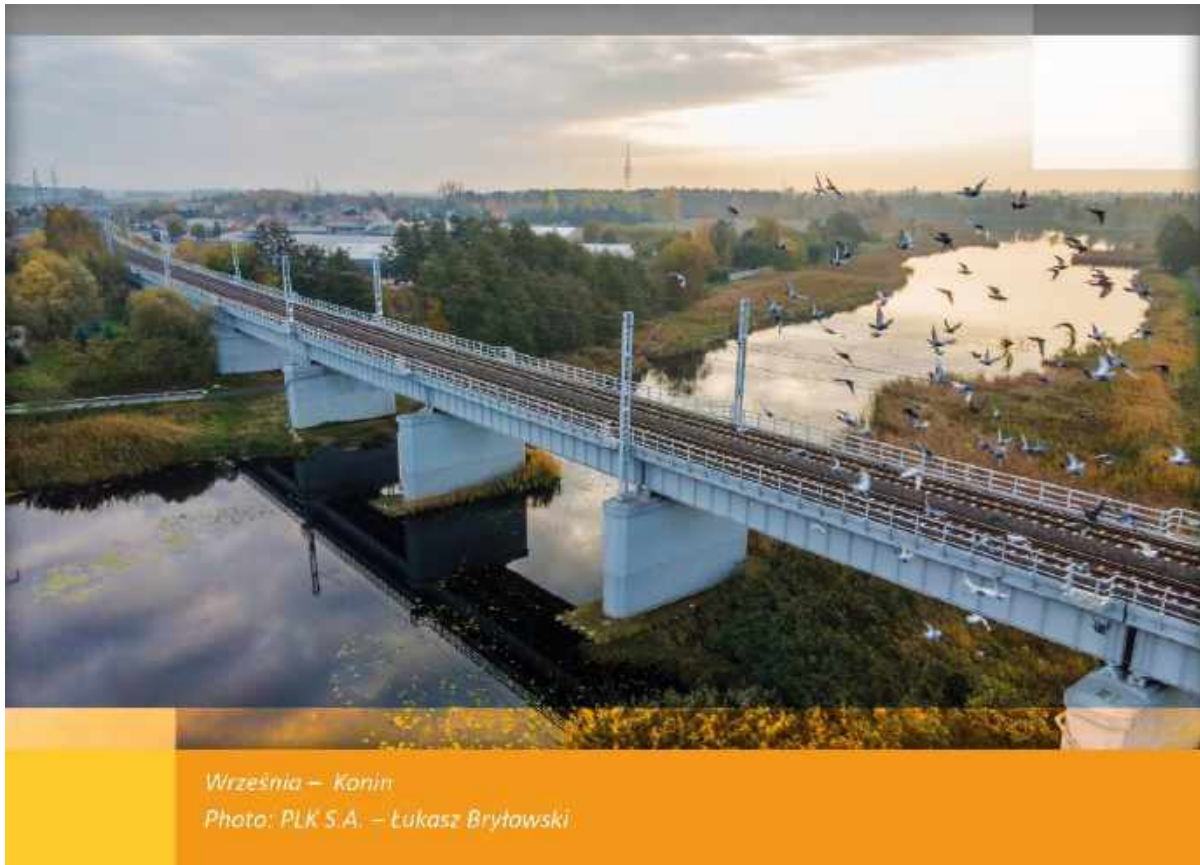
- growing interest for the commercial freight traffic to/from Western Europe on the operational section of the Rail Baltica corridor which connects to Kaunas Intermodal Terminal;
- development of the future Rail Baltica infrastructure management model has continued with key results being overviewed in the Annual Progress Report, which can be found on the Rail Baltica website: <https://rail-baltica.lt/>.

4.5 REGULATORY BODIES

The annual meeting with the Regulatory Bodies (RB) of the Corridor took place online on the 18th of November. During this meeting, the C-OSS Manager provided information about the results of the allocation process for TT2023 as well as the preparation of the capacity offer for TT2024. The RBs were informed about the handling process of the capacity wish list and analysis of the offer for TT 2023. The RB presented the Report from the workshop of IRG-Rail on monitoring RFCs. The RBs informed that IRG-Rail published new KPIs and that the NExBo is planning to create a Working Group in 2023 composed of RFCs and RNE representatives on this topic. Additionally the below topics were discussed:

- Overview of recent developments on the Corridor including the request for the extension of the RFC to Luxembourg
- Work of Regulatory Bodies: Forthcoming work on KPIs and Decision of regulatory bodies concerning corridor relevant issues.

The Cooperation Agreement between the Regulatory Bodies situated in the countries of the Rail Freight Corridor “North Sea-Baltic” was signed on 5th of December 2022 and is available on the [RFC NS-B website](#).



*Września – Konin
Photo: PLK S.A. – Łukasz Brytowski*

5. OUTLOOK 2023

5.1 REVISION OF REGULATION (EU) 913/2010

The proposal for the revision of the TEN-T Guidelines of 14/12/2021 already includes a first step in the revision of the Regulation 913/2010. In the frame of the Greening Freight Package, foreseen for July 2023, the European Commission will propose a.o. measures to revise the freight regulation. The impact of the proposal on RFC NS-B will be analysed in 2023.



*Chociw Łaski
Photo: PLK S.A. – Łukasz Bryłowski*

