

7th PRIME Plenary Meeting

19 November 2015, Brussels

7. c) Round table discussion **Opportunities of Rail Corridors for Infrastructure Managers (freight transport)**

Summary

Regulation 913/2010/EU has had a far reaching impact on the operational activities of the infrastructure managers, and has, at least to some degree, improved the business environment for rail operators. The rail sector is fully committed to the general principles and aims of the Regulation, but in some cases it is a challenge to fulfil its provisions while in other cases, the provisions do not fit well with the market needs.

The EU Commission is currently reflecting about the need of reviewing Regulation 913/2010/EU in the near future. The rail sector is producing an input paper* reflecting the experiences gathered so far, and describing market oriented solutions which the sector is currently in the process of developing for aspects which need improvements.

**Please note that the sector input paper is in its final phase of preparation, but has not yet been finalised and agreed by all parties.*

1. Introduction

The EU Commission is currently reflecting about the need of reviewing Regulation 913/2010/EU in the near future. Six corridors have been implemented in November 2013, three more will follow in November 2015, and prolongations of those corridors will be developed until 2020.

In view of these developments, the rail sector¹ is producing an input paper reflecting the experiences gathered by all relevant parties during the first year of operation of the rail freight corridors (RFCs), and describing market oriented solutions which the sector is currently in the process of developing for aspects which need improvements. A summary of the most important points are discussed below.

¹ CER IMs+Rus, EIM, and Rail Freight Corridors

2. Content

Governance

Today a large part of international trains run on more than one corridor successively, each with different and sometimes conflicting sets of rules. Therefore, a harmonisation of the governance processes of the RFCs is needed, in cooperation with the RUs.

The rail sector does not see the need to prescribe this coordination by law, nor to consolidate the corridors into one single RFC organisation. Instead, the sector has taken own measures and initiated effective coordination at all levels and at regular intervals. With the establishment of the ECCO Project, the RFC Talks and the development of joint approaches via RNE, the rail sector has found a suitable answer to the need of harmonisation. Furthermore, the RFCs thrive to define a common Framework Capacity Allocation (FCA), a harmonised Corridor Information Document (CID), and in cooperation with the RUs, a harmonised and user-friendly way of providing all relevant information for applicants.

In addition to a harmonisation at corridor level, a better coordination between national regimes and the processes on the rail freight corridors is necessary. In this respect, the sector would welcome the support of the Executive Boards of RFCs and the related ministries.

Finally, the rail sector proposes to strengthen the role of the advisory groups, RAGs and TAGs, but is still in the process of finalising their proposal. The Executive and Management Boards should put into place appropriate procedures to inform and consult RAGs and TAGs in a timely and effective manner about topics on which they intend to take decisions. In return, the RFCs would like RUs and terminal operators to commit to a regular, consistent and active participation in RAG and TAG meetings, with the submission of timely and constructive input to relevant issues.

Product Definition

In the decision process of prolongation of existing RFCs or additional freight corridors, the IMs and RUs concerned should be closely consulted, and the IM on whose network the corridor is to be prolonged or altered must consent to it. The Management Board of each RFC should be able to initiate modifications in the geographic scope of its freight corridor

Instead of repetitive obligatory work, as is the current practice, the rail sector would appreciate more flexibility with regard to the transport market studies (TMS), which form the basis of the freight corridor's product development. This flexibility could take the form of adopting a European wide approach to TMS, such as a single TMS, or a TMS consisting of common parts and individual modules for each corridor. Alternatively, the scope of the study could be extended to focus on specific topics in the transport market.

Regarding the capacity products promoted via the C-OSS (e.g. PaPs, Reserve Capacity, FlexPaPs and NetworkPaPs), both RUs and IMs need more flexibility in the offer and the request. The sector is still in the process of reflecting on a relevant proposal. Over the next few years the rail sector needs room for refining the products on the corridors in an iterative process with the customers.

Operational Provisions

In the event of disturbance, traffic management should allow IMs to take care of specific capacity requirements and to optimise the use of scarce capacity.

Detailed measures for operational performance should not be prescribed by law. Instead, the Management Boards of freight corridors should be encouraged to develop objective quality goals and measures in consultation with the RAGs and TAGs. These quality goals should be developed under the supervision of the Executive Boards and monitored by them. RUs and IMs should continue to enhance communication on disturbances on the RFCs between themselves and between national networks. Particular attention should be given by all involved parties to solving cross-border constraints by systematically setting up quality circles on the corridor and/or for specific sections.

3. Conclusions

The rail freight regulation has changed the services which infrastructure managers provide for international rail freight operators at almost every stage of the value chain. The Regulation has had a far reaching impact on the operational activities of the infrastructure managers, and has, at least to some degree, improved the business environment for rail operators.

The rail sector is fully committed to the general principles and aims of the Regulation, and recognises the strong need for improving infrastructure services for international rail freight. In some cases, however, it is a challenge to fulfil the provisions of the Regulation, while in other cases, the provisions do not fit well with the market needs, leaving too little room for improvements. A regulation should set goals and framework conditions, but not try to define specific solutions upfront.

The sector is currently in the process of developing market oriented solutions for aspects which need improvements. Such a process will require interactive learning and cooperation of infrastructure managers and rail operators.