

# ROTTERDAM DECLARATION OF MINISTERS ON RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDORS

## COMMON DECLARATION

of the Ministers of Transport

of Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland

In presence of the European Commission and Spanish EU presidency

In presence of the EU Coordinator for ERTMS, Mr. Karel Vinck

on the conference of Ministers regarding ‘Rail infrastructure for freight services: from corridors to network’

## CHAPTER A - General objectives

### **Introduction**

The development of rail freight corridors, with a view to improving the competitiveness of rail freight, is occupying an increasingly prominent place on the EU agenda. To start with, rail freight corridors were developed as multilateral initiatives by the countries involved. Their aim was to improve access and quality conditions for rail freight. These initiatives were followed by the development of ERTMS corridors, supported by Letters of Intent and included in the ERTMS deployment plan, which entered into force on 1 September 2009. The development of rail freight corridors is also reflected in the TEN-T guidelines and priority projects, which are currently under review for the 2013-2020 period.

Rail freight corridors are being developed in a context of economic crisis, in which several governments face budgetary constraint on their investment plans. This situation underlines for all parties concerned the need to coordinate investments to create seamless rail freight transport along international corridors, combined with a targeted approach for quality improvements.

In December 2008 the European Commission delivered regulation proposal for improving the competitiveness of rail freight. The Council of Ministers for Transport reached a common position on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010.

The proposed regulation provides for the implementation of corridors allowing freight trains to benefit from high quality routes, offering better services (in terms of punctuality and journey time) than at present. Additional capacities will have to be identified for rail freight, which has been growing in volume for several years now. The principal guidelines specified by the proposed regulation focus on:

- closer cooperation and harmonisation between infrastructure managers and member states both for the operational management of the infrastructures and for investments, in particular by putting in place a governance structure for each corridor;
- increased coordination between the network and terminals (maritime and inland ports and marshalling yards etc.);
- the reliability of the infrastructure capacities allocated to freight on these corridors.

### **The Ministers**

1. **recognise** the contribution of rail freight to Europe's socioeconomic development and to the environment (and in particular its potential contribution to combating climate change);
2. **stress** the high potential of the rail freight corridors to link more effectively the existing TEN-T priority projects and thus to contribute to the formation of a coherent TEN-T network;
3. **share** the ambition to work together to develop a network of rail freight corridors throughout Europe in order to achieve seamless transport by interoperability, the removal of bottlenecks, the harmonisation of operational rules, and capacity management;
4. **while pursuing that common goal, aim at optimal implementation** of all relevant EU policies (TEN-T, ERTMS, proposed EU regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight etc.);
5. **will** involve the business community in developing the rail freight corridors;
6. **stress** that the development of rail freight corridors should be properly funded although this declaration does not imply additional financing by the States unless expressly stated;
7. **consider** that this declaration is without prejudice to the competence of the Member States regarding planning and funding of rail infrastructure.

### **CHAPTER B - Common governance aspects for the EU rail freight corridors <1 / A-2, 2 / C-5, 8 / F-3>**

1. The European Union member states involved in this declaration welcome the first reading of the proposed EU regulation towards a European network for competitive freight and will adopt a common approach to its implementation once the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission have enacted the legislation. Within the process of the EU-Swiss dialogue on transport, Switzerland will consider adoption of the EU regulation by examining which provisions of its laws should be amended accordingly. Until such time, Switzerland will work as far as legally possible with the EU Member States concerned within the framework of this regulation, in advance of adoption.
2. The rail freight corridors nos. 1, 2 and 8, referred to in Annex I of the proposed regulation, overlap partly or completely other initiatives, such as the ERTMS corridors A, C and F, the RailNetEurope (RNE) corridors nos. C02, C05 and C03,

the Rotterdam-Lyon (Ro-Ly) railway link etc. The Member States, infrastructure managers and governance bodies involved in these initiatives will aim to harmonise approaches and rationalise governance in order to facilitate the functioning of the corridors.

3. Each of the proposed regulation's freight corridors will be provided with the governance structure and planning that matches its particular situation.
4. The proposed objective is to connect the regulation's individual freight corridors in terms of interoperability and capacity management, with governance primarily geared to each individual corridor.

### **CHAPTER C1 - Axis n° 1 / ERTMS corridor A / TEN-T Priority project n° 24 / RNE-2 (Zeebrugge - Antwerp/Rotterdam-Duisburg-[Basel]-Milan-Genova)**

Chapter C1 is only the responsibility of the Ministers of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

Given:

- TEN-T Priority Project no. 24: railway axis Lyon/Genoa-Basel-Duisburg-Rotterdam/Antwerp (Decision no 1692/96/EC);
- that the Ministers signed the Genoa declaration concerning the Rotterdam-Genoa corridor on 26 May 2009;
- that the Ministers signed the Letter Of Intent regarding the deployment of ERTMS on 3 March 2006;
- that the Rotterdam-Genoa executive board adopted its mission statement on 30 November 2006, identifying its objectives, roles and decision-making procedures on the basis of consensus;
- RNE corridor C02 - Rotterdam/Antwerp-Ruhr Area-Milan-Genoa;
- that an advisory board and terminal platform were to be set up by 2009;
- that a corridor noise study is finished in June 2010;
- that an ERTMS corridor authorisation group has been set up under the leadership of the corridor NSAs.

The Dutch, German, Swiss and Italian Ministers decide to:

1. continue to support the needed solid implementation of financial decisions regarding the implementation of ERTMS on the corridor per 2015 and after completion of the financial framework to request the Infrastructure Managers to make the ERTMS corridor implementation plan public;
2. adopt the annexed Annual report 2009 of the Rotterdam - Genoa Corridor;
3. amend the annexed corridor updated action plan Rotterdam - Genoa 2008- 2012 for the 2010 - 2014 period with strong focus on achieving tangible benefits for railway undertakings at short term combined with medium / long term development of infrastructure capacity and interoperability;

4. adopt the annexed framework for testing and authorising deployment of ERTMS on both infrastructure and rolling stock in the 2010-2015 period, led by the NSA authorisation group. Cooperation with ERA is crucial for its success;
5. request the Infrastructure Managers to continue to cooperate on procurement aspects of ERTMS with the objective of mitigating joint risks of ERTMS implementation;
6. endeavour to enable to run long trains at the corridor by providing at least 750 meters long tracks according to the UN ECE AGC recommended standard on train length. To achieve this it will be crucial that Infrastructure Managers shall come with an implementation plan, based on a corridor cost-benefit analysis also useful to define a possible common target date;
7. invite Belgium to participate as an observer, and as full member after the entry into force of the proposed regulation, in the executive board of corridor Rotterdam - Genoa and therefore ask the Infrastructure Managers, in cooperation with Infrabel, to propose to the executive board by the end of 2010 a plan for the extension of the corridor to Antwerp / Zeebrugge to be established via the Belgian - German border. The plan should include definition of routes, participation in corridor organisation structure and take into account the action plan 2010 - 2014 for the corridor.

The Belgian Minister accepts the invitation and endorses the above-mentioned decisions.

**CHAPTER C.2 - Axis n° 2 / ERTMS corridor C / Ro-Ly / TEN-T Priority project n° 28 / RNE-5**  
**(Rotterdam-Antwerpen-Luxemburg-Metz-Dijon-Lyon/[Base])**

Chapter C2 is only the responsibility of the Ministers of Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland and France.

Given

- Letter Of Intent ERTMS 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006;
- considering the RNE-5 initiative supporting the development of rail freight in the area Rotterdam - Antwerpen - Luxembourg - Metz - Dijon - Lyon and further to Spain and Italy, whereas ERTMS corridor C, in its present configuration, aims at supporting a similar development in the area Antwerpen - Luxembourg/Paris - Lyon/Basel;
- considering the objectives of the Rotterdam-Lyon rail freight corridor (Ro-Ly) on the improvement of quality and access conditions of the corridor based on the objectives as set by the memorandum of understanding between Ministers signed 10<sup>th</sup> December 2004 as well as the progress reports 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 ;

- TEN-T Priority Project no. 28, the Eurocap-Rail passenger rail axis on the Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg railway axis (Decision no 1692/96/EC), part of which can be used as an alternative route for corridor C;
- considering the decision of the French government in the framework of his national commitment for the rail freight of 16th September 2009 to promote the rail connection of his sea-ports;
- taking into consideration the Strategic Policy Paper of the Belgian Secretary of State for Mobility, in particular its part on the development of the rail freight corridors and their importance for the Belgian sea-ports.

The Belgian, Luxemburg, Swiss and French Ministers decide to:

1. reconfirm their commitment to deploying ERTMS on the corridor as planned in the European deployment plan (except for the branch to Lyon, where ERTMS will not be deployed until 2018);
2. adopt the annexed Annual Report 2009 of Corridor C;
3. take into consideration the annexed integrated corridor action plan including both ERTMS (2010-2018) / infrastructure development actions and quality improvement actions (2010-2013);
4. charge the executive board and the management board of Corridor C, composed of representatives of the Infrastructure Managers involved in the corridor, to take over the monitoring activities of the Ro-Ly initiative and cooperate with the national safety authorities and regulatory bodies;
5. endeavour to enable to run long trains at the corridor by providing at least 750 meters long tracks according to the UN ECE AGC recommended standard on train length by the target date of 2016;
6. invite the Netherlands to participate as an observer, and as full member after the entry into force of the proposed regulation, in the executive board of corridor Antwerp - Lyon / Basel and therefore ask the Infrastructure Managers, in cooperation with ProRail, to propose to the executive board by the end of 2010 a plan for the extension of the corridor to Rotterdam to be established via the Belgian - Netherlands border. The plan should include definition of routes, participation in corridor organisation structure and take into account the action plans ERTMS 2010-2018 and Q&I 2010 - 2013 for the corridor;
7. at the initiative of France a study will be launched to assess the connection between the ports of Dunkerque and Le Havre and the freight corridor mentioned in this chapter C.2. The study will include an analysis of the rail freight market and bottlenecks, an economic assessment, a proposal of extension of the route of the corridor including a cooperation proposal with RNE about this new alternative route in the framework of the RNE-5 corridor. On this basis, France will make a proposal for an extension of ERTMS corridor C to its executive board. Once this extension has been adopted by the executive board, it will be submitted as an extension of the corridor mentioned in the proposed

regulation, using the decision making procedure of this legislative act once it is adopted.

The Dutch Minister accepts the invitation and endorses the above-mentioned decisions.

**CHAPTER C.3 – Axis n° 8 / ERTMS corridor F / RNE-3  
Bremerhaven/Rotterdam/Antwerp - Aachen/Berlin - Warsaw - Terespol (Poland-  
Belarus border)/Kaunas**

Chapter C3 is only the responsibility of the Ministers of Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania.

Given :

- that the LOI on ERTMS corridor F Aachen-(Ruhr area)-Warsaw-Terespol was signed on 5 November 2007;
- the initiative of RNE-3 corridor Rotterdam/ Antwerp – Duisburg – [Ruhr Area] – Berlin – Warszawa which aims at the development of a very similar link as under the initiative of corridor F what could lead to integration of both initiatives into one integrated corridor organisation reinforcing the effectiveness of both initiatives ;
- the invitation by Belgium in 2008 addressed to Germany, The Netherlands and Poland to consider together the extension of corridor F to Antwerp and Zeebrugge;
- the 2008 initiative of the Dutch and Czech governments to set up an action plan for a rail freight corridor focusing on short-term measures;
- that following the decision of the Netherlands and Poland of 6 November 2008 to study the potential of a rail freight corridor between their countries and the fact that an NL PL action plan was set up in April 2010;
- the Belgian initiative launched in April 2010, to perform a similar study on the potential of rail freight corridors between Belgium and Poland and Belgium and the Czech Republic;
- the bilateral agreement between Germany and Poland on border crossings due to be signed in the course of 2010;
- the 2007 bilateral agreement between Lithuania and Poland on identification of rail border crossing points, as well as projects under implementation in Lithuania and Poland on the Warsaw-Kaunas rail section of Rail Baltica;
- that all these initiatives aim to facilitate East-West rail freight flows throughout Europe, have considerable market potential, given the integration of the European economy, and will benefit from mutual cooperation;
- that the preparatory work covers those parts of European corridors reflected in the proposed regulation.

The Polish, Lithuanian, German, Dutch and Belgian Ministers decide to:

1. take stock of current initiatives and build upon them;
2. set up a Ministerial working group with the participation of Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland with the aim of developing East-West and West-East rail freight flows on their territories;
3. present progress achieved in the aforementioned Ministerial working group;
4. invite the Czech Republic and France as an observer in this Ministerial working group;
5. concentrate on measures with tangible benefits for railway undertakings at short term without substantial infrastructure investments;
6. continue to work on ERTMS corridor F Aachen - Warsaw as well as on the reconstruction of the section Warsaw - Kaunas (Lithuania/Poland) and present progress in the aforementioned working group;
7. establish required operational standards on the section Warsaw - Kaunas within the reconstruction of the Rail Baltica;
8. request the Infrastructure Managers involved to report to the Ministers on the progress achieved by 2011, to evaluate cooperation regarding the freight corridor(s) to be developed, including specification of its/their main route / governance structure / work plan;
9. at the initiative of France a study will be launched to assess the connection between the ports of Dunkerque and Le Havre and the freight corridor mentioned in this chapter C.3. The study will include an analysis of the rail freight market and bottlenecks, an economic assessment, a proposal of extension of the route of the corridor including a cooperation proposal with RNE about this new alternative route in the framework of the RNE-3 corridor.

The Minister of the Czech Republic and France accept the invitation and support the above-mentioned decisions.

**Drafted in Rotterdam, 14 June 2010**

Belgium

Johan Decuyper, for Mr Etienne Schouppe, Staatssecretaris voor Mobiliteit

Czech Republic

Gustáv Slamečka, Ministr dopravy

France

Pour le Secrétaire d'Etat chargé des transports, M. Daniel Bursaux, Directeur général des infrastructures, des transports et de la mer, Ministère de l'Ecologie, de l'Energie, du Développement durable et de la Mer en charge des Technologies vertes et des Négociations sur le Climat

Federal Republic of Germany

Michael Harting, Abteilungsleiter Landverkehr, Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung

Republic of Italy

Sen. Roberto Castelli, Viceministro delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti



Republic of Lithuania  
Arūnas Štaras, Susisiekimo viceministras

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg  
Claude Wiseler, Ministre du Développement durable et des Infrastructures

Netherlands  
Camiel Eurlings, Minister van Verkeer en Waterstaat

Poland  
Cezary Grabarczyk, Minister Infrastruktury

Switzerland  
Bundesrat Moritz Leuenberger, Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departementes für  
Umwelt, Verkehr, Energie und Kommunikation

**In presence of :**

European Commission  
Siim Kallas, Vice-president

Spain  
José Luis Cachafeiro Vila, Secretario General de Transportes, Ministerio de Fomento

EU Coordinator for ERTMS  
Karel Vinck

**Annexes:**

**Axis n° 1 / ERTMS corridor A / TEN-T Priority project n° 24 / RNE-2  
(Zeebrugge - Antwerp/Rotterdam-Duisburg-[*Basel*]-Milan-Genova)**

1. Annual report corridor A Rotterdam – Genoa 2009
2. Updated action plan corridor Rotterdam – Genoa 2006 - 2010 – 2014
3. Framework for ERTMS testing and authorization plan ERTMS corridor Rotterdam – Genoa

**Axis n° 2 / ERTMS corridor C / Ro-Ly / TEN-T Priority project n° 28 / RNE-5  
(Rotterdam-Antwerpen-Luxemburg-Metz-Dijon-Lyon/[*Basel*])**

1. Corridor's C Annual Report 2009
2. Integrated corridor action plan including both ERTMS (2010-2018) / infrastructure development actions and quality improvement actions (2010-2013)
3. Biannual report project Rotterdam – Lyon 2007 / 2008 and 2005/2006

**Axis n° 8 / ERTMS corridor F / RNE-3  
Bremerhaven/Rotterdam/Antwerp - Aachen/Berlin - Warsaw - Terespol  
(Poland-Belarus border)/Kaunas**

1. Study rail freight corridor NL – PL commissioned by the Dutch and Polish Transport Ministries, including action plan, March 2010