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RFC7

Orient/East-Med

YEARLY ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018

Co-financed by the European Union
Connecting Europe Facility

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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN

2018 was the year of an important milestone in the continuous development of our corridor!

DB Netz AG joined the European rail freight corridor RFC Orient/East-Med (RFC OEM) from June 2018. On the basis of the EU Regulation 1316/2013 ("CEF-Regulation") and in particular its Annex II according to which the amendments of the principal route of RFC OEM has to be carried out which means the extension to Germany Bremerhaven/Wilhelmshaven/Rostock/Hamburg and further extensions in the South Eastern parts of the corridor Burgas/Svilengrad concerning the Bulgarian and until Patras concerning the Greek part of the RFC OEM.

The extension with the three new branches such as Bremen, Bremerhaven and Wilhelmshaven and the connection to Rostock and Hamburg within Germany makes RFC OEM a notably outspread corridor from the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea to the North and Baltic Seas in the future. As a result of this extension, RFC OEM will connect eight countries now, namely Germany, Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece with each other.

For the timetable year 2019, RFC OEM will offer coordinated paths for the German routes within the frames of the reserve capacities. One year later the pre-arranged paths (PAPs) will also be available. The Corridor One-Stop Shop is at entirely disposal for the new capacity requests!

2018 was also breakthrough for the activities of the RFC OEM Task Forces launched for reducing the waiting time at border crossing points. Thanks to the very complex and detailed analysis of the dwelling time at all particular border crossings and the common activity of all concerned stakeholders involved into the Task Forces 10 working plans were set up in 2018. The common driving force of each work plan was the general conclusion made by the RFC OEM Train Performance Management coordination that the waiting time at border crossings contains two main parts: the necessary process time and the unnecessary waiting time.

Work plans identified many necessary actions appointing responsible person and deadlines for these actions which are needed to eliminate the unnecessary high waiting time at the border stations. The different work plans with their individual approach could also serve as "best advisable practise" for the other border crossings in other RFC-s.

8 different RFC OEM countries, 8 different levels of infrastructure development set up a basis for a constructive cooperation along the corridor, where the customer-oriented attitude is the most important key element of our progress. Thanks to the Programme Support Action (PSA) the EU financial support lasting until 2020 will enable to broaden activities to improve both the international and external services of the RFC OEM, focusing on the harmonisation of provisions and measurements among infrastructure managers, allocation body and concerned ministries to allow more reliable and smother run on the corridor.

Lőrinc Czakó
Chairman of RFC OEM Management Board

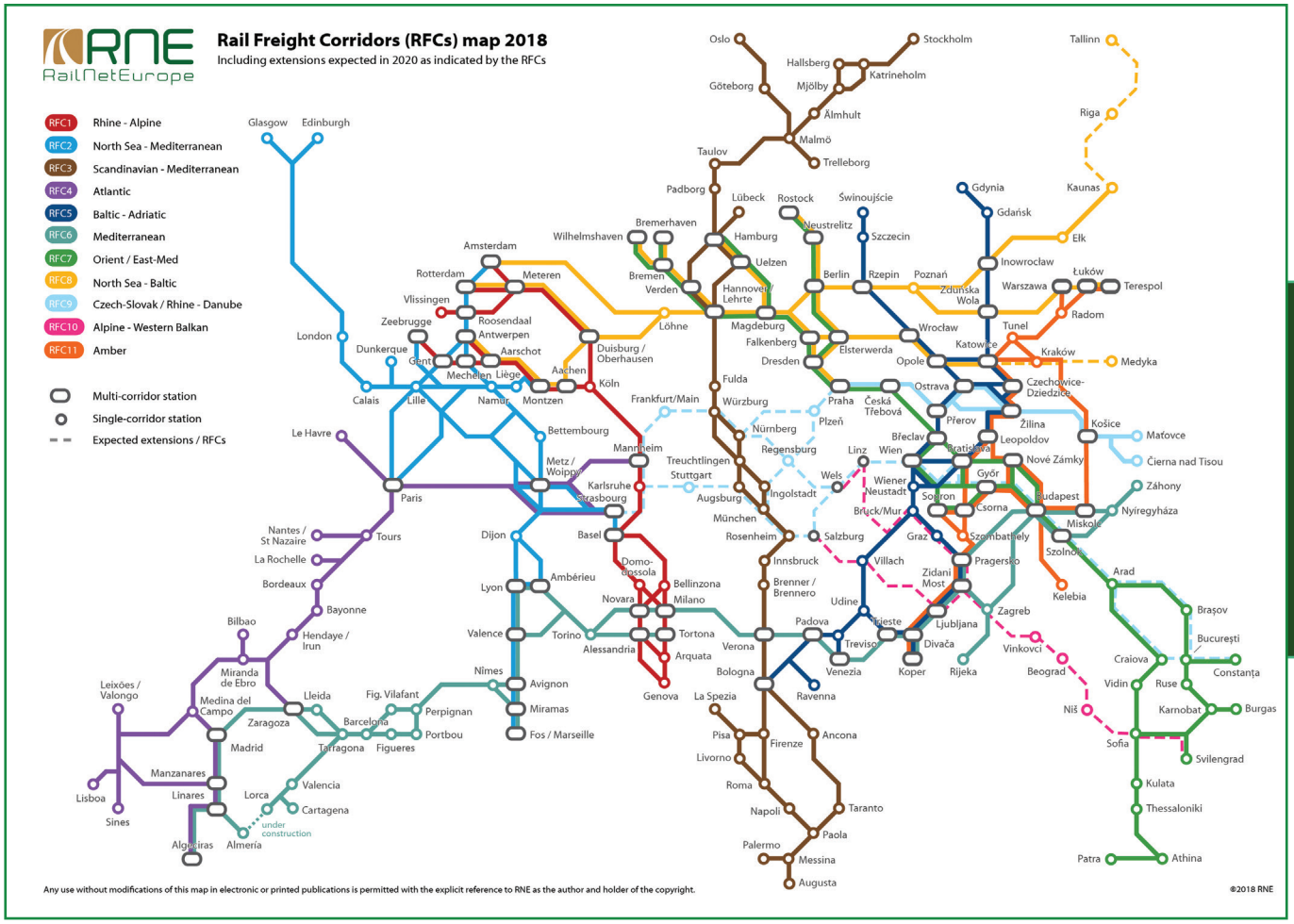
THE DRIVING FORCE IN OUR MISSION

Regulation 913/2010 EU concerning a European network for competitive freight entered into force on 9 November 2010. It was elaborated for the purpose of making international rail freight more attractive and improve the efficiency of the system thus contribute to the modal shift from road to rail as well on the long term. With the objective of improving the conditions for international rail freight Regulation 913/2010 EU (hereinafter referred as "Regulation") aims to reinforce cooperation at all levels along selected rail freight corridors (RFCs).

The long term vision with the RFC-concept is the creation and setup of international market-oriented rail freight corridors, with a view to strengthen cooperation between rail infrastructure managers as regards both investments and the management of capacity and traffic. The appropriate treatment of international freight trains shall also be achieved in terms of capacity allocation on lines designated to the corridor that also cater passenger trains.

Last but not least, a very important aspect is to support and allow the development of multimodality, in particular with the concerned ports. In case all the measures of the Regulation are going to be tackled and exploited on the right way, implicitly with further regulatory provisions arm-in-arm, the increase of the competitiveness of rail transport vis-á-vis other transport modes will be significant.

All the parties involved into the operation of RFC Orient/East-Med make utmost effort to achieve the targets of the RFC-concept, serve the demands of the market in its best way possible therefore try to contribute to the long term vision of the creation of a Single European Rail Area.



Picture 1. RFCs map made by RNE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Who are we?

Rail Freight Corridor Orient/East-Med (hereinafter referred to as "RFC OEM") according to the Regulation links Central-Europe with the Eastern- and South-Eastern parts of Europe running until the Greek port of Piraeus. The requirements deriving from the Regulation RFC OEM have called the most Member States for an international cooperation, namely: Germany, Czechia, Austria, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

Regulation 913/2010/EU was amended by adaption of Regulation 1316/2013/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility. In accordance with Annex II of Regulation 1316/2013/EU an extension to Germany, to Wilhelmshaven/Bremerhaven/Hamburg/Rostock was carried out by 2018. After 4 years of preparation the extension came into force in June 2018. We are pleased to welcome our new cooperating partner Germany, and it's Infrastructure Manager, DB Netz AG!

As a result of this extension, RFC OEM will connect eight countries, namely Germany, Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece with each other, between the main cities as Wilhelmshaven/Bremerhaven/Hamburg/Rostock–Dresden–Praha–Vienna/Bratislava–Budapest–Vidin–Sofia–Thessaloniki–Athens–Patras as well as Budapest–Bucharest–Constanta and Sofia–Plovdiv–Svilengrad, reaching the centre of the continent with several sea connections.

The current length of the corridor is approximately 9050 km. However, the length of the corridor route sections are very different among the involved countries, Austria has the shortest one with about 300 km (approx. 3% of the whole corridor) and Romania has the longest part, about 2200 km corridor line (approx. 24% of the total length).

RFC OEM follows mostly the path of ERTMS Corridor E which runs from Dresden to Constanta (common line from Praha to Constanta). The deployment of ERTMS contributes to remedy the lack of technical compatibility, a major obstacle for the development of international rail traffic.

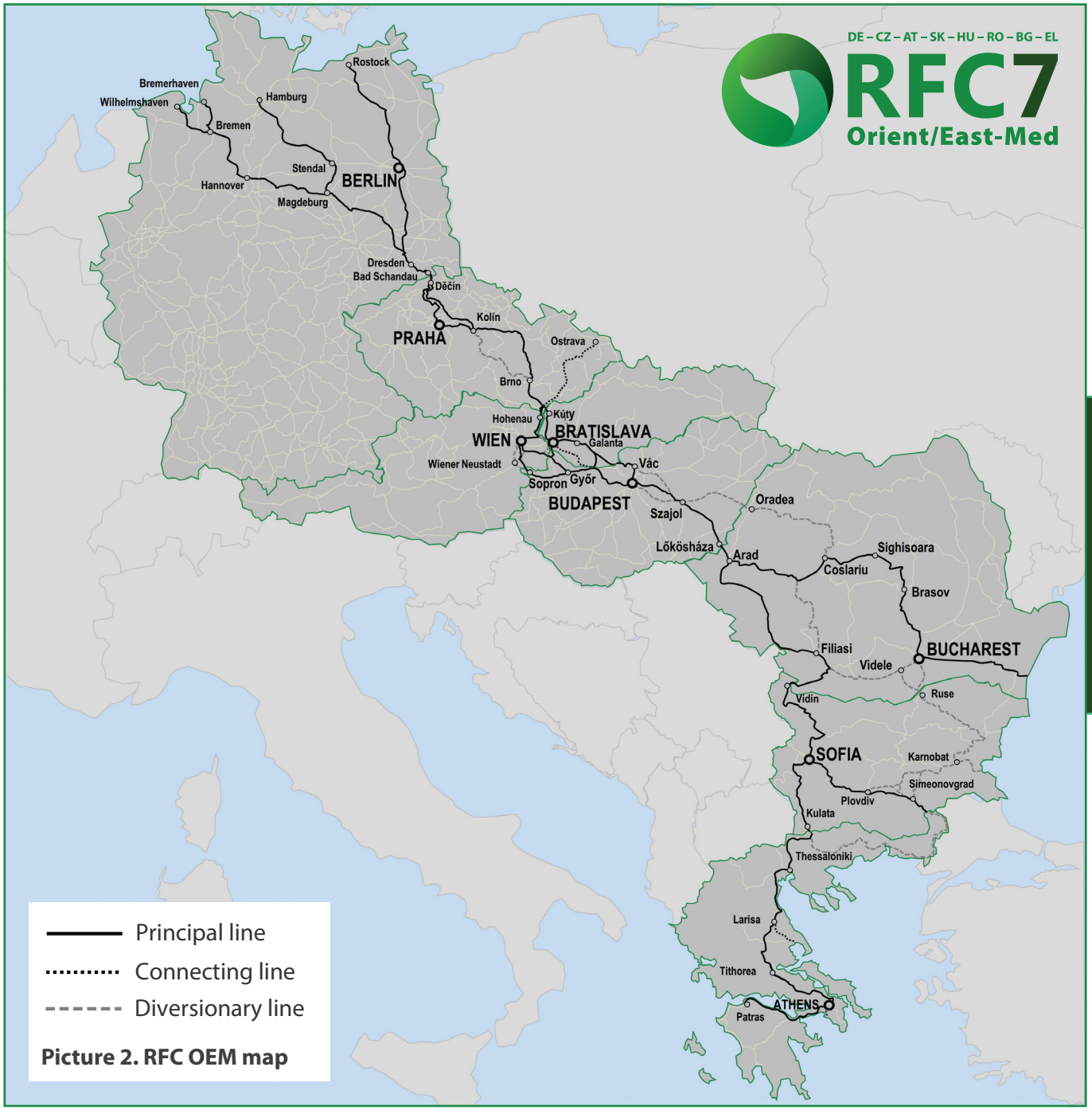
The designation of RFC OEM was also identified on the basis of previously defined European corridor concepts, such as:

- the TEN-T priority axis 22, which runs from Nürnberg and Dresden to Constanta and Athens (common line from Praha to Constanta and Athens),
- RNE corridor 10, which ran from Hamburg to Budapest (common line from Praha to Budapest) and RNE corridor 9, which ran from Vienna to Kulata and Constanta as well as to Varna, Burgas and Svilengrad (common line from Vienna to Constanta and to Kulata).

Orient/East-Med Corridor has connections with the following other RFCs:

- in Břeclav and in Ústí nad Orlicí with **RFC North Sea-Baltic** and in the cities Praha and Česká Třebová with **RFC Czech-Slovak**
- in Bratislava/Vienna with **RFC Baltic-Adriatic**
- in Budapest with **RFC Mediterranean**
- on Sopron–Győr–Komárom–Nové Zámky / Budapest and Hegyeshalom–Rajka–Bratislava–Nové Zámky; Budapest–Szob–Štúrovo–Nové Zámky railway lines with **RFC Amber**

On the overlapping sections RFC OEM has established a well-functioning collaborative model with the involved RFCs. Description of these procedures (e.g. providing data and information) should be found in the corridor document "C-OSS Operational Rules", as Annex 7. to Book 5.



Picture 2. RFC OEM map

RFC OEM is one of the most important transport arteries connecting the centre of Europe with South-East part of the Union with the maritime interfaces of the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean seas. These strategic transit routes also allow building up connection towards Turkey, with an important boosting economic area from where more and more traffic flow can reach the RFC network.

1.2 Special characteristics of RFC OEM

With the extension in 2018 eight different Member States, eight different levels of infrastructure development set up a basis for a constructive cooperation along the corridor, where the customer-oriented approach is the most important driving force of the progress. Therefore the operative governance of RFC OEM has utmost importance to harmonise provisions and requirements of rail freight related services. The RFC OEM management believes that there are big potentials for the development of rail freight business on the long term and the corridor could be also a strategic connecting opportunity toward East.

The fact that six of the involved Member States are beneficiaries of EU Cohesion Funds also indicates that RFC OEM differs in its features and infrastructural characteristics from the other RFCs which run more Central and Western parts of Europe where rather the operational measures remain still problematic. At the same time the access to different EU financial support also can be seen in a positive light, enabling the Member States and Infrastructure Managers concerned the possibility to use European funds to modernize the railway infrastructure and adapt it to the needs of today's and tomorrow's freight market.

Picture 3. A DB-Netz performance for celebrating the accession

2. RFC OEM CORRIDOR GOVERNANCE

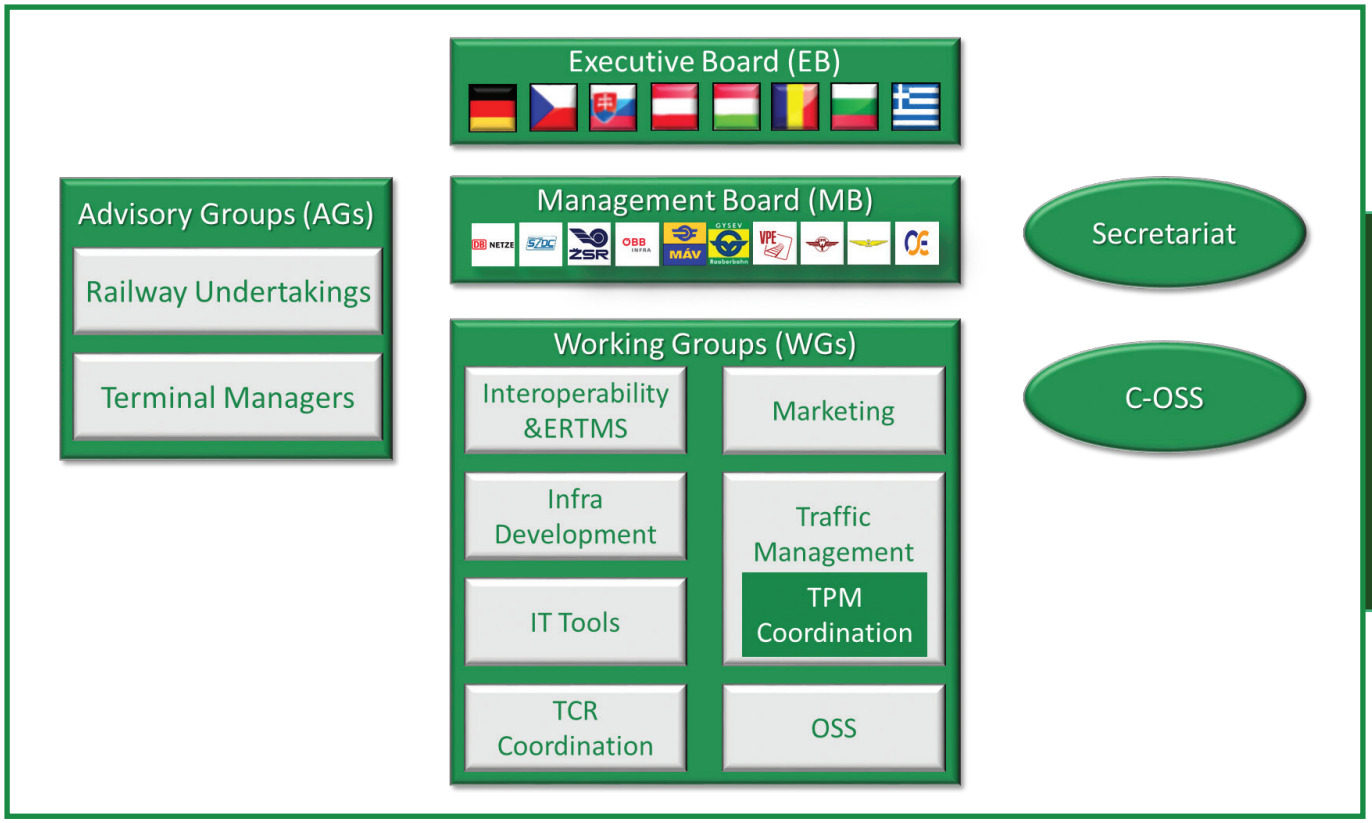
Rail Freight Corridor Orient/East-Med is established by cooperation of the transport ministries, infrastructure manager companies and one allocation body of eight countries.

The setup of RFC OEM organizational units is illustrated in a schematic picture on page 9:

One of our core businesses to operate the rail freight corridor is the coordination of traffic management. Harmonisation and coordination of different national rules and procedures along the corridor is one of our biggest duties in our everyday life. To find solutions which are acceptable for every involved infrastructure managers is important task for facilitating the smooth corridor operation among the dispatchers on cross-borders and after through the whole inland traffic management.

2.1 Executive Board

Thanks to the Germany's accession to RFC OEM the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Executive Board (EB) and containing the implementing measures of RFC OEM was amended and was signed on 5 December 2017 in Brussels. The Executive Board is the body responsible for supervision of corridor activity and for defining the general objectives and the framework for capacity-allocation along the corridor. The Executive Board is addressed in case of issues beyond the competence



of Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Bodies or when a conflict of interest arises between them. The Executive Board meet 2 times per year and regularly monitors the achieved results on the corridor by the comprehensive report made by the Chair of the Management Board.

2.2 Management Board

The Corridor organisation is based on a cooperation agreement between the IMs and (where applicable) ABs along the Corridor.

The Management Board acts in the form of cooperation, apart from the Memorandum of Understanding which set up officially this body, the rules of cooperation are laid down in the document called Internal Rules of Procedure.

The tasks of the Management Board are coordinated by a Secretariat, carried out by the Hungarian member MÁV.

The Management Board (MB) is the main operative body of the corridor, its members have to make fundamental decisions, and so they hold meetings more frequently. The Management Board makes its decisions on the basis of mutual consent of its members.

There were 4 meetings in 2018 in different host countries based on the rotation principle. Sharing duties and learning best practices of related IMs is a very good accelerating force in the international cooperation. Meetings were held in Budapest, Sopron and Vienna. The operative management tackled with several important issues to strengthen inter alia, as follows:

- the execution of the activities defined in the Programme Support Action (PSA)
- the train performance management – to reach the goal of "2-hour waiting time" at cross border points
- the OSS and C-OSS activities,
- the International Contingency Management Planning
- the consultative dialogue with members of the Advisory Groups
- the active participation in handling of the Issues Logbook priorities

RFC OEM member companies

- **DB-Netz AG –** *IM, Germany*
- **ÖBB-Infrastructure** – ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG – *IM, Austria*
- **SŽDC** – Railway Infrastructure Administration, State organisation (Správa zeleznicní dopravní cesty, státní organizace) – *IM, Czechia*
- **ŽSR** – Railways of the Slovak Republic (Zeleznice Slovenskej republiky) – *IM, Slovak Republic*
- **MÁV** – Hungarian State Railways Company Limited by Shares (MÁV Magyar Álllamvasutak Zrt.) – *IM, Hungary*
- **GYSEV** – Raab–Oedenburg–Ebenfurter Eisenbahn AG (Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt.) – *IM, Hungary & Austria*
- **VPE** – Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office (Vasúti Pályakapacitás-elosztó Kft.) – *AB, Hungary*
- **CFR** – National Infrastructure Manager of Romania (Compania Nationala de Cai Ferate) – *IM, Romania*
- **NRIC** – National Railway Infrastructure Company, State Enterprise (НКЖИ (Национална компания железопътна инфраструктура) – *IM, Bulgaria*
- **OSE** – Hellenic Railways (Οργανισμός Σιδηροδρόμων Ελλάδος) – *IM, Greece*

Programme Support Action (PSA)

RFC OEM successfully applied for EU financial support, for the Programme Support Action launched by DG-Move on 21 July 2017. The PSA grant is making support available for the secretarial, managerial and communication activities of the rail freight corridors as well as all the other RFC activities compliant with the Regulation (EU) No 913/20103, to the Member States acting in their capacity as members of the Executive Board (ExBo), and to Railway infrastructure managers and/or allocation bodies acting in their capacity as members of the Management Board (MaBo).

This is the first time when RFC OEM has been able to access EU grant which enables to broaden the activities to improve both the internal and external services of the RFC OEM. In our believe this positive financial support will strengthen the cooperation between the infrastructure managers, allocation bodies and the concerned ministries. It should also establish tangible improvements for the customers, partly in a direct and partly in an indirect way. The action comprises four activities:

1. *Removing barriers*: measures under this activity attempt to reduce the effects of the fragmented nature of the rail systems. Measures are focusing on the following fields:
   - operational rules,
   - language,
   - traffic management.
2. *IT tools:* this activity comprises all IT-related developments; hence, it possesses a great variety of effects. They involve:
   - improving the quality of providing information for the customers,
   - reducing the administrative burden for both the customers and the service providers,
   - helping to optimise the internal procedures of an infrastructure manager.

3. *Operational costs:* measures under this activity will saf eguard a high level of cooperation and commitment among the applicants towards the objectives of the OEM RFC by eliminating the financial hindrances.
4. *Building connections:* the RFC OEM intends to enhance its relations with both the other RFCs (contributing to the creation of a network of RFCs) and the customers directly (through marketing and communication measures).

In 2018 one of the main focuses was to launch the English language courses in the concerned beneficiaries. However, this activity is carried out individually at each IM, the execution of the task has a common value and interest for the RFC OEM.

We have reached an important milestone as well in the project of rolling out CIP including

RFC OEM data in 2018. Moreover, this milestone was reached more than three weeks ahead of its deadline, which was by the end of December 2018. After collecting and uploading all the data and the subsequent implementation by RailNetEurope's (RNE) service provider, RFC OEM information on the CIP website went online on 4 December 2018.

This new IT tool – as a joint cross-corridor information platform already covering the network of 8 Rail Freight Corridors – was presented at the Rail Freight Day organised commonly by DG-Move and RNE on 6 December 2018 in Vienna.

Thanks to the PSA financial support RFC OEM could further strengthen its role and relations in the RFC-Network community, actively participating at TEN-T Days organised in Ljubljana and at the Rail Freight Day.

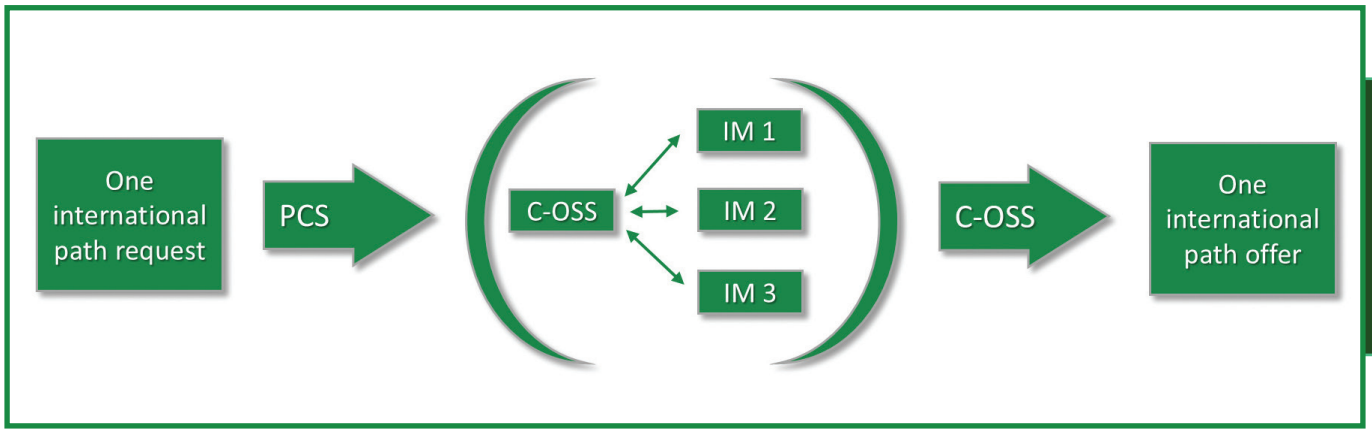
2.3 The Secretariat

The Management Board of RFC OEM decided to establish a representative governance model, i.e. to operate a Secretariat, which provides the appropriate administrative support to enable the MB to carry out its work, ensures that the tasks of the MB are properly co-ordinated, and organises all other associated aspects of corridor activity. The Secretariat is located in Budapest. Responsibilities of the Secretariat are listed in the Internal Rules and Procedures and in the Secretariat Agreement.

With the extension of DB-Netz the contractual framework was also updated among the members, the MoU, the Secretariat Agreement and the Internal Rules of Procedure were adapted to the new structure of the corridor.

2.4 Corridor One-Stop Shop (C-OSS)

Regulation 913/2010 has introduced a new "player" to the rail freight business. As a unique contact and coordination point the Corridor One-Stop Shop – hereinafter: C-OSS – simplifies and standardises the process of international capacity planning,



application and allocation using the common European IT tool Path Coordination System (PCS) developed by RailNetEurope. All available path products of the corridor are registered in PCS and can be easily booked via this system. C-OSS will manage the request through the whole phase providing maximum "care" as a single service provider acting as one IM on behalf of all involved IMs.

In 2018 **Mr. József Ádám Balogh** continued to act as RFC 7 C-OSS Manager employed by the Hungarian Allocation Body (VPE).

C-OSS Manager participates in several international meetings – such as: Forum Train Europe (FTE) conferences, PCS trainings, working group meetings, Advisory Groups meetings (for Railway undertakings (RAG) and for representatives of the Terminals (TAG)) and other common or individual customer meetings – in order to facilitate the communication between the stakeholders ensuring customer-oriented services.

The C-OSS Community

Taking into account the experiences from the first year of operation the cooperation with other corridors had become necessary. As a permanent working group set up by Management Boards of Rail Freight Corridors the Corridor OSS Community constitutes a platform for exchange of best practices among its members, coordination of their opinions and act as a permanent interface of Corridor One Stop Shops towards RailNetEurope and its bodies.
The main mission of the Community is to support individual Corridor One Stop Shops of Rail Freight Corridors in fulfilment of their tasks by finding common understanding and methods for the benefit of all.
Two main topics are considered by the C-OSS Community:

1. Topics related to C-OSS functioning on its own.
2. Topics related to improvements of process regarding the functioning of the RFCs having consequences over the whole RNE members, customers and bodies.

In 2018 the Community had four meetings on different locations, dealing with the following main topics:

- FCA Revision
- Redesign of International Timetable Process – TTR
- Future of C-OSS
- Further developing the harmonized procedure to collect international capacity needs
- Common Capacity KPIs
- Setting up internal rules for C-OSS timetable during pre-booking phase
- Capacity management on overlapping sections of RFCs
- Providing inputs for the different RNE Working Groups and Task Forces
- Further improvements of RFC functions in PCS

RFC-PCS Training

The first RFC-PCS Training was organised in 2016 with the co-operation of RNE and C-OSS managers and the main reason was the introduction of PCS Next Generation. After this first successful training we realised that this should not be a one-time occasion, since most of the RUs/IMs are not using PCS on a regular, daily basis, only in few times in a year: usually for annual requests. So even though users thinks themselves as PCS experts, they can forget easily, simply because they only use the system a few times per year. Thus the C-OSS Community realized that having these regular training is very useful to maintain and expand the PCS knowledge, and also to provide support for the rookies. Another important aspect, which makes these trainings unique is that participants can work with RFC-specific cases.
During these trainings the Customers receive not only best practice and support, but also first-hand information on the annual PaP offer: routes, characteristics, parameters, terms and conditions and all the important information.

Our third training, organized together with RFC Baltic-Adriatic and Czech-Slovak in close co-operation with RNE, was held on 28th February and 1st March 2018 in Budapest. The training consisted of:

- A short plenary session, held by RNE PCS Managers and all three RFCs together, during which general information and new features of the system were presented.
- Group sessions moderated separately by each RFC, during which the Customers of each RFC worked with the system by using real or test cases.

As we received very positive feedback from the market, our aim is to continue organizing this event in the future.

2.5 Working Groups

The MB identified the basic structure of activities, and systematically divided the tasks to the most competent expert groups in the particular fields. As a result, six Working Groups have been established, each composing of experts from every MB member company, to deliver the required measures.

Each Working Group's work is co-ordinated by a Head of WG designated by the Management Board therewith possibly each infrastructure manager can direct one WG. The head of WG is responsible for the organization and co-ordination of the work in the respective WG according to the decisions and expectations of the MB and according to the aims and rules set out in the Regulation.

Every WG keeps a record of the activities, documents, consultations and decisions made by the WG. Heads of WGs inform the MB about the activity of the WG via the Secretariat for every MB meeting, or take part in the MB meeting upon request of the MB.

The following Working Groups operate:

1. Marketing WG (leadership by GYSEV)
2. Traffic Management WG and Train Performance Management (leadership by MÁV)
3. Temporary Capacity Restrictions WG (leadership by SŽDC)
4. One-Stop Shop WG (leadership by VPE)
5. Infrastructure Development WG (leadership by SŽDC)
6. Interoperability and ERTMS WG (leadership by ÖBB-Infra)
7. IT Tools WG (leadership by CFR S.A.)

The tasks of each WG are included in the Internal Rules and Procedures, and they are also governed by the necessity arising in the process of corridor work. Though the topics of WGs overlap, their main fields of competence are summarized in the below table:

Marketing WG	Transport Market Study, Satisfaction Survey, performance objectives and monitoring, definition of Pre-arranged Paths and reserve capacity, Non-RU Applicants.
Traffic Management WG	Harmonisation of traffic management in case of disturbance, working out solutions and procedures for improving the punctuality and reducing the waiting times during the train run. Effective communication between TCCs. In the framework of TPM Coordination working together with the concerned RUs in order to increase the train performance of RFC OEM.
One-Stop Shop WG	C-OSS operation rules, Corridor Information Document, definition of Pre-arranged Paths and reserve capacity, coordination of capacity-allocation btw C-OSS & IMs & Terminals & Applicants.
Infrastructure Development WG	Investment Plan, inventory of projects and financial resources, harmonization of investments along the corridor.
Interoperability and ERTMS WG	Accelerating the establishment of better interoperability along the corridor and enhancing ERTMS deployment, ensure consistency with ERTMS E corridor.
IT Tools WG	Identification of necessary IT tools, facilitating their introduction by every involved IM and AB.
TCR WG	Coordination of planned temporary capacity restrictions along the corridor.

2.6 The Railway Undertaking Advisory Group (RAG) and the Terminal Advisory Group (TAG)

The Advisory Groups were created as a platform for railway undertakings (Railway Advisory Group – RAG); managers and owners of terminals (Terminal Advisory Group – TAG) to facilitate the exchange of information, to have a consultation in a various matters of the corridor operation, to find recommendations and solutions for mutual benefit of all partners.

Since October 2012, the MB has consulted AG members at AG's meetings and in e-mail circular letters regularly. According to the Regulation AGs' opinions were always asked and were taken into consideration.

During the meeting the participants identified further proposals concerning the needs of the infrastructure developments (e.g. TEN-T parameters) have been also shared with the CNC coordinator and his team who have influence to monitor these activities in the Member States.

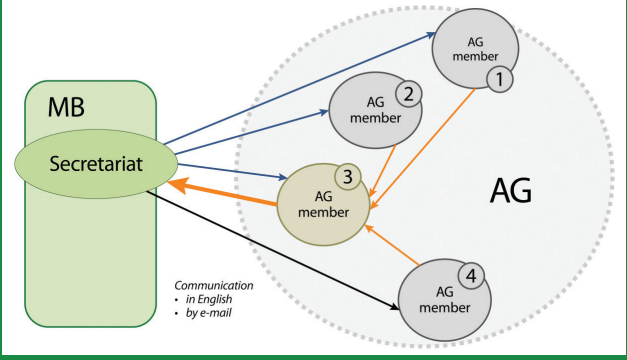
Thanks to the good cooperation with the RUs the offered RFC OEM capacities are mainly based on business partners' feedbacks and needs as much as possible which shows that RFC OEM is always open to new requests and flexible solutions.

The C-OSS manager pointed out in his presentation as summary of the annual PaP request for TT 2019 that taking into consideration the upcoming major capacity restrictions, there is a strong need to focus on the management of our international freight traffic in order to avoid the „domino effect" as much as possible.

Also an essential element of the Advisory Groups' meetings is to provide concrete examples from the operators' perspective, considering the impact of global supply chains to the corridor and to the sector as a whole. A very comprehensive introduction was presented, which highlighted the contribution of Piraeus Port as a Gateway to Europe in RFC OEM by attracting new volumes of cargo coming mostly from Far East with destination the Central Europe consumption area. As the traffic volume of the Pireaus port is growing

Our working model – Communication flow

As principally Secretariat acts as a single channel of communication between MB and AGs, it spreads material for consultation to every company registered as AG member, and receives feedback from the Spokespersons of the two AG only, which contains the opinion of all AG members:



Even the year of 2018 has shown the importance of the cooperation between the stakeholders within the Advisory Groups which were further strengthened. Beside the permanent agenda items like the C-OSS, traffic management and other operational issues, the main focus is nothing but the dialogue with our business partners, as their feedback is always crucial towards the development of the services of our corridor. Essential feedbacks were provided by the business partners on the **Advisory Groups' meeting which was held on 13 June 2018 in Praha.**

every year, these developments might boost the rail freight on the corridor in both directions. AG partners were also asked to take part in the Yearly Customer Satisfaction Survey as their contribution is vital for the development of the corridor.

Concerning the Issues Logbook, which was initiated by the European Commission, representatives of the AG-RU group were invited for the cooperation to figure out a possible working method together with ERA to start to lift up unnecessary national rules or measurements at cross border points concerning the technical wagon check and mandatory checks in the Member States.

The meeting was accompanied with a site visit, which gave an insight into the operational equipment of the rock mine Lomy Mořina. The members were carried by a special train to show the importance of this mode of transport at this facility. These occasions allow understanding and learning more about each other's activities in the international freight transport chain and with the synergies the RFC OEM potential can be increased in the future.

Thanks to the accession of Germany to RFC OEM with the kind contribution of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure and DB Netz the 2nd AG's meeting was organised jointly with RFC OEM ExBo members first time in Germany in November 2018.

On the basis of the previous request proposed by the representatives of RUs a regular update of the recent infrastructure developments shall be provided once a year. This time three presentations were conducted about the recent reconstructions and modernisation of RFC OEM corridor lines.

On behalf of the Czech Ministry of Transport, Mr Jan Spousta gave an overview about the Czech railway network and its performance. Four RFCs cross Czechia, therefore, it can be noted that international freight transportation plays an important role on their network. They make huge efforts to increase the network's interoperability e.g. GSM-R is in operation on all RFC OEM lines and the ETCS L2 installation is ongoing, as well. Another important aspect for the RUs is the loading gauge which is on level D4 on almost each RFC OEM section. Several investments are foreseen on the RFC OEM lines, such as rehabilitation of Pardubice station (renovation of tracks), building of a new tunnel on the Choceň – Ústí n.O. section in 2025.

The representative of the National Railway Infrastructure Company, Mr Nikola Mishev provided a detailed overview on the ongoing

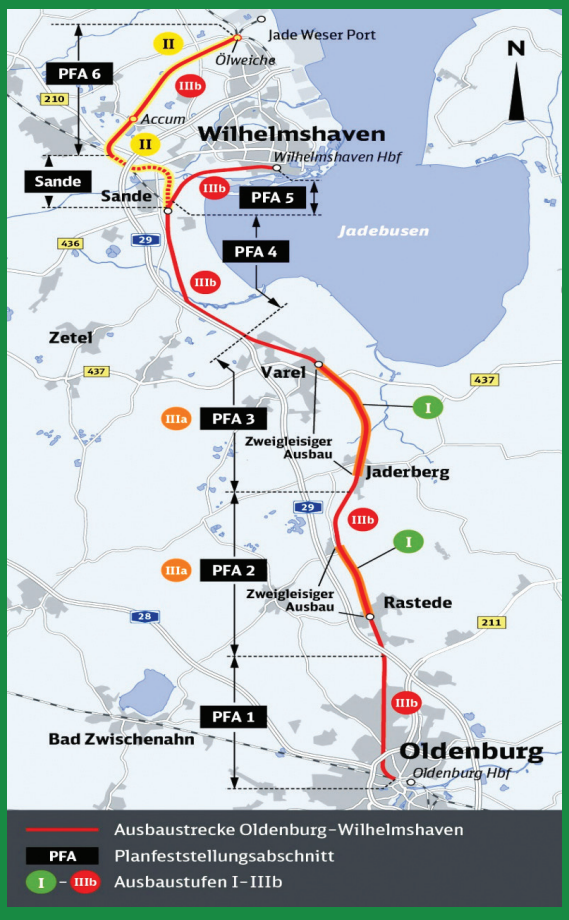
Picture 4. Advisory groups' members visit rock mine Lomy Mořina in a safe mode

and planned developments on the Bulgarian rail network. Taking into account that the majority of corridor trains run through Bulgaria, the development of the infrastructure is essential for RFC OEM. Regular update will be provided to C-OSS and to business partners well in advance about the expected capacity restrictions.

Ms Anke Möller (Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure) presented some important facts about the German rail network. The financing resources are ensured, as around 40% of federal budget traffic funds available for railway infrastructure, which is much higher share than the share of rail in total transport services.

During the consultative dialogue expectations and suggestion on behalf of the Railway Undertakings were summarized by Mr Gyula Farkas, the RFC OEM RU-spokesperson. He pointed out in general that there are many operational issues which have to be solved in a relatively short period of time. The main stumbling points are the different national rules regarding braking rules, buffer wagons and mandatory technical wagon checks. These measures are in hand of the concerned Ministries and Regulatory Bodies, so at the occasion of the joint meeting the ExBo members could get updated and direct information from the "market". RUs running on RFC OEM were asking for harmonising national rules as they cause additional technological time, require more human resources and wagon resources from their side which are very costly. Mr Farkas acknowledged that the initiative concerning the Issues Logbook is a promising tool which might contribute to achieve the intended level of harmonisation.

The spokesperson reported as well that crossing the HU – RO border at Lőkösháza-Curtici, despite the efforts made so far, is still very difficult. According to the concerned RUs the current running and waiting time is still high, therefore it is necessary that the related IMs together with the authorities shall do their utmost to implement the measures proposed by the Task Force-Curtici. The presented operational measures were supported by the ExBo members.



Source: BMVIT

Regarding the RFC OEM related infrastructure developments the following were highlighted:

- Oldenburg – Wilhelmshaven → upgrade the capacity and quality of the existing line. The last step will be the electrification of the section until 2022.
- Uelzen – Stendal → Double tracking the entire section. The aim is to improve the connection of the Eastern European and Balkan countries with the North Sea ports
- Dresden – Border → The implementation of the new high speed line is in the planning phase. The project will also bring added value to the freight sector as the new route will be used by freight trains, too.

3. CAPACITY ON RFC OEM

One of the main characteristics of RFC OEM is the availability of adequate and good capacity both in terms of quantity and quality for the provision of rail freight services. This advantage stems from the fact that in the CEE and SEE regions there are not so many congested parts of the infrastructure as it is typical rather in Western European Member States. Our C-OSS made sure that a number of well-defined Pre-arranged Paths (PaPs) and reserve capacity (RC) were available for the customers and in case any assistance or special demand arose the C-OSS Manager was always at their disposal to assist with his best knowledge.

3.1. Our offer

Similar to past years, path-construction process was preceded by a unique service oriented feature offered by the C-OSS Community, inviting all potential applicants into a preliminary consultation in order to improve the quality of PaPs for timetable 2019 and RC for timetable 2018 by collecting their needs. All the received data were treated with utmost care and were incorporated during the designation and construction of our path catalogues**.**

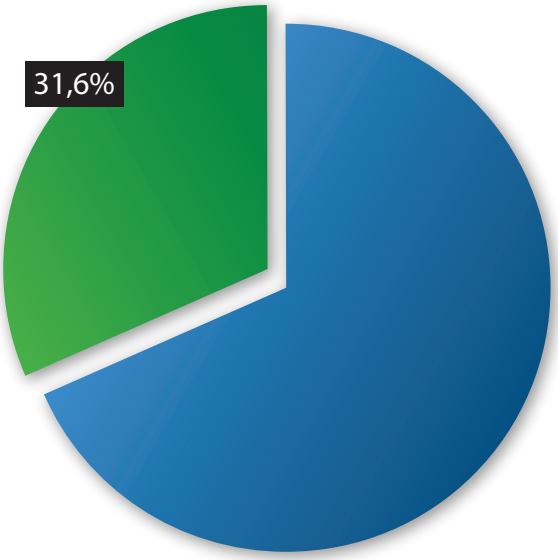
On 8th January 2018 PaP catalogue was published, offering to our Customers 11.3 million path-kilometers (km*running days) of high-quality paths for international traffic, which is an approximate 17% increase compared to last year.

3.2. Results of 2018

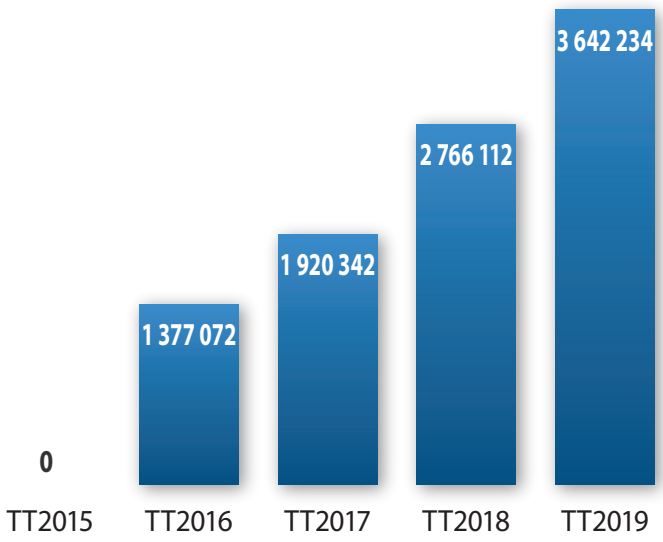
Annual path requests

2018 was a real breakthrough for RFC OEM in terms of annual path (PaP) requests.
On 9th April 2018 (deadline for placing international path requests) the C-OSS received 27 requests from 19 Applicants.
During the pre-booking phase 3.6 million path-kilometers (31.6% of the published capacity) were allocated by the C-OSS.
Compared to last year, allocated PaP capacity has been increased by approximately 32%.

PaP capacity allocated by the C-OSS for TT2019



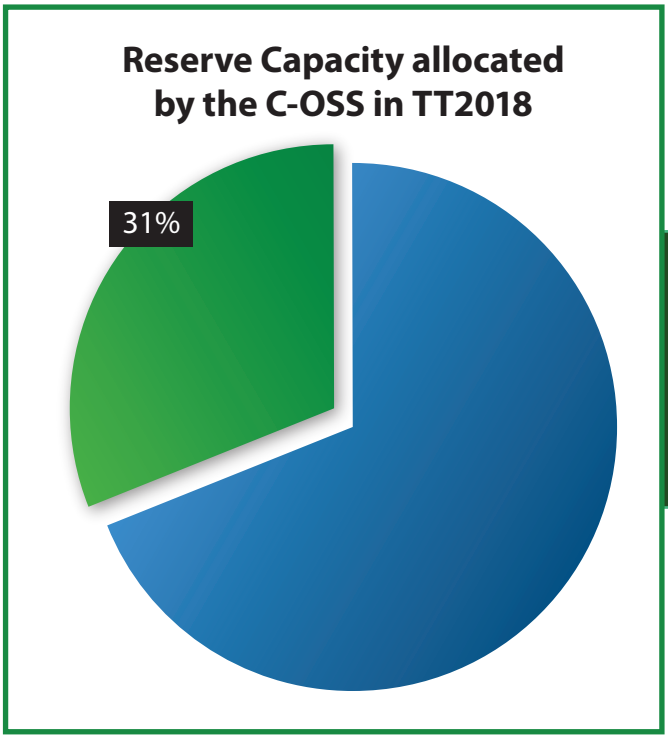
Volume of requested PaP capacity (km*RD)



- Total requested running days were 5459 with an average 237.3 per request.
- The longest requested PaP distance was 1637.5 km with an average 846.1 km per request.

Requests for reserve capacity

Reserve capacity – published on 9th October 2017 and later continuously updated – has provided 4.66 million path-kilometers in order to satisfy the interim and ad-hoc needs of our customers. Till the end of timetable year 2018 1.45 million path-kilometers had been requested and allocated through the C-OSS, which is quite similar to the results of the previous year.



Capacity management KPIs

Volume of offered capacity – PaPs (million km)	**for TT2019**	**at X-11**	**11.3**
Volume of requested capacity – PaPs (million km)	**for TT2019**	**at X-8**	**3.6**
Volume of requests (number of PCS dossiers)	**for TT2019**	**at X-8**	**27**
Number of conflicts (number of conflicting PCS dossiers)	**for TT2019**	**at X-8**	**4**
Volume of pre-booked capacity (million km)	**for TT2019**	**at X-7.5**	**3.6**
Volume of offered capacity – Reserve Capacity (million km)	**for TT2018**	**at X-2**	**4.66**
Volume of requested capacity – Reserve Capacity (million km)	**for TT2018**	**at X+12**	**1.45**
Volume of requests – Reserve Capacity (number of PCS dossiers)	**for TT2018**	**at X+12**	**14**

Summary and conclusion

- **Capacity utilization percentage (the ratio of requested and published capacity) grows year by year**. As a result of the numerous consultative dialogues with RFC OEM business partners and Advisory Group members, **the offer is increasingly matching the real market demand.**
- **The amount of PaP requests grows year by year**, which shows a clear interest from the business partners in RFC OEM services. However the basis of this interest is not merely a capacity guarantee, but also a guarantee of high-quality and customer-oriented services, which shall be maintained and further improved.
- **Reserve capacity is a stable, well-sold product on RFC OEM**, based on the characteristics of the market and of the business behaviour in this region, **thus RFC OEM is continuously aiming to develop this product further on.**
- The requests clearly show that our **main traffic flow is on the (DE) – Dečín – Praha – Bratislava – Budapest – Curtici – Ruse – Svilengrad – (TR) axis.**
- There is a growing interest on RFC OEM to utilize PaPs by the **long distance traffic**. **A continuous 1637 km PaP request is outstanding among RFCs.**
- However one of the main axis of the corridor i.e. Vidin – Sofia – Athens is not favoured by the freight forwarders yet. **Major developments on the Southern part of the Corridor would be essential** in order to compete with the experienced traffic flow through Serbia.
- **There is a strong need from the market to focus on the management of the traffic**, and to reduce the unnecessary waiting times at the borders, especially on lines where major works are ongoing.

4. TRAFFIC AND TRAIN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.1. Progress achieved by the Task Forces

On the basis of analysis of the dwelling time at all particular cross borders and the common activity of all concerned stakeholders involved into the Task Forces 10 working plans were set up in 2018. The common driving force of each work plan was the general conclusion made by the RFC OEM Train Performance Management (TPM) coordination that the waiting time at border crossings contains two main parts:

- the necessary process time and
- the unnecessary waiting time.

The necessary process time could only be reduced with harmonisation of the related national rules and also with some infrastructure investments.

The unnecessary waiting time could only be eliminated with an optimal coordination among all involved stakeholders. To be able to reach the "2-hour waiting time" at cross border points this segment of the influencing factors shall get more focus and experts shall make efforts to elaborate solutions for these challenges since the reduction in that field could be reached mainly with soft measurements and better coordination in the foreseeable future.

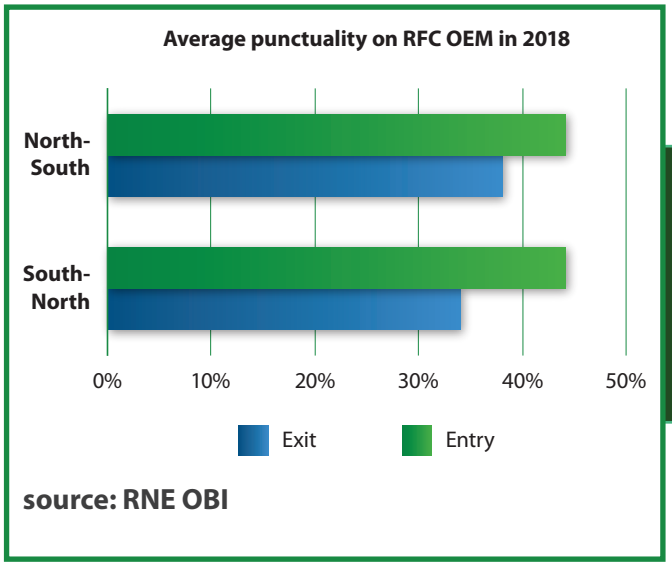
It was also clear that there is no harmonised solution for every border crossing, tailor-made solutions are required, "one size does not fit to all".

Work plans identified many necessary actions appointing responsible person and deadlines for the actions which are needed to eliminate the unnecessary high waiting time at the border stations. The different work plans with their individual approach could also serve as "*best advisable practise*" for the other border crossings in other RFC-s. Task forces' leaders are regularly reporting their progress at TPM coordination meetings.

Another focus of the TPM coordination work is the punctuality. It is still a crucial issue to deal with to show feedback about the performance of the corridor and implement necessary measures to ensure a reliable service in this regard as well. 79 963 freight trains crossed defined pairs of border points in 2018 (source: RNE OBI).

The next figure shows the punctuality of these trains on RFC OEM in both directions, using a 30 minutes threshold. The figure indicates that the trains running on their route have generally less than 50% punctuality when entering the corridor and at exiting the corridor the punctuality decreases with 6 percentage points at the North-South, and with 10 percentage points at the South-North direction.

It shall be also investigated how this topic can be harmonized with the actions defined in the TF Work plans, because we believe that the smooth run at cross border points has a certain influencing factor in this regard. Working group's experts are continuously working on feasible solutions involving our RU partners as well.



source: RNE OBI

4.2. International Contingency Management planning – ICM Handbook

The history of large incidents shows that international, off-the-shelf measures implemented could help efficiently to organize traffic after a major interruption. European Rail Infrastructure Managers (IMs) in 2018 agreed on international processes described in the "Handbook for International Contingency Management". An important new element was also added: an international re-routing overview for the Rail Freight Corridors (RFC) and re-routing scenarios for the concerning routes.

These re-routing scenarios can help to the experts of the traffic management and timetabling people in the coordination of the deviation of freight trains in the plannable phase (as soon as possible after an incident) in case of larger incidents with an international impact, lasts more than 72 hours.

The Handbook complements the national incident management of the individual European infrastructure managers and the requirements of the OPE TSI (Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/995 – Operation and traffic management TSI) and other regulations referring to incident management. Railway undertakings are invited

to develop their own contingency management plans if not yet existing, considering the re-routing options outlined in the re-routing overviews.

This overview below shows potential re-routing options and give a complete picture about the infrastructure parameters and operational specifications on these lines in a harmonised format suggested by Rhine-Alpine RFC.

Working out operational scenarios is not a fresh idea on RFC OEM. Soon after the establishment of RFC7 in 2013 the Management Board, with the assistance of members of the Traffic Management Working Group set up different scenarios for alternative routes in case of temporary capacity restrictions, but as the first step it was concentrated on the border sections only. Taking into consideration the consequences of the Rastatt incident it became clear that these kind of operational scenarios could also help to restore freight traffic not only at borders but also all along the corridor.

8 different RFC OEM countries, 8 different levels of infrastructure development set up a basis for a constructive cooperation along the corridor, where the customer-oriented attitude is the most important key element of the progress. Therefore the governance of RFC OEM has utmost importance to harmonise provisions and requirements of rail freight related services. The RFC OEM management believes that there are big potentials for the development of rail freight business and the corridor could be also a strategic connecting opportunity toward East.

All RFC-s have their own specificities regarding geographical layout, existing alternative routes and the available capacity on those routes. RFC OEM has a strong base, has a capacity surplus, and most of our members can offer additional capacity if it is required due to a suddenly occurred disturbance. The coordination for the ICM has been established at RFC OEM.

More detailed information about International Contingency Management can be found on the corridor's website:
http://www.rfc7.eu/public
/International contingency management/

4.3. Coordination of capacity restrictions

Management of coordination and publication of temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs) is delegated to the independent working group, TCR WG, headed by SŽDC. The working group meets at least two times per year in order to coordinate TCRs along the corridor and as well as in order to change experiences with TCR tasks between TCR experts of involved IMs.

RFC OEM operational management considers that TCR topic is still crucial point in quality of RFC products. Taking into consideration that several CEF investment projects are ongoing recently on the infrastructure of RFC OEM Member States, the TCR WG gives a lot of effort to reach the harmonized TCR coordination as much as possible. We believe that an adequate publication process is a very important tool for our business partners and potential clients which produce a significant additional value for them in planning of their path request.

Year 2018 was determinate by implementation of Delegated decision of EU (2075/2017) within all IMs along the corridor and even in all European countries. Together with RNE TCR coordinators developed the revised version of common TCR RNE Guidelines. RFC OEM TCR WG was involved in all preparation process and endeavoured to keep RFC TCR activities still on. Even though Annex VII gives no obligation regarding RFCs TCR activities TCR WG decided to keep former and more complex criteria for coordination and publication in order to bring consistent information flow to our customers.

5. SATISFACTION SURVEY

To know our customers' opinion is a fundamental interest of Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs) for further development. With this in mind Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 also requires RFCs to conduct a user satisfaction survey on yearly basis and publish the main results.

RFC OEM has been a member of RNE Satisfaction Survey Platform since formation (2014). This common surface provides us an adequate methodology with proved functionality, and a stable complex European framework.

Currently the target population is not extended, as a consequence the number of respondents cannot be numerous either. Thus we have to work with a quite small sample size, however the results reflect real market phenomena, which validate the survey, and provide us a good base to reveal the main changes in OEM performance.

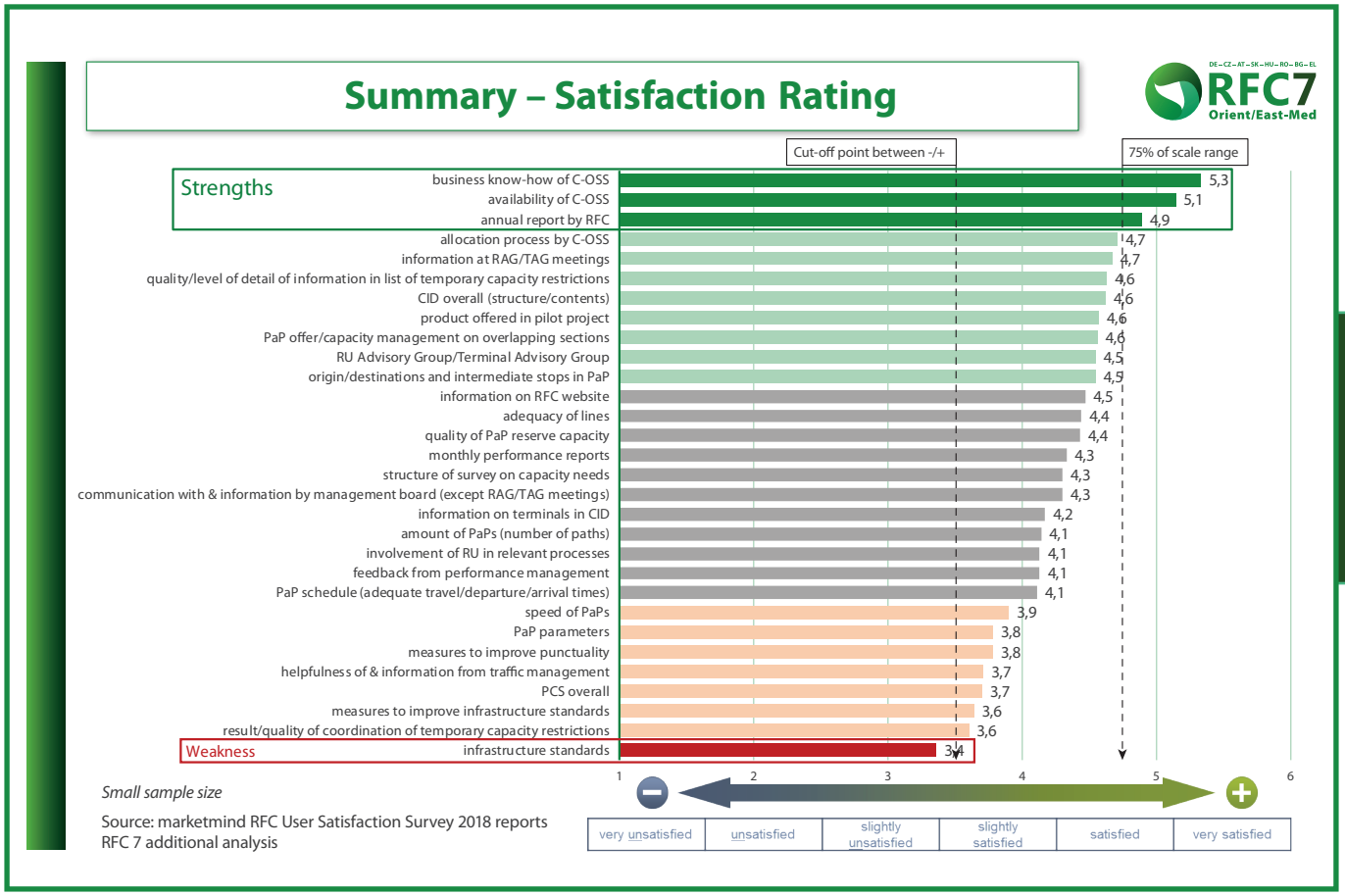
The fieldwork of the fifth wave was conducted between 13th September and 12th October, 2018.

Among the corridors participating in the survey only OEM could increase both the number of interviews[1], and the response rate of corridor users (65%[2]). Our partners' commitment is a valuable virtue to be kept in the future as well. [3]

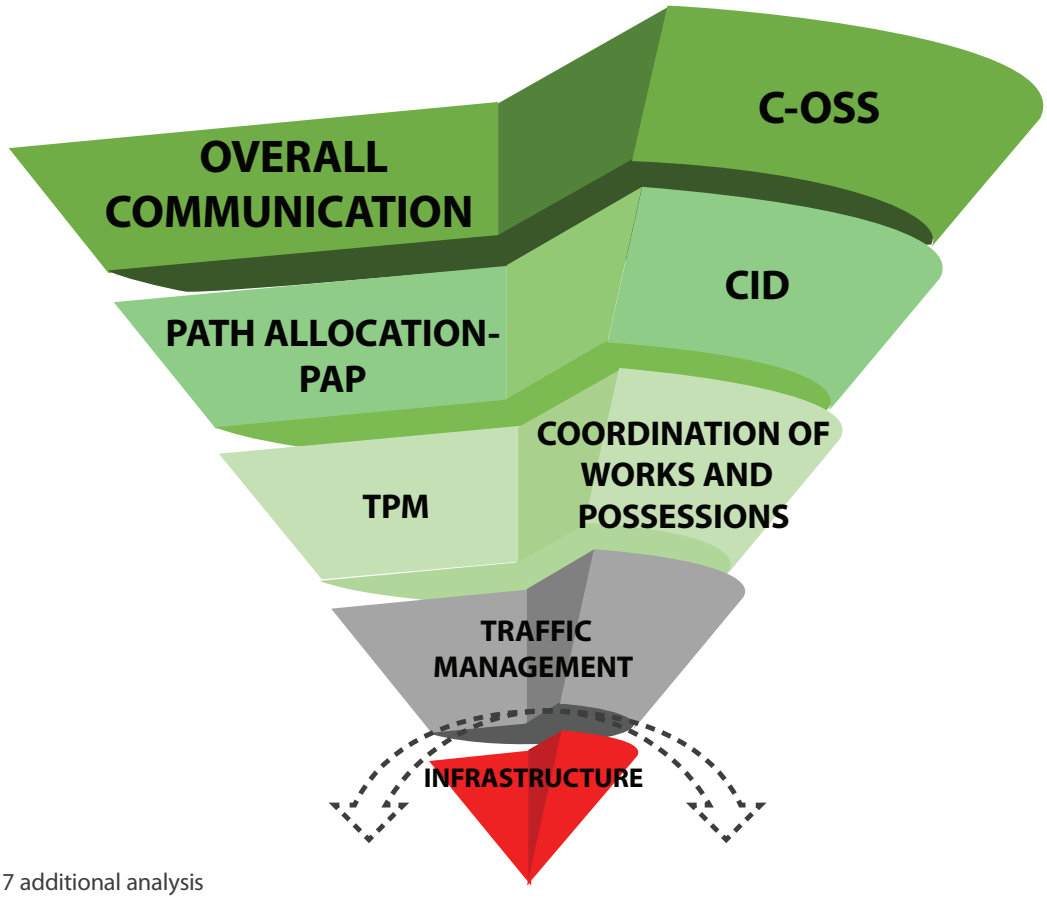
The number of highlighted strengths decreased significantly from 9 (2017) to 3, but still we have more areas with favourable results, than unfavourable.

Key activities are the followings: C-OSS with conspicuous performance, and Communication.

[1] 19 interviews in 2018, while 17 interviews in 2017
[2] +3% compared to 62% in 2017
[3] Based on open-ended answers we should improve mainly the real priority on problematic sections, as well as the more reliable information and service providing.



RFC OEM Performance Pyramid 2018



RFC 7 additional analysis

It is a remarkable result, that almost every item has already stepped over the cut-off point between positive and negative sides (3.5). Their scores are still quite low, but they exceeded a crucial line and they are now in the rather satisfied quarter of the scale.

There is only one item, which is still in the rather dissatisfied quarter of the respondents' perception: this is infrastructure standards, where a small positive shift can be observed but we still have a lot of to do in this field.

An impressive step forward was revealed in Coordination of Temporary Capacity Restriction mainly as a result of work of separate expert group dedicated to this area and thanks to the good communication in connection with Bulgarian and Romanian possessions.

C-OSS and Overall communication are our best performing areas, and even just to keep such a high satisfaction level needs lots of effort. In communication we can improve further focusing on website and information beyond RAG/TAG.

Results of Path Allocation were puzzling, because there were not important changes in this area, and still the respondents' evaluation decreased, not significantly but generally and tendentiously. This customer warning hint can indicate that the unchanged parameters are not enough anymore, the customer expectations, we have to fulfil, are higher. And this result can also be some kind of projection: there are considerable difference between the plans and the facts in traffic parameters and the users could project their dissatisfaction with real running conditions to the plan based PAP. The latter is underpinned

by the fact that the traffic conditions worsened: both in case of Train performance and Traffic management not significant but tendentious step backward was revealed.

It throws a light upon the very important effect of probable interconnection, interaction between activities: We have areas which keep its excellent performance level, but they cannot make stability without the good performance of other fields.

RFC OEM performed same or better than the Overall of all Corridors in any item, moreover we have distinctive advantage in some activities. However, in positive changes Overall of all Corridors has more favourable results than RFC OEM, they could improve in 55% of areas while in our case the proportion of those activities which performed better than a year before is only 34%.

The complex report was analysed by the Management Board as well. It is seen that RFC OEM Corridor's tendency in positive changes is not so prosperous as in earlier years, some customer warning hints can also be observed and the effect of difficulties on south axis of the corridor can also be perceived. The Management Board has decided some measures in December that more tangible changes and further added values are needed focusing on the traffic management and train performance management.

The operative management of the RFC OEM pays always attention to customer feedbacks, therefore it is foreseen that 2019 should be the year of further real, factual and perceptible actions.

6. CUSTOMER INFORMATION PLATFORM – CIP

Introduction

The Customer Information Platform (CIP) is an interactive, Internet-based information tool. By means of a Graphical User Interface (GUI), CIP provides precise information on the routing, terminals, infrastructure investment projects and maintenance works as well as on basic track properties of the participating Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs).

At the request of several RFCs, RailNetEurope (RNE) took over the ownership, hosting and maintenance of the CIP from the Corridor Rhine-Alpine (RFC 1), thereby enabling it to evolve into a multi-corridor tool providing harmonised information and communication processes. RNE shall further develop the CIP according to the decisions of the CIP Change Control Board (CCB) and following the approval, if necessary, of the RNE General Assembly (GA).

Main functions of CIP

Improved navigation for customers:

- Customers can switch between the CIPs of participating RFCs.

Corridor Information Documents (CID):

- CIDs containing all necessary information on the conditions of use of the corridors are displayed using a common structure, either directly in CIP or via a link to individual RFCs' webpages.

Corridor Line Properties:

- Precise, rail freight-specific information on the properties of corridor lines, such as intermodal freight codes and interoperable gauges, is provided for all participating RFCs.

General Structure of CIP

There are two environments of CIP which have been established during the implementation phase: the CIP Productive and the CIP Test environments. Both environments have the same structure but serve for different purposes: Test environment is used by internal users and has been developed for testing of new functionalities or features intended for later implementation in the Productive environment. After successful testing of a new functionality or feature by the CIP Development Group, it shall be transferred to the Productive environment by the IT Supplier in coordination with RNE.

Productive environment

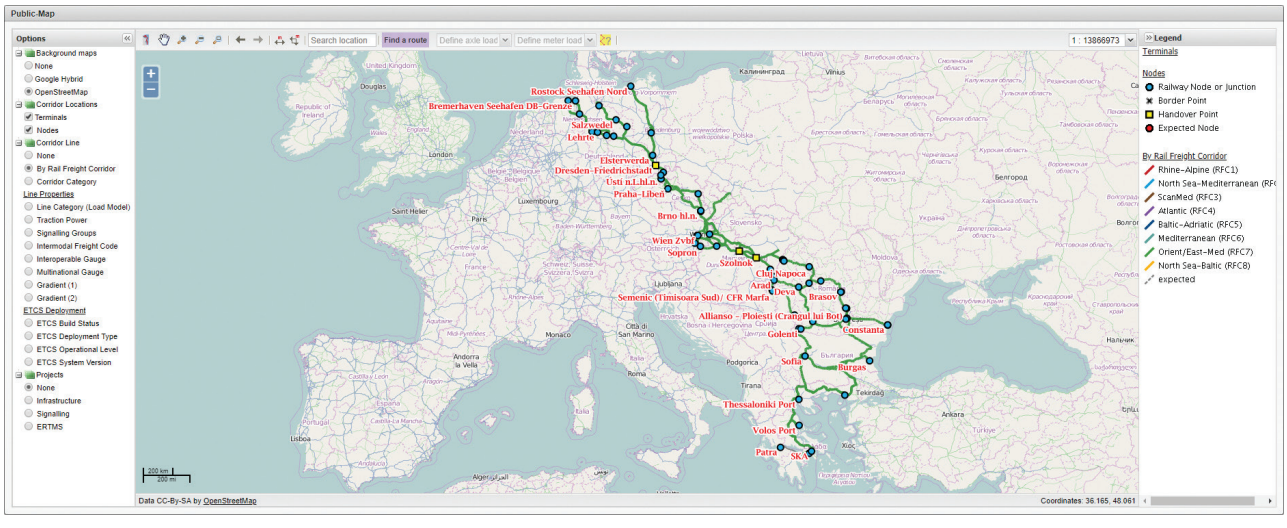
However, if any content of CIP should be changed, it has to be done directly in the productive environment, in order to make it immediately available for the external users. That concerns change of such content, as for example:

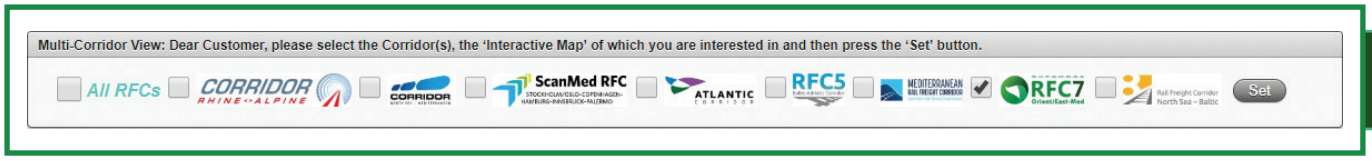
- Creating, editing, deleting of nodes/ segments/terminals;
- Changing of corridors' GIS DATA;
- Changing of Projects, ETCS parameters;
- Changing of content within the Information Documents tab;
- User assignments.

The general layout of the application interface consists of three main application sections, each defined by a specific tab (Home, Public, and Administration). Each main application section consists of several pages and is also defined by sub-tabs. By clicking on the specific sub-tab, the user can navigate through each page, which contains data regarding specific topics. The pages under the Home section, such as Interactive Map, Information Documents, Documents, Projects and ERTMS-Status contain information dedicated for internal users. Home area is also the area where changes are made and automatically shown in public. The Public Section contains only pages which are displayed for public users, when they are logged into CIP as a Public user. These pages are Interactive Map and Information Documents.

Interactive Map

After the successful internal Log-in in CIP, the interactive map of the public area will be shown to the user by default. That is, how a map with all its content appears for any public user. Interactive map contains the most relevant Corridor infrastructure. Information such as Nodes, Terminals and Segments, as defined within the Map administration tab under the Administration section, are displayed on those maps. Project information and other valuable items about ETCS and line properties are also displayed.





Map consists of a Map area with the toolbar on the upper part, Options region, Legend region and region with the Multi-Corridor-View functionality.

Multi-Corridor-View functionality

The Multi-Corridor-View functionality is situated separately from the Map area on the upper part on the Interactive map page and enables the user to display several corridors on the interactive map. It can be done, at first by selecting the corridors and then clicking the Set button. The chosen corridors will be immediately displayed on the map.

Interactive Report

The Interactive Report is used within the application in order to display data in the form of a report containing records. In most cases, data displayed within a report are of the same type and contain the same attributes. Each row of the report is a different record and each column of the report represents a different attribute of a record.

Route-finding functionality

The interactive map of CIP gives the user a quick overview over the corridors showing information about the line properties. By choosing a line property, the different values of this property will be shown in the map by colours. In this way you get information on a single line property.

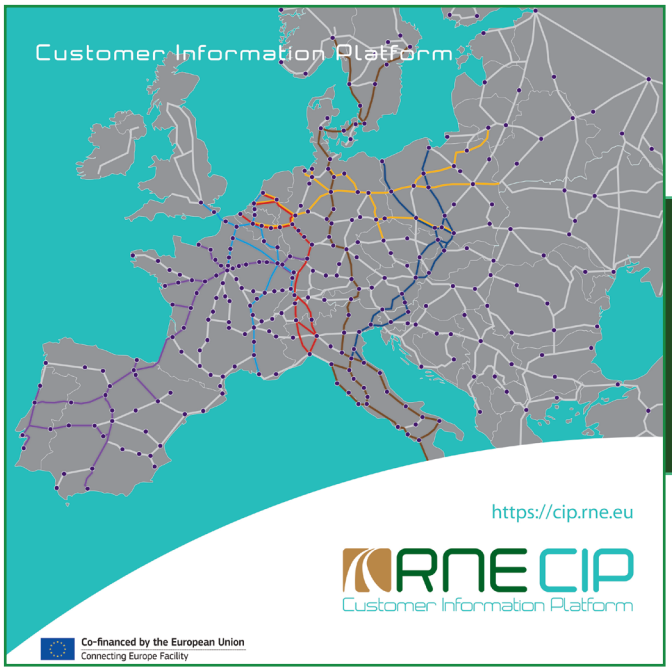
If you intend to run a train through Europe it would be nice to see the line properties just for a dedicated route. It is possible in CIP to find a route between an origin and destination and to request an overview of all the line parameters of this specific route.

Accessing the Information documents within CIP

Information documents page is an area where the RFC's store all their documents, which are dedicated for use by public users. Information Documents page can be seen by both internal and external users. The 'Information Documents' space can be found both for internal and external users in the public area of the CIP, under the tab 'Information Documents'.

Summary

At the moment CIP displays of harmonised corridor information, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week information on railway infrastructure in 18 European countries covering the network of 8 RFCs: Rhine – Alpine (RFC 1), North Sea – Mediterranean (RFC 2), Scandinavian – Mediterranean (RFC 3), Atlantic (RFC 4), Baltic – Adriatic (RFC 5), Corridors Mediterranean (RFC 6), Orient / East Med (RFC 7) and North Sea – Baltic (RFC 8). CIP is available at https://cip.rne.eu website.



7. FURTHER COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COORDINATOR OF ORIENT/ EAST-MED CORE NETWORK CORRIDOR (CNC) AND WITH HIS TEAM

Following the establishment of the TEN-T core network corridors with the legal act by 1316/2013/EU an interaction between the two platforms was started. The Orient/East-Med Core Network Corridor (OEM CNC) runs parallel to RFC OEM, thus, they are the natural complimentary for each other.

On the basis of the kind initiative of the European Coordinator a progress reports were presented two times in 2018 to get an overview of the actions made so far on the basis of reaching the 2-hour waiting time in average at cross border points along the corridor according to the intentions deriving from the OEM Ministerial declaration signed in Rotterdam, 2016. The first meeting was held on 19 March 2018 in Budapest and the second meeting was held on 9 October 2018 in Bratislava.

Picture 5. Meeting with the CNC OEM European Coordinator, Mr Mathieu Grosch – Bratislava

At the first occasion 12 Task Forces' (TF) leaders presented their work plan set up by the Task Forces individually. Detailed work plans contain every issue identified by TF as a hampering factor and the commonly decided solutions were suggested which are in the competence of the IMs. At the same time operational and administrative bottlenecks were also presented which are connected with different national rules and eliminations of the old-dates rules are fare beyond of the competence of IMs or RUs .

The commitment of the involved stakeholders were appreciated by the European Coordinator, and he emphasized that besides the TEN-T-parameters, solving cross-border operational and interoperability issues is a clear priority for rail freight and this shall be accelerated. "Quick-win" solutions are very important. Beside the significant investments, optimising technical, operational and administrative solutions can also demonstrate the success of the implementation of CEF funds into the rail sector removing bottlenecks and improving interoperability, thus boosting the competitiveness of rail among different transport modes. The railway sector shall present its development reached in the past few years in order to be able to keep the same level of investment support in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) as it was during the CEF period. He also pointed out that he would offer his supportive facilitator role towards the representatives of the Member States to accelerate necessary decisions requesting by the operational management of the OEM RFC. That is the main reason to have this regular dialogue with the TF leaders to get relevant input from the experts.

8. RFC OEM IN THE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY

RFC OEM is a reliable partner in cross-corridor cooperation, we are committed to represent our region's interest at discussions and meetings of different corridor platforms as e.g. RFC-Network, C-OSS Community, RNE, CER, ECCO Group, UIRR, IRG-Rail, etc.

RFC OEM is also a constructive cooperating member in the whole RFC Community. This new concept of the rail sector – to establish a corridor network – is a continuously developing area in order to increase rail freight's competitiveness for longer distances in Europe.

"The future of Mobility- Innovation" – TEN-T Days, Ljubljana

Showing the common strength the RFC-Network organised first time a common stand at "The future of Mobility- Innovation" at TEN-T Days organised in Ljubljana on 25-27 April 2018. This new concept symbolized a strong cooperation among 11 RFC-s. At this occasion, all members of the RFC Network were happy to invite the participants of the conference to join our stand for:

- having open discussions about the rail freight market;
- presenting inter alia the harmonised RFC/ RNE tools Customer Information Platform (CIP), Train Information System (TIS), Path Coordination System (PCS);

The name of the stand was:

" RFC Network – cooperation of RFCs in Europe in cooperation with RailNetEurope"

Among the visitors Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc was also there visiting the stand and she expressed her great satisfaction for that.

Picture 6. „ The common stand"

"The future of Mobility"- Innovation at TEN-T Days – 25 – 27 April 2018 in Ljubljana in the Exhibition and Convention Centre where the RFCs had their own stand beside 48 other exhibitors like UNIFE, Dresden-Prague High speed rail connection or Rail Baltica. The 10 RFCs prepared with their promotional materials and brochures to be offered to the interested visitors. The RFC Network prepared a joint presentation explaining the RFC concept the major goals and the 10 Sector Priorities tackled. An explanation of capacity products and the C-OSS were also provided to the visitors.

Picture 7. The Commissioner Violeta Bulc visited the RFC-stand at TEN-T Days in Ljubljana

A side event with cocktails was also organised by the RFC Network on 25 April where inter allia the International Contingency Management Concept was presented.

A separate session was also organised by the Commission to the RFCs where the key objective was to investigate ways to maximise the complementarity between TEN-T infrastructure policy and rail freight policy. Strategic discussions took place highlighting priorities and addressing concrete cases w here this complementarity has been addressed already or where initiatives are in the process of being set up.

The entry into force of Regulation 913/2010/EU created the legal framework for the development of rail freight corridors. The on-going work, the implementation of the requirements highlights more and more issues of common interest to several corridors and the need for harmonisation of rules and processes between corridors. It implies a need for effective coordination between the different Rail Freight Corridors, the National Ministries and Regulatory Bodies. Therefore the European Commission is facilitating this coordination in the following ways;

Twice a year the European Commission, DG-Move organises a joint meeting of representatives of all Member States, Regulatory Bodies and Infrastructure Managers participating in a Rail Freight Corridor, the forum is called **Single European Railway Area Committee (hereinafter: SERAC RFC WG) meeting.** These meetings are ideal occasions to tackle legal, operational and other specific issues to be addressed jointly by all concerned Member States, Regulatory Bodies and IMs.

Picture 8. Here we are, the RFC-Network!

A new initiative was launched in May 2018 by DG-Move C, Unit C4. (Rail Safety and Interoperability) to harmonize procedures at cross border points and eliminate hampering operational issues. The **Issues Logbook** was set up and 3 main priorities were selected by the sector. The goal of the Issues Logbook is to make concrete progress on the selected bottlenecks, as *breaking rules, technical wagon checks at border station, train composition* and *ETA* (Estimated Time of arrival) with solutions to be developed within 12-18 months. Due to the complexity of these issues the Commission intends to use its influence to engage all relevant actors in the process (particularly those not represented in the RFC governance structure). ERA is fully committed to support the work with their expertise.

ERA will be in charge of the overall coordination of the Priority No.2. "*Technical wagon checks*" and RFC OEM was invited to continue its successful work on border crossing issues and train composition under this priority, in close cooperation with ERA. After outlining some feasible solutions the Commission intends to gradually increase the geographical scope of this priority with the involvement of RFC4, RFC5 and RFC6.

The main driving principle is to overview the existing national rules on train composition/tests and checks that cause the problems and delays at border crossings with the aim to reduce or remove, if it is possible, the unnecessary requirements. Interim results and further steps will be regularly monitored, therefore Issues Logbook Plenary Session will be organised twice a year in Brussels.

Picture 9. „ Modal shift is the right direction"

Picture 10. The 3rd Panel discussion

Rail Freight Day – December 2018, Vienna

The Railway Conference dealt with four major challenges:

Challenge 1: Rail freight: How to improve rail freight's competitiveness in a challenging environment
Challenge 2: Providing high-quality capacity for rail freight traffic
Challenge 3: Solving technical and operational barriers for rail freight
Challenge 4: Strengthening rail freight in a multimodal transport system

Picture 11. Cross corridor cooperation at the same table

RFC OEM also participated the Rail Freight Day 2018 organised jointly by the European Commission and RNE in Vienna both as panellist and stand exhibitioner.

The Chairman of our corridor, Mr Lőrinc Czakó participated in the 3rd panel discussion. In his speech he highlighted the importance of the harmonization of the different national rules and regulations which are hampering the smooth run on the corridor. In the cooperation with eight Members States is an ambicious challenge!

The common RFC stand was open for visitors all day. Current and future customers were able to get all the needed information from the Secretariat, the C-OSS manager and the informative RFC OEM publications!

The corridor management keeps also very close contact with RNE. The common operational guidelines provided by RNE contribute to a harmonised development of the corridors, even if they are not endorsed by the Commission and thus have no legal status. RNE has launched several projects in 2018 directly related to the operation of the corridor. RNE intends to involve RFCs' experts in the elaboration of the harmonised solutions. The work run in different project working groups where RFCs experts' experiences and proposals are also taken into consideration. Since September 2014 all RFCs are associated members in the RNE General Assembly.

Picture 12. Some useful products for the RFC people

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