



Alpine-Western Balkan & Baltic-Adriatic RFCs RAG&TAG

*Port of Trieste, Italy & MS Teams
22 April 2026*

Draft minutes

	<i>Arrival and registration of participants</i>
1.	Introduction & Welcome
9:00-9:30	<i>Weronika Karbowiak, Chairperson of RFC BA Helga Steinberger, Chairperson of RFC AWB Robert Žnidaršič, RAG Spokesperson of RFC AWB Damjan Rak, RAG Spokesperson of RFC BA</i>
Presentation	At the beginning of the event, the host and organizers welcomed the participants, emphasizing the international nature of the meeting and the importance of cooperation among infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, ministries, and logistics stakeholders. The location of Trieste was highlighted not only as a geographical hub but also as a key of integration between maritime and rail transport in Europe. The opening session featured contributions from Weronika Karbowiak, Helga Steinberger, Robert Žnidaršič, and Damjan Rak, who underlined that closer coordination between infrastructure managers and railway undertakings is essential for maintaining the competitiveness of rail freight transport in Europe. Representatives of the Railway Undertakings Advisory Group (RAG) and Terminal Advisory Group (TAG) expressed serious concerns regarding the current operational situation. They emphasized that international freight traffic is highly interconnected and that infrastructure problems on one Infrastructure manager's network immediately generate delays and inefficiencies throughout the entire corridor network. The presentation by Mr. Marco Consalvo, director of the Port of Trieste, provided a concrete example of long-term strategic development. Its strategic geographical position allows it to serve as a natural gateway between maritime trade routes and the industrial markets of Central and Eastern Europe. In recent years, the port has experienced continuous growth in container traffic, intermodal transport, and rail freight activity, supported by changing global trade patterns and increasing pressure for more sustainable transport solutions. Particular emphasis was placed on the port's strong rail orientation. The speakers highlighted that a substantial proportion of the port's hinterland traffic is already transported by rail, connecting Trieste with Austria, Hungary, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the Western Balkan region. This rail-oriented development strategy has positioned the port as a major logistics gateway within the Baltic-Adriatic and Alpine-Western Balkan freight corridors. At the same time, the presentation openly addressed the operational pressures currently affecting the regional railway network. Port representatives acknowledged that the rapid growth of freight demand is increasingly constrained by limited railway infrastructure capacity, particularly on the cross-border sections between Italy, Slovenia, and Central Europe



	The speakers also stressed that ports can no longer operate as isolated maritime facilities. Modern logistics chains require close integration between ports, railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, terminals, and digital traffic management systems. The future competitiveness of European freight transport therefore depends not only on port capacity itself, but equally on the efficiency and reliability of the surrounding rail freight corridors.
2.	RAG / TAG perspective
9:30-11:00	<i>Robert Žnidaršič, RAG Spokesperson of RFC AWB</i> <i>Damjan Rak, RAG Spokesperson of RFC BA</i>
Presentation	One of the central sessions was dedicated to the perspective of railway undertakings and terminal operators. Mr. Robert Žnidaršič and Mr. Damjan Rak presented a detailed overview of the operational difficulties currently affecting international rail freight transport. The speakers strongly criticized the growing lack of infrastructure capacity and the negative impact of extensive construction works. Particular attention was given to the Hungarian-Croatian-Slovenian parts of the corridors, where insufficient alternative routes and non-electrified lines create severe operational inefficiencies. Railway undertakings explained that the forced use of diesel traction on diversionary routes significantly increases operational costs while also conflicting with environmental objectives. Several interventions highlighted the contradiction between European transport policy goals and operational reality. While European institutions aim to shift freight traffic from road to rail, railway undertakings argued that infrastructure bottlenecks, delays, and operational restrictions are instead pushing customers back toward road transport. Participants repeatedly stressed that rail freight operators are facing rising costs, decreasing capacity, and growing pressure from customers demanding more reliable services. A further issue discussed during the session concerned train length limitations. RUs argued that the currently widespread 500-meter operational standard is no longer economically sustainable in modern freight logistics. Operators explained that at least 600-meter train lengths from Port of Koper are necessary to achieve acceptable productivity and cost efficiency, while EU regulations set goal the implementation of 740-meter freight train operations. However, many corridor sections currently remain unable to support such operational improvements because TCRs and construction-related limitations reduce infrastructure flexibility even further. One of the strongest discussions during the session concerned the lack of harmonized commercial and operational rules between countries. RUs expressed serious frustration regarding inconsistent cancellation procedures and infrastructure charging systems. The RUs particularly emphasized the problem of penalty for late train cancellations in case where such cancelation is caused by too late cancelation from the partner RU on previous railway network. Dedicated RU does not have any influence on this cancelation, and they emphasized the idea of exemption from charging such cases. Participants argued that such fragmented national rules create unnecessary financial risks and significantly weaken the competitiveness of international rail freight transport. Mrs. Nikolina Ostrman, Mrs. Silva Kristan and Mr. Marko Jeremić provided written answers to specific questions related to Croatian, Slovenian and Serbian networks. Mr. Jeremić was also present online and clarified certain issues directly. Mr. Alessandro Turconi provided answers regarding the situation on cancellation rules on RFC BA, on PCS and on the advantage to send TCM messages to RNE TIS.



3.	Temporary Capacity Restrictions & Infrastructure Developments
11:00-11:30	<i>Dóra Varga, RFC BA C-OSS Manager</i> <i>Tihomir Španić, RFC AWB CIM</i>
Presentation	The session led by Dóra Varga and Tihomir Španić focused on TCRs and major infrastructure developments along the corridors. The discussion addressed ongoing construction projects, expected operational impacts, and traffic management measures during infrastructure works. Dóra Varga emphasized that while major investments are essential for the future competitiveness of rail freight transport, the implementation phase of these projects generates severe TCRs, which directly affect RUs and customers. She noted that IMs across the corridor are currently facing the difficult task of simultaneously modernizing the railway system while maintaining sufficient operational continuity for international freight services. Particular attention was devoted to Slovenia. The construction of the second railway track between Divača and Koper was identified as one of the most strategically significant infrastructure investments in the region. The existing single-track line toward the Port of Koper has long represented a critical bottleneck for freight transport. Due to the continuous growth of port traffic and the increasing number of freight trains, operational flexibility on the line has become extremely limited. Even minor disruptions can generate large-scale congestion because the infrastructure lacks sufficient reserve capacity for operational recovery. In her presentation, Dóra Varga explained that the second-track project is expected to substantially improve future freight operations by increasing line capacity, reducing operational conflicts, and creating the conditions necessary for more stable timetable planning. The project is also expected to support longer and heavier freight trains in the future, thereby improving the economic competitiveness of rail freight transport. During the discussion, SI representatives indicated that the new infrastructure could gradually enter operation around mid-2027, although they also cautioned that complete operational stabilization may require an additional one to two years due to safety certification procedures, technical integration, and system optimization. Another major topic addressed in the presentation was the modernization of the Ljubljana railway node. The ongoing reconstruction includes extensive track renewal, station modernization, signalling upgrades, and preparations for future digital traffic management systems. However, the construction activities themselves have already created considerable operational difficulties. Adriafer representatives presented a major issue related to TCRs. RFI had informed the RUs in line with the timing anticipation requested by Annex VII that the line Pontebbana to Tarvisio crossing will be closed for a long period in 2026, 2027, 2028. In coordination with OeBB-I, the rerouting line has been identified via Brenner. However, there are 2 main issues: first of all, Brenner cannot accommodate all trains that run via Tarvisio. Second, for destinations in the East such as Croatia or Hungary, to run via Brenner from Trieste becomes not economically viable. Additional capacity via Villa Opicina could not be made available due to concurrent TCRs on the Jesenice line and Ljubljana node



	As the TCRs in Slovenia depends on Ministry decisions, the representative of Slovenian Ministry provided a reply. Mrs. Vlasta Kampos Jerenec from Slovenian MoT mentioned that this year there are urgent works to modernize Ljubljana station and 160 year-old viaduct. For next year there could be more possibilities to coordinate with RFI and OeBB-I. Mrs. Laura Fortunato replied that indeed RFI and OeBB-I announced the TCRs in coordination and well ahead the works start, in line with the Annex VII, but no information regarding concurrent main TCRs in Slovenia had been communicated during previous coordination meetings. Paolo Crescenzi from Trieste Port Authority expressed the big concerns and that customers and rail traffic will likely go lost if Tarvisio closed for a long period and no capacity is offered via Slovenia during that time. The operators asked for a better coordination of TCRs among IMs. The operators need sufficient capacity for every closure from 2026, 2027 to 2028 that to avoid concurrent long closures on Pontebbana, Jesenice, and Ljubljana lines. In particular for the train which connect the port of Trieste to the localities situated in EASTERN and NORTH-EASTERN Europe will have be guaranteed, which by geographical position cannot be diverted via Brenner - for example: Budapest (HU), Dunajska Streda (SK), Bratislava (SK), Mosnow (CZ), Villach (AT), Wien (AT). For these localities it is necessary to find capacity via Villa Opicina. The Slovenian Ministry and the IMs took note of the operators issues. Mr. Tihomir Španić focused on the operational challenges and infrastructure conditions along RFC AWB. He explained that RFC AWB occupies a particularly sensitive position within the European rail freight network because it connects Central Europe with the Western Balkans and serves as a major transit corridor between Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and neighboring regions. The corridor carries substantial volumes of industrial goods, automotive products, raw materials, agricultural commodities, and intermodal freight traffic linked to Adriatic ports and inland logistics terminals. However, RFC AWB continues to face significant infrastructure development challenges. A major focus of Mr. Tihomir's presentation was the uneven level of infrastructure development across the corridor. He emphasized that infrastructure standards differ significantly between countries, particularly regarding electrification, signaling systems, and operational procedures. Some corridor sections continue to rely on outdated infrastructure with limited capacity and low operational resilience. Single-track bottlenecks remain common in several areas, while diversionary routes are often either unavailable or technically unsuitable for modern freight traffic requirements. These structural limitations become especially problematic during periods of TCRs, when alternative routing possibilities are urgently needed.
COFFEE BREAK	
4.	Improvement of Border Dwelling Time along RFC BA and RFC AWB
11:45-12:45	<i>Tihomir Španić, RFC AWB CIM</i> <i>Alessandro Turconi, RFC BA EM</i> <i>Sandra Ferrari, RFC Med EM</i>



Presentation	One of the most important agenda items concerned border dwelling times along the RFC BA and RFC AWB. Mrs. Sandra Ferrari from Mediterranean RFC presented the current situation at Villa Opicina. There was no time for the other borders presentations. Participants proposed the introduction of dedicated delay codes specifically for border bottleneck situations. Such measures would improve transparency and enable more accurate monitoring of congestion-related delays throughout the corridor network. Working groups and task forces established were presented as important mechanisms for analysing cross-border procedures, identifying bottlenecks, and developing coordinated improvement measures. The Villa Opicina border crossing, located between Italy and Slovenia, has long been recognized as a major bottleneck within RFC Med. Increasing traffic volumes combined with limited infrastructure capacity have resulted in significant delays and operational inefficiencies. Mrs. Sandra Ferrari emphasized that such challenges cannot be effectively addressed at a purely national level, but require coordinated, cross-border action involving all relevant stakeholders. The Villa Opicina task force was established with the objective of moving beyond problem identification toward detailed operational analysis and concrete solutions. One of its primary tasks is to map the entire border-crossing process, examining each step and the interactions between infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, and authorities. This process-oriented approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of where and why delays occur. A key element of the initiative is the improvement of performance measurement. She highlighted that traditional indicators often fail to reflect real operational conditions, particularly hidden waiting times occurring outside official measurement points. The task force therefore aims to identify unnecessary waiting times, determine their root causes, and develop targeted action plans to address them. Collaboration was emphasized as a central pillar of the initiative. The task force involves all relevant stakeholders, ensuring that proposed solutions are grounded in operational reality. Furthermore, the approach includes continuous monitoring of implementation, allowing for the evaluation of measures and adjustments where necessary. In his intervention, Mr. Tihomir Španić, focused on the operational challenges of border crossings and the practical impact of infrastructure developments, with particular emphasis on the Dobova border crossing between Slovenia and Croatia. He stressed that corridor performance is highly dependent on the efficiency of border operations. In the case of Dobova, increasing traffic volumes have not been matched by corresponding infrastructure or operational improvements, resulting in recurring bottlenecks. These constraints lead not only to congestion at the border station itself but also to significant delays already occurring on the approach lines. He highlighted that the challenges at border crossings are not purely infrastructural, but also strongly operational and organizational in nature. At Dobova border crossing, train handling requires close coordination between infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, and state authorities (Police, inspections). Any lack of synchronization among these actors directly reduces capacity and increases delays. A key point of his presentation was the discrepancy between official performance indicators and real operational conditions. He noted that reported dwell times at the border often reflect only
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	the time spent at the crossing point itself, while significant waiting times occur earlier at pre-border stations. This results in a distorted picture of actual system performance and makes it difficult to accurately assess bottlenecks. The situation farther east is even worse, because there are two border crossings between EU and non-EU countries (Tovarnik - Šid between Croatia and Serbia and Dimitrovgrad – Dragoman between Serbia and Bulgaria). Dwell time on these border crossings is several times longer than on internal EU border crossings, therefore AWB RFC General Assembly decided to launch two more QCOs for mentioned borders. Mr. Alessandro Turconi presented the planned and real dwell times in 2025 for all borders of RFC BA and mentioned that, for sake of efficiency, for the overlapping borders with RFC AWB and MED, the latter are establishing QCOs -involving the RUs- to work together for improvement. Besides Villa Opicina, new QCOs are foreseen at Hodos, Dobova and Koprivnica. As Tarvisio is covered by RFC BA, the Southern region of the RFC is covered. Regarding the central region, he mentioned that in recent years, QCOs were established between ZSR, Gysev and MAV, and actions were taken improving the original situation, though at that time the new Regulation wasn't yet out and therefore the goal was 120' dwell rather than 25'. Under the input of the Executive Board, RFC BA is expecting the RUs to provide input about which further border crossing should be taken care by establishing a WG. Mr. Turconi asked the RAG to indicate the priorities. The Speaker mentioned that he will provide feedback after the meeting, in written form (after the meeting, the RAG confirmed Zebrzydowice-Petrovice as the priority for a QCO, as it was also indicated at the previous RAG meeting in Vienna).
LUNCH BREAK	
5.	Capacity Regulation
14:00-14:45	<i>Reinhard Haller, RNE Head of Market & Performance</i> <i>Helga Steinberger, Chair of RFC AWB</i> <i>Dóra Varga, RFC BA C-OSS Manager</i> <i>Dino Dzafo, RFC AWB C-OSS Manager</i>
Presentation	Rainhard Haller and Helga Steinberger gave a detailed insight into the Capacity Regulation. The presentation by Mrs. Helga Steinberger outlined the IM's discussions and preparations on ENIM and the future stakeholder consultation system. She pointed out that the Rail Capacity Regulation requires Infrastructure Managers, ENIM and the Network Coordinator to consult operational stakeholders on a broad range of issues within the scope of the Regulation. At the same time, the Regulation gives operational stakeholders the possibility to establish the European Railway Platform (ERP) as a platform to discuss their views and to consolidate their positions. RNE has established the platform Advisory Board for the Capacity Regulation (ABCR) which supports a structured stakeholder dialogue. It serves to organise plenary meetings, feedback procedures, training sessions, and consultation activities related to the implementation of the new regulatory framework. The presentation also highlighted the preparation of common consultation guidelines for the future European Frameworks. These guidelines aim to ensure harmonised consultation procedures across Capacity Management, Traffic Management, and Performance Review,



while still allowing flexibility for specific operational topics. Mrs. Steinberger invited the operators to organize themselves in view of these new regulatory developments and suggested to consider making use of the already existing collaboration structures of RUs in RAG TAG for developing the European Railway Platform.

The presentation by Mr. Reinhard Haller provided an overview of the EU Regulation on the use of railway infrastructure capacity. The Regulation enters into force following the completion of trilogue negotiations and final legal review. Its main objective is to improve the efficiency, coordination, and performance of railway capacity management across Europe. RNE, acting as candidate Network Coordinator, and the European Network of Infrastructure Managers (ENIM) will jointly manage the preparation and adoption of the future European Frameworks. ENIM will be responsible for decision-making and framework adoption, while RNE (NC) will support operational preparation, coordination, and stakeholder involvement. The Regulation introduces harmonised European Frameworks. IMs will be required to align their national procedures and Network Statements with these frameworks. The new system will strengthen cross-border coordination, digitalisation, disruption management, and performance monitoring.

The presentations also described developments of the future governance structure involving ENIM, the Network Coordinator, regulatory bodies, and operational stakeholders. Several implementation milestones were presented for the period between 2027 and 2029, including the adoption of the European Frameworks, publication of Capacity Strategies and Models, deployment of digital tools, and introduction of performance monitoring mechanisms. Overall, the Regulation represents a major step toward a more coordinated and market-oriented European railway system.

5.2 Capacity Allocation Process

The section focused primarily on the organisation of rail freight capacity and the practical implementation of Pre-arranged Train Paths on the corridors.

Dóra Varga provided a detailed overview of the available corridor capacity and the timetable preparation for the 2027 period. She explained that the corridor had significantly expanded due to the official accession of Hungary and Croatia on 1 January 2026. This enlargement created several new cross-border sections between Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Austria, substantially increasing operational complexity but also opening new logistical opportunities. One of the most important numerical highlights of the presentation was the scale of the published capacity offer. In total, the corridor offered 63 PAPs for the 2027 timetable:

- 32 PAPs in the North-South direction;
- 31 PAPs in the East-West direction.

Compared with previous years, the available capacity on the corridor almost doubled. The deadline for path requests was 13 April 2026, after which the corridor entered the pre-booking phase. Capacity allocation activities were being carried out through the PCS Capacity Broker, which serves as the digital platform for international train path allocation. The speakers emphasized that the corridor no longer uses the traditional RFC numbering system. Instead, the new methodology applies abbreviations and numerical identifiers for PAP identification. For example, identifiers such as “BA-MED-NP7-ZIKo” indicate Baltic-



Adriatic corridor capacity products coordinated jointly with other Mediterranean rail freight corridors while the final part of the identifier contains the first two letters of the origin and destination — in this case, Žilina (“Zi”) and Koper (“Ko”).

A major operational topic concerned the increasing importance of long freight trains and harmonised corridor standards. The corridor offers long PAPs and long train solutions, especially for intermodal traffic. However, several technical limitations remain on certain infrastructure sections. Particular attention was given to train length standards. The discussion repeatedly referenced the European objective of supporting 740-metre freight trains, which are essential for increasing freight efficiency and reducing operational costs. Nevertheless, many infrastructure managers acknowledged that large parts of the current network are still incapable of handling trains of this length. The debate revealed a clear tension between regulatory ambitions and physical infrastructure realities. RUs explained that they often avoid requesting 740-metre train paths because such requests are likely to be rejected due to insufficient infrastructure capacity. As one speaker explained, operators frequently submit requests for shorter trains - for example 600 metres instead of 740 metres - simply to avoid refusal.

IMs underlined that future investments must be based on realistic market demand. They argued that not every line requires immediate adaptation for 740-metre operations. According to corridor analyses:

- approximately 48% of corridor sections currently operate with fewer than 24 trains per day;
- many lines carry only one to three freight trains daily;
- demand for long intermodal trains is concentrated mainly between ports, terminals, and industrial hubs.

The corridor representatives therefore encouraged railway undertakings and terminals to provide more transparent “capacity needs announcements” (also known as Capacity Wish List) in order to identify where long-train infrastructure is genuinely necessary. The speakers also discussed short-term capacity allocation products. These allow applicants to request corridor paths between eight and five days before train operation. This short-term flexibility is particularly important for freight market responsiveness and dynamic logistics chains.

Dino Džafo expanded on the technical aspects of PaPs creation. He explained that PaPs are developed through a coordination process between RUs, IMs and C-OSSs.

Mr. Džafo presented Pre-arranged train paths for TT2027 for AWB RFC. C-OSS divided them into three parts including geographical view on the map. Those parts are: Regular AWB RFC offer, Former RFC7 PaPs - published by RFC AWB and RFC RD and Turkey – Romania New routes over Bulgaria also published by RFC AWB and RFC RD. It includes overall 46 PaPs (18 Regular AWB RFC offer, 18 Former RFC7 PaPs and 10 New routes between Turkey and Romania over Bulgaria). All PaPs were published on 12th January 2026 on AWB RFC web site, CIP-Customer information platform, PCS Capacity Broker for RUs to request them. PaP catalogue was also sent by e-mail to RUs from AWB RFC contact list.

Visual appearance of AWB RFC PaP Catalogue for TT2027 was also changed compared to last years due to huge increase of number of PaPs and old version is no longer easy to work with.

Comparison of PaPs from TT2024 to TT2027 shows increase in number of PaPs from 10 in 2024 to 46 in 2027. AWB RFC offer also increase from 4,6 mil.km in 2026 to 6,53 milkm for



	2027. Average speed of PaPs for those which are comparable shows slight increase in Salsburg Hbf - Ljubljana Moste PaP and Ljubljana Zalog - Zagreb RK PaP, while slight decrease in average speed is in Wels - Maribor Tezno PaP mainly due to planned TCRs on that route. In his presentation, he also addressed other indicators of corridor performance besides capacity, such as Operations KPIs and Market development KPIs which were also presented to the participants.
6.	Performance with KPIs
14:45-15:30	PMO representatives RAG & TAG Members
	The discussions focused on corridor performance indicators and the operational efficiency. For RFC BA, Mr. Turconi explained that the ministries had established specific performance targets within the corridor implementation plan. These indicators included train punctuality, fulfilment of customer requests, capacity allocation efficiency, premium PaPs, and operational priorities (dwell times at border crossings, punctuality, 740m train). The data presented showed that customer capacity needs had generally been fulfilled successfully; however, punctuality at final destination remained critically low. According to the presented figures of RFC BA, only 28% of trains reached their destination within the 30' punctuality threshold. Participants acknowledged that these delays represented significant costs for RUs, IMs, terminals, and customers alike. An important aspect of the debate was the interpretation of responsibility for delays. While some participants argued that IMs were responsible for only a limited percentage of delays, others emphasized that most of reasons for delays was less important than improving overall corridor performance. The common conclusion was that cooperation among all stakeholders is essential in order to improve punctuality and operational reliability, and therefore RFC BA invites the operators to participate in WGs focusing on punctuality on a terminal/Port. Mr. Turconi also mentioned that if the Port is interested and RUs too, a WG could be established, and same for Trieste or other terminals. He invited the terminals to volunteer. Another major KPI-related issue concerned border dwelling times. The regulation target foresees a border dwell time of twenty-five minutes; however, actual figures were far higher at several key border crossings. The discussions also addressed the challenge of implementing 740-metre train operations across the corridor. Although European regulations promote the operation of longer freight trains, participants noted that many infrastructure sections are still unable to support such train lengths. Terminal operators explained that several ports and terminals had already invested in tracks capable of handling 740-metre trains. They stressed the importance of better understanding on what lines and to which destinations, long trains can run. It was remarked that to know the market demand would be highly important in order to prioritize investments effectively. Corridor representatives asked the operators what are the most important routes where demand for 740m trains is highest. Not all kind of freight in fact needs to run with 740m long trains. A realistic survey, indication, would be beneficial to the discussion on the topic. The Regulation, as it is written, sets volumes target, but currently on about half of RFC BA sections, run fewer freight trains of any length than those foreseen by art 19 of the Regulation. The RAG Speaker asked for a schematic map representation of such data.



	Mr. Džafo presented Operations and Market development KPIs in his presentation explained in previous topic. Those KPIs for 2026 shows punctuality at entry and exit with 30min threshold which are at 51% at entry and 34% at exit as well as punctuality at entry and exit with 15min threshold which are at 44% at entry and 30% at exit. Also, overall number of trains per RFC for dedicated year is 26.135 with 11.686.508 achieved train kilometers per RFC. He also showed other KPIs which includes number of trains per border on the corridor as well as numbers for dwelling time per border on the corridor. The RFC AWB is in process on the future integration of additional countries and infrastructure managers into the corridor framework. Corridor representatives explained that the future structure would expand from five participating infrastructure managers to fourteen and one allocation Body, creating a significantly larger and more complex operational environment. Particular attention was paid to the inclusion of non-EU Western Balkan countries, including Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo*, and North Macedonia. Participants acknowledged that integrating these countries into a unified operational framework would require substantial institutional coordination and legal harmonization. At the same time, the corridor was considered strategically important for connecting the Balkans with Central Europe and the Adriatic region. The corridor representatives emphasized the importance of maritime connectivity and port integration. Major ports such as Rijeka, Piraeus, Bar, and others were identified as future strategic gateways for European freight transport. The recently published EU port strategy was also referenced as a potential source of future financing for improving port-to-corridor connections. The corridor management outlined ambitious expectations for future market growth, estimating freight volume increases between 14% and 40% according to transport market studies. At the same time, participants openly acknowledged that the corridor faces major infrastructure challenges, particularly in the Western Balkans region.
7.	Alignment - New European Transport Corridors & Corridor Cooperation
15:30-15:45	<i>Helga Steinberger, Chair of RFC AWB</i> <i>Saša Jerele, RFC AWB EM</i> <i>Eszter Boglárka Gáboros, RFC BA CIM</i>
Presentation	The speeches on alignment of RFC AWB focused on the integration of a significantly larger and geographically more complex corridor structure into the future European Transport Corridor system. Mrs. Helga Steinberger and Mrs. Saša Jerele presented the corridor as one of the most ambitious expansion projects within the new European corridor framework. The presenters explained that the future corridor will expand from five participating infrastructure managers to fourteen, significantly increasing the number of involved countries, border crossings, ports, terminals, and operational stakeholders. This enlargement includes several Western Balkan countries and non-EU participants such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo*, and North Macedonia. It must be emphasized at this point that Serbia, a non-EU country, is already a member of AWB RFC. The integration process therefore requires extensive institutional cooperation, legal harmonization, and operational coordination across highly diverse national railway systems. A key aspect of the alignment concerns maritime integration and the strengthening of European port connectivity. The corridor incorporates numerous strategic ports including

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



	Rijeka, Piraeus, Bar, and several Adriatic and Mediterranean gateways. These ports are expected to play an increasingly important role in connecting European freight flows with global maritime trade routes. Mrs. Steinberger and Mrs. Jerele also referred to the European Union's port strategy published in 2026, which may be relevant in the future in providing financial aid for improving port-to-corridor infrastructure connections. The presentations also addressed the substantial infrastructure disparities that still exist across the Western Balkans region. Compared with more developed parts of the European railway network, many sections of the corridor continue to face challenges related to electrification, outdated rolling stock, ERTMS implementation, interoperability, and overall infrastructure modernization. Historical geopolitical tensions and varying levels of economic development were identified as additional complicating factors influencing corridor development. Despite these challenges, the presenters expressed cautious optimism regarding the long-term development potential of the corridor. According to transport market studies, freight traffic growth along the corridor could increase between 14% and 40% in the coming years. Furthermore, the Western Balkan countries aim to increase railway electrification from approximately 73% in 2020 to 86% by 2030, demonstrating a strong commitment toward modernization and sustainable transport development. Another important element of the alignment process is the establishment of stronger operational cooperation among IMs. Working groups have already been created to improve data exchange, harmonize operational procedures, and support smoother capacity allocation processes across the enlarged corridor network. These initiatives are intended to ensure more efficient international freight operations and to support the corridor's future role within the integrated European Transport Corridor framework. Eszter Boglárka Gáboros presented the alignment process of RFC BA, emphasizing that the new TEN-T Regulation introduced a profound transformation for European freight corridors. Geographically, the corridor expanded through the inclusion of additional countries, ports, and logistic nodes. A major focus of the presentation was the strategic inclusion of Hungary and Croatia into the corridor. Previously consisting of six member states, RFC BA now includes eight participating countries together with their infrastructure managers and allocation bodies. Hungary was presented as a strategically important inland logistics hub connecting East-West and North-South transport flows. Key Hungarian nodes such as Budapest, Győr, Zalaegerszeg, and Székesfehérvár were identified as crucial distribution and intermodal centres for future corridor operations. She also emphasized Hungary's growing role in combined transport and intermodal development. Ongoing logistics investments around Budapest and western Hungary are expected to strengthen the corridor's competitiveness and improve integration between rail and other transport modes. The Croatian section was highlighted as particularly important due to its maritime access to the Adriatic Sea. The Port of Rijeka was identified as one of the corridor's key strategic gateways, providing direct maritime access to global trade routes. Additional important Croatian nodes included Zagreb and Karlovac, both of which play central roles in regional railway connectivity. The presentation also referred to infrastructure modernization projects, including the development of the Rijeka-Zagreb railway line, electrification projects, and improvements of port-related intermodal connections.
8.	Discussion, Conclusions & Next Steps
15:45-16:45	All



	RFC BA announced 28th of October at new Clips Terminal in Southern Poland as the date for the next RAG/TAG meeting. RFC BA representatives thanked the Port Authority for the excellent hospitality and the AWB and BA teams for good cooperation.
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Day 2 - Thursday, 23 April 2026 | Port of Trieste

1.	Technical visit and transfer back to port of Trieste
9:00-12:00	<i>Registered participants</i>
	The second day of the meeting, participants were invited for a guided tour in the port of Trieste.