

**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Alpine - Western Balkan Rail Freight Corridor**  
**Railway Undertakings & Terminals Advisory Groups Meeting 2023**

**12.10.2023**

**09:00 – 14:00 (EEST)**

**Venue:**

**National Railway Infrastructure Company of Bulgaria (NRIC),  
Knyaginya Mariya Luiza 110  
1233 Sofia  
Bulgaria**

**Participants:**

**Present on sight:**

1. Helga Steinberger (OBB-I)
2. Saša Jerele (AWB RFC)
3. Tihomir Španić (AWB RFC)
4. Dino Džafo (AWB RFC)
5. Nikolina Ostrman (HŽ-I)
6. Robert Žnidaršič (SŽ-TP)
7. Silva Kristan (SŽ-I)
8. Peter Šišolak (RNE)
9. Slavko Ivanda (HŽ-I)
10. Apostol Hristov (NRIC)
11. Silvia Shumelova (NRIC)
12. Lyubomir Gerchev (DB Cargo BG)
13. Georgi D. Georgiev (DB Cargo BG)
14. Emiliya Hristova (BDŽ Cargo BG)
15. Miroslava Stoyanova (BDŽ Cargo BG)
16. Damir Medvedić (Cenoza Rail)
17. Krešimir Novak (Cenoza Promet)
18. Vedran Devčić (Cenoza Rail)
19. Beno Fekonja (MoT SI)
20. Teodor Dushev (RCC BG)
21. Boyan Filipov (PIMK RAIL BG)
22. Neli Andreeva (NRIC)

**Present via MS Teams**

23. Toni Yancheva (BG MoT)
24. Roman Bricelj (SŽ-TP)
25. Camille Dachincourt (AT MoT)
26. Damjan Rak (RCC SLO)
27. Iva Roman
28. Admir Henić (HŽ Cargo)
29. Marius Damigus (PEARL S.A.)
30. Tilen Žičkar
31. Matic Tržan (SŽI)
32. Dragan Ćorluka (RCC HR)
33. Damjan Petrc (SŽI)
34. Aleksandra Berak
35. Niccolo Tavella
36. Dennis Heric
37. Nicola Gentile
38. Germano Boni
39. Elizabeth Hochhold (RNE)

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and opening</b>
	<p>Mr. Apostol Hristov from NRIC, as host of the event, greeted all participants, and wishes for all to have intensive discussion and successful meeting.</p> <p>All present, and online attendees were invited to introduce themselves, after which Mrs. Helga Steinberger greeted everyone and gave an opening speech on behalf of AWB RFC as the chairperson of the general assembly. She reflected on the past actions and activities of the corridor and expressed her gratitude to all stakeholders for their continued support and collaboration. Also appointed that most important thing is for all to cooperate among each other. By building the network among us, we are building our business and our infrastructure. We are in front of regulatory challenges as new regulation is about to come. She is hoping to have a fruitful discussion during RAG TAG meeting among various topics which are scheduled. She also asked all Infrastructure managers to join in order to build better network for everybody.</p> <p>Mr. Robert Žnidaršič from SŽ-Tovorni promet and as the spokesperson of RAG also greeted the attendees and first of all expressed happiness to see so many people involved in this meeting, especially from the RUs. In order to use all of the advantages of the corridor, IMs and RUs should work together, and if we all work together, we would manage some progress.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>General introduction of AWB RFC and the benefits of capacity allocation via C-OSS</b>
	<p>Mr. Dino Džafo, as member of PMO, held presentation about general introduction of AWB RFC regarding the length of railway lines in total and by all 5 countries involved, gauge and electrification of tracks on the corridor, expressing also one of the bottleneck as non-electrified line section in Serbia, and said that according to the plan, work on that part should be completed by the end of summer 2025.</p> <p>After the introduction of AWB RFC point was transferred to the benefits of using C-OSS for capacity allocation. Among other things as requirement for further better planning which TTR will require, biggest aspect is one place where RUs or Terminals could arrange train paths among several countries.</p> <p>The C-OSS facilitates cross-border harmonization and coordination of paths; hence the Applicants do not need to talk to many different IMs for an international train run. It furthermore accompanies and steers the whole process from advance planning to path allocation, again making life of the Applicants much easier in terms of running international trains. TTR is basically the next level of advance planning, for which DCM (Digital Capacity Management) will more or less substitute the current RFC methodologies of planning and allocating. Advanced planning is one of the defining elements of future TTR (and the new capacity regulation), and there are many similarities between the services provided by RFCs and future processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFC Capacity Wish List - TTR Capacity Needs Announcement</li> <li>• PaP publication - TTR Capacity Supply publication</li> <li>• PaP product - TTR pre-planned capacity (published in the Capacity Supply)</li> <li>• Usage of PCS - usage of TTR digital tools (Capacity Broker, ECMT etc.)</li> <li>• C-OSS - one-stop shop for multi-network capacity requests.</li> </ul> <p>Requesting via C-OSS provides a more stable planning and value-added services by transparent communication among the interested parties.</p> <p>After presenting the benefits of capacity allocation via C-OSS, Mr. Džafo also presented PaPs (Pre-arrange train paths) for TT 2024 for RUs who can use them in their transport business.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Temporary Capacity Restrictions along the AWB RFC - State of play</b>
	<p>Mr. Tihomir Španić, as member of PMO, held presentation about planned TCRs in all 5 countries of the corridor for TT 2023/2024. He pointed out at the beginning that according to legal basis of TCR (Article 53(2) of the annex VII to the Directive 2012/34/EU and Article 12 of the Regulation EU No. 913/2010 and No. 1316/2013 “Coordination of works”) TCRs are divided into 4 groups: Major impact TCR, High impact TCR, Medium impact TCR and Minor impact TCR.</p> <p>Regarding Austria, he pointed out several TCRs with graphical overview: Schwarzach-St. Velt – Boeckenstein which was basically over by 02. of October 2023, Villach – Jesenice, Graz Vbf. – Graz Fbf. And Traun – Rohr-Bad Hall.</p> <p>In Slovenia there are many smaller TCRs during TT 2023/2024 from Ljubljana to Jesenice and mainly from Ljubljana to Zidani Most. On the slide there is also seen other TCRs including closure of individual track on station Ljubljana for the whole 2024, as well as the stations Krško, Jesenice, Podnart and Lesce Bled.</p> <p>For Croatia highlighted sections of TCRs are Zagreb ZK – Zagreb GK (end in 2024), Dugo Selo – Novska (end by the 2029 because of construction of the second track on that section) and Andrijevići – Garčin (end in 2024).</p> <p>For Serbia he pointed out section Niš – Dimitrovgrad (connection with Bulgaria) which is single and non-electrified line that electrification works are prolonged also for 2025. There are also construction works on Niš station (construction of new deviation)</p> <p>He finished with construction works in Bulgaria regarding modernisation of the railway infrastructure on 5 sections which is planned for the whole 2024 and 2025. These sections are: Dragoman – Voluyak, Voluyak – Sofia, Sofia station, Sofia – Septemvri and Krumovo – Katunitsa.</p> <p>Conclusion is that there are many planned TCRs which will have impact especially on freight traffic.</p> <p>Mr. Robert Žnidaršič agreed that there are lots of planned construction works, and hopes that after all is done, there will be better network for all. He also hoped that data provided is correct and that RUs can plan their business with more accuracy.</p> <p>Mrs. Helga Steinberger pointed out that it is important for countries to have monthly and annual planning, and that it is important to have at least two years planning in advance.</p> <p>Mr. Damjan Rak from RCC Slovenia pointed out that when TCRs are validated in one country as medium impact for rail transport, several TCRs in other countries, in this case corridor countries, have huge impact on international traffic, and that the validation of TCRs should be looked from corridor point of view. Mr. Tihomir Španić answered that the whole process of validation is up to IMs, but also said that we could gather involved IMs to discuss timeframe of construction works if that is possible for them regarding other aspects that are involved in the process especially financing and public procurement procedure for which IMs are not responsible.</p> <p>Mr. Robert Žnidaršič agrees with all what is said from either side but thinks that the representatives of the ministries of those countries, which are involved in corridor work, could make more effort to harmonize these construction projects.</p> <p>Mrs. Helga Steinberger concluded that more effort should be done by everybody for situation to be better.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Reducing dwelling times on borders – pilot project Dobova; Improvement of the border time situation by reducing dwelling times, common approach -improvements to report</b>
	<p>Mr. Matic Tržan (SŽI) held presentation about development of project of Reducing dwelling times on station Dobova, which is the border station between Slovenia and Croatia. Presentation started as general information about station as well as time slot which were considered on the project and number of trains taken into</p>

	<p>measurement during the period from 10.th to 17.th July 2023. 153 trains were included into monitoring. 63% of the trains going direction CRO – SLO have to go through technical inspection, and 15% on the other direction. As the Dobova station (or route through Slovenia) have different power system than Croatia (HŽI), locomotives must change. Measurement showed that 50% of the trains have to wait for the locomotive at the station for direction CRO – SLO, and 57% on the opposite direction. Several RUs were taken into account also. In general, there are four bigger RUs which are operating in the station Dobova.</p> <p>Measurement showed that real dwell time is almost double than the planned dwell time for direction CRO – SLO. The biggest cause of this is issue of waiting for the locomotive. If the trains that are waiting for the locomotive were taken out from the measurement, difference between planned and real dwell time is much smaller. Direction SLO – CRO shows less difference between planned and real dwell time. Biggest cause for dwelling in that direction is also issue of waiting for the locomotive.</p> <p>Second issue for trains to be dwelled is acceptance of trains into the network of each IM. Shorter waiting time is for the direction towards Slovenia.</p> <p>After presentation Mrs. Silva Kristan concluded that now is the time where we have to decide what is our next step regarding reducing dwelling times, and that steps would be mutual meetings with IMs and RUs that are operating on that border crossing.</p> <p>Mr. Peter Šišolak followed up with the fact that European goal is for that number to be not more than 15 minutes.</p> <p>Mr. Robert Žnidaršič appointed out that only for the loco – driver is possible to have those 15 minutes of dwell, because that time is measured when the driver is actually on the locomotive. The whole procedure for the train to be processed at the station is 45 – 60 minutes.</p> <p>Mr. Damjan Rak expressed gratitude for the presentation and told that he will compare the data from the presentation from his RUs data and said that it is on RUs to have more interoperable locomotives in order to reduce dwell times on border stations.</p> <p>Future steps to the topic for the RUs are also to have reliable partners in neighbouring countries or their own transport companies, which would reduce the time for certain checks in train technical inspection operations.</p> <p>Mr. Damjan Rak also said that it is praiseworthy of Slovenian IM to make effort of making better communication with Croatian IM, but also said that he thinks that major problem of the station Dobova is the lack of tracks intended for waiting locomotives.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>RNE Train Information System (TIS) and language programs – activities, functions and benefits for users</b></p>
	<p>Mr. Šišolak held a presentation about the RNE application Train Information System (TIS) with special reference to its functions as well as benefits for application users. He presented the functions of TIS, transparency and advantages of use. He also said that all the activities of individual trains are visible as well as are the trains running on schedule or late and what is the reason for the delay (notify IM). He also appointed that they are working on an upgrade with GPS data so that trains could be better monitored in real time. All the data are stored in a database that has limited access. It is approached by the project group, which prepares reports of key indicators. Data can be linked to national systems. It now also includes terminals and not only RFCs.</p> <p>TIS currently have 4,000 users. Some of the users were interested if they could get access to an individual train, currently they get the user's identification number and then the user does not know which train the data refers to, if the user has several trains on the route at the same time. For that issue users are referred to RNE support to forward a written request.</p>

	<p>It was also suggested that data on individual train compositions should be available to all stakeholders in the process. Currently, there are restrictions because not everyone wants to exchange data, or they do not yet have consent to do so. The initiative will be sent to the consultative group for TIS, which consists of RU representatives.</p> <p>On the second part of his presentation, Mr. Šišolak presented innovations in multilingual communication. Currently, the project is being implemented on three of the four projects. It is carried out at the level of: IM - RU - operationalization of communication, IM - IM at the local level, IM - IM at the regional level. RU - RU communication is still pending.</p> <p>The project started in 2019. In practice, the tablet version should be operational by 2025, and the upgrade by 2026 – hands-free communication. It currently has 300 words and 25 pre-set messages. The application is translated into 10 languages. For security reasons, the individual meaning of the words is adapted to the linguistic slang in the railway industry. Thus, for example, the version for the Austrian speaking area is separated from the German one, as different terminology is used. Five operators are already using the system on a test basis.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Impact of Capacity Regulation on future capacity allocation &amp; TEN-T REGULATION</b></p>
	<p>Mrs. Elisabeth Hochhold from RNE presented the key elements of the draft regulation on use of railway infrastructure capacity published by the European Commission in July 2023 in relation to Capacity Allocation. Strategic planning, capacity products better reflecting customer demands and different capacity booking/allocation processes for stable vs dynamic traffic are key elements of the new proposal. While the allocation of train paths will remain a competence of national infrastructure managers, the draft regulation requires strong cooperation between infrastructure managers across Europe throughout the entire capacity management process; this shall be ensure by two bodies, i.e. the European network of infrastructure managers and the network coordinator. In addition, the draft Regulation introduces comprehensive requirements for IMs to consult customers and other operational stakeholders throughout the capacity management process.</p> <p>Since there are some inconsistencies between the draft Regulation and the proposal for revised TEN-T guidelines, coordination during the ongoing negotiation process will be needed to harmonize the responsibilities.</p> <p>She also emphasized the importance of long-term planning, which is required by the new capacity regulation, and the importance of a harmonized implementation of the TTR process for capacity allocation. Digital tools and services are under development to support IMs in the different stages of capacity planning and allocation, as required by the draft regulation.</p> <p>She also gave a brief overview of the requirements regarding traffic, disruption, and crisis management, as well as TEN-T &amp; Capacity management regulations proposals timeline. Also introduced present about assumption of legislative process.</p> <p>Mrs. Helga Steinberger pointed out that RUs will be involved in building new system as that is also the intention of EU Commission.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic investments and developments of the Bulgarian route of the AWB RFC</b></p>
	<p>Mrs. Neli Andreeva as representative of the National Railway Infrastructure Company of Bulgaria (NRIC) held a detailed presentation on current and future infrastructure investments in railway infrastructure in Bulgaria with the final fact that all railway infrastructure works in Bulgaria basically span the entire length of the corridor lines. She presented the infrastructure projects that will be implemented in the future. Completion the modernization of the line from the town of Septemvri to the border with Turkey on border station Svilengrad. Documentation for the second track in this area is being prepared. In process of upgrading is also the line between Sofia and the Serbian border. Among whole planned infrastructure works on the network is the longest railway tunnel in the Balkans as well in total of 6,8 km.</p>

October 2023, annotated November 2023 by E. H.

