



Minutes of the Mediterranean Rail Freight Corridor 18th TAG-RAG meeting

16/03/2022 - 09:00-12:30

Organized via Microsoft Teams

	Topic	Speaker	Time
1	Welcome from the Med RFC	Med RFC	09:00 09:10
2	TAG-RAG pre-meetings outcomes and new topics	TAG RAG Spokespersons	09:10 09:50
3	Feedback from Med RFC on previous and ongoing issues	Managing Director Project Manager	09:50 10:10
4	TAG/RAG Success stories Med RFC Terminal presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeciras Rail Terminal • Perpignan Rail Terminal • EWG Terminal 		10:10 10:40
	Coffee break		10:40 10:50
5	Streamline Med RFC Cross-Border connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villa Opicina monitoring and taskforce actions state of play • Modane taskforce actions state of play 	Managing Director Project Manager	10:50 11:10
6	C-OSS state of play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Offer 2023 • TCRs information Request and suggestions from TAGs and RAGs.	C-OSS Leader	11:10 11:30
7	Train Performance Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking of trains 	Deputy Director Project Manager	11:30 11:45
8	International Contingency Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-routing options TT2022 • Simulations – RUs involvement 	Deputy Director Project Manager	11:45 12:00
9	2021 User Satisfaction Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main outcomes 	Project Manager	12:00 12:20
10	Wrap-up of the meeting and main conclusions	Managing Director	12:20 12:30
	End of the meeting		12:30

1. Welcome from the Med RFC

The MD welcomes the participants to the 18th Advisory group meeting of the Mediterranean RFC. The presented agenda is accepted. Pamela Chiarappa is nominated as secretary of the meeting.

2. TAG-RAG pre-meetings outcomes and new topics

The RAG spokesperson presents a list of topics and issues collected by the RUs. Given the future possible changes of the TEN-T regulation framework and, the new RFCs network projects, and moreover considering the reduction of the numbers of Corridors, the RUs concern about:

1. European Transport Corridors deriving from the EC draft on Union guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013TEN-T regulation (proposal of 14/12/2021) the RUs would like to receive:

- a general description of the new features of the new European Transport Corridors;
- a detailed description of the map of new Mediterranean Corridor.

To discuss about the shortening of Med RFC on the Eastern side (Hungary), and the necessity of more parking and passing tracks along the entire Med RFC, suitable to receive faster, heavier, and longer trains.

2. East side items: Slovenia

The track closure planned in Slovenia, on the line Ljubljana – (Koper) Villa Opicina is known by the RUs and they understand the necessity of the construction of new tracks and therefore the importance of tracks closures, for this reason they are trying to reduce stops on borders with interoperable locomotives and add availability of the loco drivers for compensating the delays and improve the traffic. They request more official information from IMs and from SŽ-I in particular, regarding possible further limitations of railway capacity for freight transport from September 2022 on.

This would improve the communication with the customers and the whole chain of planning could get better.

In addition to this the RUs propose:

- 1) To perform the same initiative undergoing at Villa Opicina/Sežana (working group to analyse and solve border problems) also for Dobova border crossing.
- 2) To add to the RFC line also the connection between the Port of Rijeka in Croatia via border station Šapjane – Ilirska Bistrica towards Villa Opicina (as a possible re-routing track in case of ICM). Today the line has limited parameters: 370 m train length and 20 t/axle.

3. West side items: Spain and France

Relating the Working Groups for solving border problems, the RUs appreciate the undergoing initiatives and ask and propose:

- 1) to get the state of play of the work relating to Modane and Villa Opicina;
- 2) to create a similar working group for Spain/France border at Cerbère/PortBou (also including the tunnel Perpignan-Figueras); possibly integrating it with the working group of the other border Spain/France at Irun/Hendaye;
- 3) to activate an information platform on the new Lyon-Turin line to know the future technical equipment and the operating model, very important aspects to plan future RUs' investment.

4. Central side items: Italy

The RUs propose to evaluate the possibility to insert Tortona-Piacenza-Cremona-Mantova-Verona line in the MedRFC alignment, to provide a valid by-pass in case of works or serious traffic disturbances on the Milano-Verona line.

DB Cargo representative suggests having a deeper analysis to discuss the new proposal of the TEN-T framework from the Commission and proposes to have a workshop on this topic to discuss the possibilities and limits of the proposal.

The MD presents some general information about the new draft TEN-T Regulation and shows the official presentation delivered by Mr Sopinsky at Mediterranean CNC working group. This will be shared with the meeting materials.

The TAG spokesperson gives his presentation of the TAG premeeting feedback collection. They show the effect of 2 years pandemic outbreak and projects plans on the MedRFC:

1. Port of Barcelona: post COVID-19, 2019-2020;
2. Traffic update: ports and inland terminals in the MED RFC;
3. New projects insight;
4. Impact on terminals of political and economic disruptions.

COVID-19 affected all the ports but in different ways. Some increased their work, other could not due to a change in the production of necessity goods and in general the effect is very much dependent on the handled goods. The information was mainly collected from Spain, France and Italy, few information is available from the East part of the corridor. The traffic had an overall increase: for instance, inland terminals in Spain and France handling agro-food, chemical and also specialized rail services increased, instead car traffic had a strong decrease.

Next, the TAG spokesperson shows the state of play of new projects for terminals in Spain and France mainly.

An additional topic regards the impact on terminals of political and economic disruption. In general, there has been an increase of the production costs (electricity, raw materials, etc.) and at the same time a scarcity of drivers and trucks. Also, the ports and terminals had to be more flexible to deliver good service, due to the lack of reliability of vessels ETA. In addition to the increase of congestion to the management of empty equipment - containers, plus the reduction of automotive rail traffic (lack of semiconductors) in terminals in OEM factories.

The TAG spokesman also attracts the attention of the audience on the use of the Rail Facility Portal (<http://www.railfacilitiesportal.eu/>), the portal established on a European Commission initiative for creating a European web portal for information on all kinds of rail service facilities and now managed by RNE. He underlines that in the information tools most of the terminals contain only basic information, uploaded by UIRR. It is suggested that this dataset should be managed by facilities operators and should be verified whether the published data is accurate, to keep the data updated.

3. Feedback from Med RFC on previous and ongoing issues

The Project Manager (PM) represents the state of play of the feedback collected during the latest TAG-RAG meetings and provided to the attendees the feedback of the RFC regarding the open issues:

1. As for the request for **information about the Fréjus base tunnel, Lyon-Turin** feeder lines and connected terminals, the PM explains that the request from the RAG has been processed and the MedRFC will organize a specific session about the topic within the 1st semester of 2022 with the involvement of the interested infrastructure managers.
2. As for the request on update on **Infrastructure developments in Spain**. The PM reminds that a first meeting was organized on 09.06.2021 and a following one will be organized by the end of 2022.
3. Possibility of **exchange trains between Slovenian and Italian RUs also in Sežana** other than in Villa Opicina. This item can be handled within the Villa Opicina taskforce which is the working group dedicated to the improvement of the border operations between IT/SI. This topic has been addressed in the working group.
4. Unlock the **works for Perpignan-Montpellier**, it is a request to the MedRFC to push on the realization of the project as a prosecution of LFP, connecting to Contournement Nîmes-Montpellier. The PM underlines that these are important works for the Corridor and the timeline and the two phases (phase 1 Montpellier – Béziers; phase 2 Béziers – Perpignan) foreseen were presented.



5. **Ljubljana – Brezovica and Tarvisio closure** feedback, RUs are asking for monthly updates from SŽ-I containing the timeline and the expected end date of the works, in order to avoid overlapping with works in Tarvisio. The MedRFC informs about the actions already performed in cooperation with the two IMs, in particular the postponement of the works on the Slovenian side and a common meeting IMs-RUs-MedRFC for the re-routing possibilities of the Tarvisio traffic. Most of the traffic will be re-routed through Villa Opicina. To avoid congestions at the plant, the PM underlines the importance of:

- Creating a solid network of programmed traffic.
- Sharing by all RUs of all available information in order to allow the optimization of the capacity in Villa Opicina.
- Respecting the VOPT bilateral agreement to create efficient programming.

Furthermore, MedRFC will organize specific working groups and online events all through 2022, also for train linking in TIS and the Involvement of the RUs in the ICM simulations.

4. TAG/RAG Success stories: Med RFC Terminal presentation

Thanks to the support of the TAG representative there have been three terminals/port presentations, one for the west, one for the centre and one for the east side of the MedRFC, to give a picture of the success, difficulties and experience gained in these 2 years of big environmental and political/economical changes. The presentations are given by:

- Port of Algeciras (ES) - Luis Núñez Vera
- Perpignan Saint Charles Conteneur Terminal (FR) - Eric Gilbert
- East-West Gate Terminal (HU) - Ádám Tálosi

(The information is available in the separate presentations in the zipped folder)

5. Streamline Med RFC Cross-Border connections

- Villa Opicina monitoring and taskforce actions state of play
- Modane taskforce actions state of play

The MD presents the state of play of the monitoring of the performance at border points by RNE and a general overview of the problems affecting cross-border areas. Then, he presents the projects of the MedRFC for covering the different cross border areas of the corridor and the specific activities undergoing at Villa Opicina task force and Modane.

Regarding **Villa Opicina** after the cluster phase and list of priorities, some smaller focused working groups started.

The main achievements have been:

- a. **Karavanken tunnel closure:** optimization brought to a level of punctuality maintained with +32% of trains
- b. **Tarvisio planned closure in July 2022:** Works on the Slovenian network were suspended and the TCR WG was activated with all the Stakeholders involvement.
- c. **Electronic Docs Exchange:** the WG started, and it's currently at Phase 1: rail documents mapping and exchange of contacts to improve communication of information.
- d. **Int'l ad hoc trains Management of the ICT tool:** the BPS tool under evaluation.
- e. **Monitoring of the VOPT agreement compliance:** monitor since June 2021, compliance ratio of 46%

Regarding **Modane QCO/WG** the Project Manager informs about the state of play. The meetings in 2021 have been plenary meetings and then bilateral to cluster and prioritize the topics (8 have been individualized) The TCR planning and operational management was the first issue faced and some IM-IM meetings were necessary to find a good approach.

DB Cargo representative asks for information about the next steps of the activities of the Electronic Doc Exchange WG, and asks for the support of the Safety Authorities of Slovenia. Solving the congestion at Villa Opicina could help increase the capacity and encourage development of other activities.



Rail Cargo representative adds that EU investments should be foreseen not only for the lines between stations, but for the hub's, like in Sežana, which needs more tracks for trains which could be parked when waiting for a slot at border point/terminals. This can avoid bottlenecks and support the traffic.

In conclusion, the collaborative approaches like the cross border working groups of AtlanticRFC or MedRFC show concrete results and generate a positive attitude in the participants (e.g. RU, Ports and Terminals). Rail Freight Corridors can act as a facilitator/platform for those programs.

In the end, the RFCs suggest that the CEF 2021-2027 call should support Cross-border harmonization projects as these actions aim to implement soft measures needed to make effective the infrastructure investments.

6. C-OSS state of play

The COSS leader gives information about the status of the Offer along the MedRFC for TT2023. Publication was done on time on PCS, CIP and Website of the MedRFC. Compared to last year the offer increased from 14 Million Tonnes to 16 Million Tonnes, up by 16%.

Regarding the analysis country by country, the distribution increased mostly for SNCF and RFI, and a little bit for ADIF and LFP, the same level as last year was kept for SŽ-I, HŽI and VPE. The goal is to follow better the wish of the customer and work with the available flow.

About the compliance weekly offer TT2021

- Have been sent the wish lists to 32 applicants, for which 11 replies have been received;
- There is a limited capacity on the East side (offer at the same level as last year);

Reasons for lack of offers are capacity:

- 70% are fully compliant with respect of the tolerances.
- 19% have a slightly difference (e.g. 1 day missing, some minutes missing to respect tolerances...)
- 11% fully no compliant

The Med RFC hope for a good level of requests despite the unstable political situation due to the Ukraine war, with its limitations, and an impact on TCRs. Then, he informs that the deadline to request path is on the 11th of April. The COSS leader insisted offering its availability to help customers on PCS procedures. He reminds also that the information on TCRs are available on the website too. It is possible to find maps and the status for each country where TCRs have strong impact on capacity. More information are in the next chapter.

Offers TT 2023:

- 22 PaPs East (both sides) on Hungary – Croatia – Slovenia - Italy
- 32 PaPs Italy – France (both sides) for Paris to Novara, Lyon area to Torino and beyond
- 47 PaPs North – South for Germany – Benelux – Spain border - Spain

Many of them are common with NSM and Atlantic and also with Amber and Orient-East Med.

PaPs number East Number of PaPs

The COSS leader informs about the PaP Offer on the East side, which are more or less at the same level as the previous year but the increase in TCRs limit the capacity.

PaPs number Italy-France & West

Number of PaPs by country and section there is an Increase in Spain and France less in Italy. PCS training was held in February and at the moment the COSS leader supports Rus in the process requests. Then he also informs us about next events: the FTE virtual meetings are happening in March (21th to 24th) and the deadline for requested PaPs, 11th of April.

TCR

The COSS Leader presents the state of play for works and constructions in details (with maps) in Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and France. These are due for improvements of the lines to be ended by 2030. Some of these constructions happens almost in parallel in Slovenia and Croatia with few alternative solutions. He shows as an example Hungary, where the possibility of re-routing is simpler compared to other countries. He also shows the state of play for Croatia and Slovenia which is complicated, due to constructions but also, he



reminds that in Italy and France many closures are expected in the next years with impact on traffic. All of these are under control and described in the TCR documents online as said and maps are also available on the website of the MedRFC and on the slides of this TAG-RAG meeting.

7. Train Performance Management

The Deputy director replying to an earlier request from the RAG, presents the new information about the TPM activities considering the overview solutions for the linking of trains. He presented and shortly described the basic solutions for linking offered by RNE as shown in its presentation:

- The automatic linking of trains, in case of the train runs with yearly timetable, was efficient for some borders in Italy/France and Slovenia/Hungary,
- A linking action based on the TCM (TAF-TSI) message. This solution requires the RUs to send train composition messages to TIS which help the linking of trains across the borders.
- The last group, on the bottom, is designed for the Ad-hoc traffic, where no automatic procedure is available, only manual. Based on the composition of the Eastern traffic this strongly impacts on Villa Opicina traffic flow. The DD proposes to organize small group clarifications separately with IMs and RUs, to further clarify and establish a minimum level of common understanding of the issue before having the RNE Workshop. After that, the partners could find agreement on how to manage the activity in the future. These could start in March and go on for next months.

In any case, an effective meeting is scheduled with RNE. The stakeholders will be approached in May.

8. International Contingency Management

The next topic concerns the International Contingency Management document. Earlier the RUs proposed to have only an excel sheet for re-routing options which helped a lot. The revised ICM Handbook requirements are now in line with this request.

Additionally, the re-routing options are available in CIP with the "ICM re-routing options" function available in the interactive map. Later this year a comprehensive CIP workshop will be organised.

Referring to re-routing options, RAG also requested to the RFC to organize the simulations as per the ICM Handbook to the IMs together with the RUs, putting together a workshop with RNE as well. First, it is foreseen to have short meeting to clarify what is the goal and how to do. Then, the idea is to organize the simulation/test on the East side and in June the GA will have a chance to make a decision, based on the volunteering IMs. The Workshop is planned to be sometime in the 4th quarter of 2022. The MD remarks the importance of having simulations to be organized together.

9. 2021 User Satisfaction Survey

The Project Manager presents the information regarding the User Satisfaction Survey which took place from the 26th August to 8th October 2021.

Regarding the response rate for all RFC Network there was a total of 126 evaluations and of 79 participants (each company is counted once). On 28/02/2022 MedRFC sent to all the invitees an e-mail with the summary results of the survey. The results are published also on MED RFC website and CIP.

The most important messages coming from the survey regard the request to improve infrastructure parameters, the improvement of infrastructure capacity and information on works and possessions. The TCR information request and infrastructure capacity information are the most demanding topics remarked also in the past and for which MedRFC is taking actions.

In 2021, a specific question for terminals was designed and the feedback shows that terminals are interested in having a support of the electronic data exchange, TIS, within the rail sector. An additional question was requesting to identify (both to terminal and applicants) the bottlenecks along the corridor with an indication of the severeness of it: mainly border crossings were indicated as bottlenecks and these were mainly: Villa Opicina, Modane, Gyekenyes, Dobova. This confirms the attention dedicated to the topic and further actions in this direction.



Finally, the PM shows an overall view on the actions performed so far by MedRFC, the coordination for the planned closure of Tarvisio, the increase in the satisfaction for the commercial offer, she underlines the importance of following the process and to send the wish list to the C-OSS.

She explains that the survey shows that the satisfaction with CIP is still not satisfactory, and many RUs and TM/Ports declared that they are not using the platform (33%), therefore the RFC will organize a dedicated workshop on CIP by June 2022.

In January there was the publication of TCRs both on CIP and website and all the RAG members were notified by e-mail. TCR Alerts are published on the website and an e-mail is sent to customers for the major interruptions.

Finally, a new MedRFC website more user friendly has been prepared with updated contents.

The PM informs about the plan of creating a MedRFC Newsletter and the presents a calendar of actions, where meetings and events that the corridor would implement to improve communication with the customers.

10. Wrap-up of the meeting and main conclusions

The Managing Director summarizes the topics discussed. There is a remark about the derogation of the language level B1 at borders asking whether there is any development on this issue. The MD answers that RFCs with RNE are quickly moving towards this direction throughout the project called Language Program, ICT tools are being developed to help speech translation and messages translations, but it is complex because also safety agencies are involved. RFCs are aware that the best exchange of information is crucial especially in this moment.

MedRFC thanks all for participation and discussion and remind the next meeting in September 2022. While presentations and minutes will be soon available on the dedicated Advisory group page of the MedRFC Website and on the Teams dedicated folder.

The Advisory group meeting ends.