

Summary of the 26th meeting with the RFC North Sea – Baltic RAG & TAG

Date: 25.03.2026 10:00 – 16:00

Venue: DB Cargo in Mainz
Rheinstr. 2, 55116 Mainz

1. Welcome and introduction.

Oliver Sellnick (OS), Chairman of the RFC NS-B Management Board and Katarzyna Wachowicz (KW), Managing Director of the RFC NS-B welcomed the participants. A short tour the table took place. OS presented the agenda.

2. RAG slot

In the RAG speaker's absence, Damian Figurski (DF), DB Cargo Polska, presented the topics of tackling language – related issues at borders and electrification plans related to potential re – routing proposals at Kostrzyn/Kietz and Gubin/Guben border crossing points (BCPs). With the B1 level language skills required, leading to difficulties finding suitable train drivers, BCPs have become more of a bottleneck. DF mentioned RNE recognised this problem and runs successful projects, i.e. Translate4Rail. This project is based on pre – defined phrases exchanged between the driver and signaller. With effective pilots on Slovenia – Italy and Austria – Italy borders, DF proposed the possibility to run a similar pilot on RFC NS-B. OS informed loco drivers have to speak the language of a network they run on. Possibility of adding English as a second language looks interesting but not many staff speak B1 level English either. Most IMs would be leaning towards automated, AI – powered translation. As neither DB InfraGO nor PLK have a solution right now, both are open to exploring options. Guus de Mol (GdM) added that in the Netherlands a simplified form of communication was introduced, with a list of short sentences, agreed with the safety authorities. Götz Walther (GW) added this topic is important and should be developed at a faster pace to fulfil RU's expectations, all options should be explored. Erik Nieuwenhuis (EN) informed that on the Oderbrücke BCP all dispatchers know both Polish and German, but there the paper work is the problem and it could be a good BCP to start pilots in the future. GW added digital solution is the future, bilingual requirement could be a fall back option. Weronika Karbowski (WK) concluded RUs should prepare a written statement and a proposal of changes, explaining their situation and problems to the IMs and MoTs.

For the electrification plans, DF explained that when Rzepin BCP is closed, capacity is really scarce with most of the traffic done via Horka. Guben – Czerwieńsk route would be a great re – routing option, but the line is not electrified on PL side and for the Kostrzyn – Kietz line, the electrification is not done on DE side. WK informed PLK has started preliminary work for power supply system analysis but for now, Horka remains the main re – routing option, more information to follow on this topic. WG added it is a political issue to convince DE MoT to change the Kostrzyn line from a regional to a main one, the idea is already supported by the Brandenburg Federal Government. Paweł Skowroński (PS) added PLK has already modernised Gubin line to 100km/h and plans to conduct a design study, but funding is not secured yet. GdM added maintaining the existing network is already extremely expensive and funds are scarce. OS added many projects had to be put on hold due to lack of funding.

DF informed he received information on plans to simplify procedures for military transports, aimed at crisis situation, and requested more information on the topic. OS informed military

mobility is a hot topic and there is a regulation by the EC in the works that will define a crisis state, attach certain priorities to special transport and accelerate procedures in general. He added NATO, together with the EU countries, should define train categories and we as a corridor already took the initiative for a better cooperation. DF received links to the draft Regulation and further documents by CER.

3. TAG slot

Erik Nieuwenhuis (EN), TAG Speaker of RFC North Sea - Baltic, spoke about the need for a bigger exposure of RFCs to potential customers, as well as the need to give smaller terminals more publicity as they don't have the funds to use paid platforms. OS stated RFP and TIS are good platforms, but EN questioned what can terminals actually get from using those and proposed to show those systems to potential users during fairs etc.

EN also pointed out the need to build new train lines/add tracks, to have a better connection with the road and IWW transport, RFCs could be a good platform to pass this information further to the Mots. He informed that PLKs investment plans in Rzepin should be passed down to all interested parties via RFC channels, as this improvement may cause lack of parking spaces for other terminals at the station. He also mentioned infrastructure problems at that BCP – automatic systems not functioning properly on PL side. WK responded that the idea of the corridor functioning as an exchange/consultation platform is good, but with the corridor's responsibilities clearly defined, we cannot be considered the driving seat for change. She also mentioned Nysa – Odra TCR coordination group that meets with customers – she will pass the information along to EN – as well as Rzepin QCO, that EN participates in. EN stated track extension at Rzepin will block capacity for other terminals. WK informed IMs are not responsible for terminal development planning but colliding projects will be checked. KW proposed for EN to participate in terminal/multimodal conferences, with OS confirming we will continue to promote RFCs.

4. PaP Capacity offer for TT2027

Anna Diffliiff (AD) presented the PaP offer, published for the first time in PCS capacity broker. New functionalities were added to allow filtering PaP catalogue by section in geographical order. She presented all sections that have been removed from the offer to customers – with the loss of CZ capacity impacting the offer the most. Planned TCRs were also shown, with re – routings offered via tailor made paths instead of PaPs.

5. Status of the 740 m trains TEN-T obligations on RFC NS-B

GdM informed the participants, that the revised TEN-T regulation requires a certain number of 740m trains running on core/extended core network with 2030 and 2040 being the respective deadlines to implement those changes. RFCs developed a methodology to calculate the potential of running set number of trains. IMs have the necessary data and the knowledge of timetabling, RFCs are responsible for data coordination and presentation. It is down to the Member States and their respective MoTs to decide where to invest, with some room for the European Coordinator to push certain investments forward. What is now known is the fact that obligations from the regulation have to be fulfilled, any possible efforts to increase the offer would be important to consider. RFCs need to finalise the approach to the matter – whether for example we omit TCRs but include rush hour traffics in the scenario planning. The goal is to start data analysis in Q4 2026, keeping in mind the actual needs of RUs. The current situation is known but the 2030 horizon is problematic, as some IMs don't even plan that far

ahead. This is especially important when planning long routes/ cross border ones, as if even a small stretch within a 740m – compliant one falls out as non – compliant, the whole route will be marked as non – compliant. The other important matter to consider is capacity needs and how to analyse those needs in a situation, where most IMs practice open ordering and RUs can order train runs as they want. Other factors to consider would be planned stops, pax traffic, rush hour patterns and priority rules. All of this analysis will be presented to the ExBo in Autumn for consideration. Michelle Guebelle (MG) concluded this is a Regulation and at the end of the day, we have to fulfil it. GW stated this legislation comes from the same people as Capacity regulation and conflict is clear with a lack of information on what to prioritise. OS added Member States and IMs must have a plan on how to enable 740m trains at least on core network, otherwise we show it is not possible and risk non – compliance. Dirk Schade (DS) stated what RUs need is resilience, regulation is only an overview of possibilities, what RUs need is contingency plans for delays and all unplanned events. GdM stated 740m trains will only be doable when it becomes a standard, not an exception. Daily operations in NL shown RUs stepping away from 740m trains. OS concluded we have to start somewhere and see what the future brings.

6. International Contingency Management (ICM) – RFC NS-B re-routing scenarios

KW presented the re – routing scenarios for RAG and TAG consultations. GW pointed out mistakes in the scenarios that will be corrected by the Office. He also deemed Łuków – Biała Podlaska re – routing as not feasible. WK added that since TEN-T Regulation downgraded the status of Małaszewicze and our corridor ends in Biała Podlaska, any potential re – routings happen on an ad hoc basis. Map will be adapted. EN proposed to add potential scenarios for Rzepin – Medyka line. The Office will investigate this matter with the appropriate WG and present, if possible, re – routings on this stretch.

7. AOB

OS asked the participants for topics proposals for the next meeting on the 28th of October in Poland. This meeting will be a joint one with Corridor Baltic – Adriatic. Military Mobility Regulation status was proposed, along with Rail Baltica updates. GdM proposed to add a presentation on the consequences of Mil Mob Regulation on RAG and TAG.

8. General Overhaul of Aachen-Cologne in 2029 – online event

Participants had the opportunity to join an online meeting organised jointly by the IMs of BE, NL and DE, who work together on developing and implementing re – routing concepts. OS stated DB InfraGO is happy with this good cooperation to find solutions for customers during TCRs 2028 – 2030. Those TCRs are essential to renovate large parts of TENT network in Germany and to clear investment backlog, ultimately helping smoothen out daily operations. The aim of this event, as per organisers, was to give the customers an overview of planned construction works, and get them involved early by launching a large scale consultations. Closure of Cologne Bridges and Cologne – Aachen line is an open concept, open for discussion and planning re – routing together to find the best possible solutions. Works overview:

- Replacing 4 bridges in Cologne
- Total closure Cologne West – South
- Total closure Aachen – Cologne Ehrenfeld

All of the above closures will have a high impact on international freight and regional pax traffic, with pax traffic completely suspended for the duration of Aachen – Cologne TCR. The

aim is to replace tracks, switches, culverts, bridges, overhead lines, add noise barriers, modernise stations and fit ETCS. The organisers presented the participants with an extensive list of potential re – routings. The plan is to deviate within Germany as much as possible, then shift traffic to subsequent BCPs. RUs deemed the plans very ambitious, with the need for additional locos and personnel. DB representatives assured all that an operations group will be introduced to assure quality. They also added that besides capacity, other characteristics are relevant to re – routing proposals i.e., power supply and safety systems. The meeting closed with a Q&A session.

List of annexes and presentations:

All the presentations and annexes are available on the RFC NS-B website in the Download area <https://www.rfc-nsb.eu/downloads> .

- 1) Agenda for the RAG-TAG meeting on 25.03.2026
- 2) Annex 2 RAG slot
- 3) Annex 3 TAG slot
- 4) Annex 4 PaP capacity offer for TT2027
- 5) Annex 5 Status of the 740 m trains TEN-T obligations on RFC NS-B
- 6) Annex 6 International Contingency Management (ICM) – RFC NS-B re-routing scenarios
- 7) Annex 7 General overhaul Aachen - Cologne

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