

**Press Release  
of the Executive Board and Management Board**

Milan-Busto, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Rail Freight Corridor Rhine-Alpine welcomes 2<sup>nd</sup> October reopening of the railway line Karlsruhe-Basel following Rastatt incident**

The Executive Board and Management Board of Rail Freight Corridor (RFC) Rhine-Alpine welcome the 2<sup>nd</sup> October reopening of the line Karlsruhe - Basel. This line is of major importance to the functioning of rail freight in Europe in general and of the RFC Rhine-Alpine in particular. The line was interrupted and hence closed between 12<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> October following an incident at Rastatt, a railway station half way between Karlsruhe and Basel. The incident occurred during large-scale construction works related to the quadrupling of this line to provide more capacity especially for international rail freight.

Today the Executive Board and the Management Board of RFC Rhine-Alpine in presence of representatives of the European Commission and regulatory bodies met in a special meeting in Milan-Busto to discuss the ramifications of this incident, which has caused a major negative impact not only on the traffic using the Rhine-Alpine rail freight corridor, but also on rail passenger traffic and other rail freight on this specific line. Rastatt is located at the border crossing line Karlsruhe-Basel taking 55.000 freight trains annually (growth rate 2016: 2,2 %; source: Annual Report RFC Rhine-Alpine 2016).

The Executive Board recognises and appreciates the individual and collaborative efforts done by all infrastructure managers of Rail Freight Corridor Rhine-Alpine to mitigate the impact by offering alternative routes as diversionary routes in collaboration with other Rail Freight Corridors and neighbouring infrastructure managers in Luxembourg, France and Austria. During the disruption phase, DB Netz as leading Infrastructure Manager in this incident coordinated the capacity offer and operations on diversionary routes together with neighbouring Infrastructure Managers. RFC Rhine-Alpine supported the communication and coordination also with neighbouring RFCs and informed the Executive Board on any issue where the Member States of the corridor could help. As a result of these efforts, approximately 65% of corridor freight trains (compared to the period in 2016) were able to cross the (Swiss) Alps during the seven weeks disruption period (source: Swiss ministry).

The Executive Board and the Management Board recognise the impact of the incident on railway undertakings, intermodal operators, shippers and other parties affected as of high importance. Therefore it is accepted that this incident has to be used as a learning case for a better management and redirection of freight traffics in case of relevant disturbances, to find solutions providing higher resilience of rail freight and an increased availability of alternative capacity in case of similar incidents.

The Executive Board and Management Board support initiatives to evaluate the incident with a view to lessons learned in order to determine how the rail freight corridor organisations can further contribute to the robustness and preparedness of the Rail Freight Corridors. One building block of the Rastatt review is the survey on communication/information which the Management Board currently carries out. The Executive Board and Management Board will meet again to discuss follow-up activities on 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

The Executive Board and the Management Board already stress the importance of effective multi-national contingency plans, crisis management and coordination of works for dealing with such major incidents, including the provision of suitable capacity for international rail freight on diversionary routes. In this regard the implementation of the Ministerial declaration “Rail freight corridors to boost international freight” adopted 21<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Rotterdam is considered as of particular relevance.

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