

History of RFC Rhine-Alpine

Corridor A was born in 2003. In January 2003, the Ministries of Transport of the participating countries The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Lugano to establish an international working group (International Working Group for Quality on the North-South Corridor, IQ-C). The group's task was to bring about numerous quantitative and qualitative improvements to the Corridor on the basis of a comprehensive plan of action.

In March 2005, the European Commission and the railway sector agreed on a further MoU, this time referring to the implementation of ERTMS on 6 corridors to define a European migration strategy for deployment of ERTMS. This forms the foundation for the pan-European implementation of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI CCS) for a trans-European railway network for conventional and high-speed rail transport.

The third crucial date is March 2006. In Bregenz the Transport Ministers of the participating countries signed a Letter of Intent (LOI), ensuring that besides the measures from the IQ-C action plan, Corridor A will be provided with an interoperable European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) in two stages until 2015. This objective was reinforced in May 2009 in a declaration issued in Genoa by the Ministries of Transport.

The next major changes to the corridor occurred in 2010. In June, the Transport Ministers of the participating countries signed a declaration in Rotterdam stating that Corridor A will be extended from Cologne to Antwerp and Zeebrugge. A few months later, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the new EU Regulation No 913/2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight. It entered into force on 9 November 2010 and was implemented by the Member States until 2013. This Regulation defines nine initial corridors, out of which Corridor Rhine-Alpine includes the ERTMS Corridor A as it used to be defined. The wording of the Regulation enables and even encourages to build upon experience and to ensure coherence with the commitments already taken, especially in the field of ERTMS.

As a direct consequence of the Regulation however, the corridor added a branch linking Duisburg to Antwerp, Zeebrugge and Amsterdam.